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**Chair**

Mr. Steven Blaney

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• (0900)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** While the members take their places, we'll begin our meeting, since we have a lot of witnesses.

Welcome, everyone, to our second meeting on support for postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada. We have a full slate of witnesses this morning. I congratulate our research attachés for the work that has been done.

It's like fishing: sometimes you throw out a line and the fish don't bite as much, but today we really have a lot of people that we are very pleased to hear from. I'm going to introduce you. Starting on the left, we have Mr. Laurier Thibault, who is director general of the Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada. He is here with Mr. Yves Chouinard, who is one of the administrators.

Welcome.

Then, from the Canadian Association of University Teachers, we have Penni Stewart.

[English]

Welcome, Madam Stewart, to the committee.

[Translation]

She is here with Greg Allain, who is the past president and whom I welcome as well.

We also welcome officials from the Department of Human Resources and Social Development who are responsible for the component we are dealing with today. They are Mark Hopkins who is Director General of Learning Policy, and Mr. Segard, who is Director General of Program Policy and Planning Directorate.

In the fourth group, we have the Canadian Association of Second-Language Teachers, represented by its president, John Erskine, and the executive director, Ms. Thibault.

Welcome to our committee.

Without further ado, I am going to turn the floor over to witnesses. We could start with you, Mr. Thibault, if you want to go ahead with your introductory remarks.

**Mr. Laurier Thibault (Director General, Réseau des cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada):** Mr. Chouinard will be making the presentation on behalf of the RCCFC.

**Mr. Yves Chouinard (Administrator, Director General of the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, Réseau des**

**cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada):** Mr. Chairman, committee members, colleagues, my name is Yves Chouinard. I am director general of the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick and I am also administrator of the Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada. I am here with Mr. Thibault, who is the director general of the RCCFC.

First, I want to thank the Standing Committee on Official Languages for giving our organization the opportunity to discuss the importance and unique role of our collegiate postsecondary education and training institutions. We know how concerned you are about promoting the development of our communities. There's no need to convince you that education and training in French are preferred means of achieving those objectives.

We firmly believe that our network, through its members across the country, is making an active contribution to the development of each of the communities where they are established. We are working on the ground; we are very close to the concerns and expectations of our young people; we offer training to adults; we are preparing the skilled workers of tomorrow, but not enough of them. Of course, like all of you, we are aware of the fragile and precarious nature of college instruction provided in French. This is what compels us to innovate and develop numerous partnerships in order to distinguish ourselves and to achieve our training and education objectives.

Our minority francophone colleagues have a twofold mandate. First, they must increase access to postsecondary education in French in the technical and occupational fields, in addition to supporting the development of their communities through their actions and active presence. Our institutions must develop registration thresholds in order to offer a range of competitive programs that meet labour market needs and their clientele's expectations. You will therefore understand that this raises challenges with regard to funding, innovation and partnerships in order to meet needs in an environment that is receptive to learning in French. And this must be stable, continuing and multi-year funding. It must be aimed not only at introducing services, but also at maintaining and developing them.

Since 1995, the RCCFC has been the national voice of 58 college-level French-language education and training institutions across Canada. Since its inception, its operation and a number of its activities have been funded by Canadian Heritage, on which we have always been able to rely. The RCCFC is mainly a network of mutual assistance, promotion, exchange and partnership. Its mission is to support the development of the Canadian francophone community by putting the expertise of its institutions at its service and raising the profile of French-language college-level instruction to government bodies.

Through its cooperation programs and networking initiatives, the RCCFC makes a significant contribution to French-language postsecondary education and training in all regions of the country. Through its actions, college-level institutions are increasingly making breakthroughs in minority communities, to the point where they now serve 8,500 full-time and 20,000 part-time francophone students, mainly in Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and British Columbia.

In recent years, the RCCFC has organized and partly funded more than 65 joint projects covering various activities, sharing expertise and developing instructional programs adapted to the communities, as well as distance training exchanges. The network has piloted research projects on, for example, high school graduates' motivation to continue their postsecondary education in French. It has also facilitated the Far West project to introduce college-level French-language training in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

RCCFC has also taken part in student mobility pilot projects with 27 colleges across Canada so that their students can have a college experience in another province. The purpose of this program was not only to reinforce the Canadian identity, but also to improve college students' language skills, mobility and competencies.

However, our last co-funding application was denied in 2007 because it was no longer consistent with existing funding programs. However, we're back with our financial assistance application for the next three years, waiting for Human Resources and Social Development Canada to put its own Canadian student mobility program in place to supplement the international mobility program.

• (0905)

To promote and support immigration in our communities, we have begun a study on the academic success of students of different languages and cultures registered at our institutions. This study is funded by Canadian Heritage and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Through it, we want to improve the adjustment and integration of francophone immigrants in our communities by identifying practices that work the best and by adapting them to their environment. In this way, we'll be able to determine best practices and to share them with all French-language college institutions in order to increase their academic success rates.

Our colleges have common points and preferred partners for community development. It is not without reason that the first two recommendations of the Lord Report specifically highlight the importance and prime position of education in community development and linguistic duality, by inviting the government to increase support for postsecondary institutions, a central point in our 2006-2011 action plan.

We firmly believe that our colleges are a good fit in the government's action areas outlined in the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013, particularly in the promotion of linguistic duality to Canadians, the emphasis on youth and improved access to services. However, it must never be forgotten that insufficient and inadequate funding can give an incorrect impression of the way in which we respond to education and training needs. Our institutions thus cannot be satisfied with staying in survival mode, because permanently looking for funding forces them into catch-up

mode, which becomes systematic. In education, catching up means regressing. We have to move forward.

In 2006, the RCCFC established the Consortium national de développement de ressources pédagogiques en français au collégial, a pan-Canadian partnership to improve the quality of education for students in professional, technical and trade programs at minority francophone colleges. The consortium receives \$250,000 annually from Canadian Heritage, but that is not enough to meet the many needs and requests from the colleges or to make even more teaching material available in French at the college level.

In another connection, based on the government's priorities set out in the Roadmap, on our experience with partnerships and on our technical expertise, we are developing a new paralinguistic services program scheduled for early 2010. Studies by the Translation Bureau of Canada and certain translators associations show that the language industry is really expanding. That is why industry stakeholders unanimously confirm the importance and validity of establishing this kind of program in language technologies at the college level.

In addition, a number of francophone colleges and institutions offer language training to federal public servants and newcomers who are not fully proficient in one of the official languages. To carry out these mandates more effectively and to support the federal government, the RCCFC thinks it is important to establish a consortium, with appropriate funding, so that colleges are collectively recognized as language training service suppliers by the Government of Canada.

However, it is the infrastructure issue, one of the cornerstones of the January budget, that offers our colleges and institutions unique opportunities to carry out their education and community development mission. Moreover, the RCCFC's 2006-2011 action plan is perfectly consistent with the government's objectives.

It is our colleges that train the skilled, innovative and bilingual labour force, that take an active part in strengthening their communities and that put into practice their vast experience of sharing expertise across the country. The purpose of our primary action strategy is to put in place physical and virtual infrastructure to support the supply of college programs and services. College training outside Quebec is, above all, technical and professional training that prepares students directly for the labour market. The delivery of quality programs requires that specialized equipment and development be put in place.

We believe that we must further develop college infrastructure across the country, improve the quality of infrastructure already in place, invest in equipment acquisition and the development or even construction of infrastructure, and promote new programs. This is what we can call skills reinforcement in the service of the development of our communities.

The recent history of education in this country shows us that the supply of appropriate high-quality services and programs, in modern infrastructures, is a powerful stimulant of demand for French-language services.

● (0910)

It is not enough to wait for the demand to appear. It must be triggered, stimulated. In education, there is nothing more attractive for students and their future employers than a variety of relevant programs provided in modern infrastructures, learning assistance services with high tech equipment and, of course, high-quality instruction.

We take this opportunity to note that our requests and needs are not based solely on available funding for official languages development. In view of the urgent need to support employment in Canada, other federal departments and agencies should be involved with Canadian Heritage in infrastructure projects in particular. We believe it is important that our colleges and other training institutions have access to a diverse range of funding sources so that they can develop at the same rate as their anglophone counterparts. It must never be forgotten that our francophone students and their future employers expect high-quality training services consistent with their career objectives and skilled labour needs.

The RCCFC is of the view that colleges and postsecondary training institutions are privileged government partners in the struggle against the forces of regression, mediocrity and assimilation. By training quality, innovative and bilingual workers, we hope to carry out our twofold education and training mandate even more effectively, while contributing to the development of our communities.

Thank you. I will be pleased to answer your questions.

● (0915)

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

[*English*]

We'll now move on to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, with Madame Penni Stewart.

**Mrs. Penni Stewart (President, Canadian Association of University Teachers):** My colleague, Greg Allain, will present for us.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Greg Allain (Past President, Canadian Association of University Teachers):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Penni.

My name is Greg Allain. I am a sociology professor at the Université de Moncton and past president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. I am here with our president, Penni Stewart, professor at York University. Many thanks to the committee for inviting us to make a presentation on official languages this morning.

My presentation will address three points. The first point will concern the official languages role of our members at the postsecondary level.

Our members provide training through a full range of academic and professional programs in both official languages in a broad variety of minority official language communities, from Vancouver to Church Point. Many of our members provide training in the minority language. For example, we train primary and secondary school teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers and social workers, not to mention journalists, researchers, artists and so on. Our members also provide a varied range of instruction in the second official language at various levels, including the postsecondary level.

Outside Quebec, many of our members perform duties in French in official language minority communities, in university certificate, undergraduate, master's and doctoral level degree programs at colleges and universities in every province.

The second point of my presentation concerns funding. We absolutely acknowledge the central position that the two official languages occupy in Canada, and we entirely support the introduction of Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future, and I quote:

Both official languages, English and French, represent a great cultural wealth for Canada. As a founding and fundamental characteristic of Canadian identity and culture, linguistic duality is at the heart of the values that have forged Canada, making it a strong and united country that is open to the world.

We absolutely agree on the importance that is attached to programs for supporting and promoting official languages. However, one of the problems we are facing is funding. The very nature of postsecondary education programs requires stable, firm, funding commitments, particularly in the official language minority communities. That partly reflects their need to be recognized as equal partners, alongside programs intended for the majority communities. The latter will always risk attracting minority students, particularly if those majority language programs receive guaranteed funding.

The nature of postsecondary programs is such that they frequently require a cycle of three or four years before granting a degree. In that sense, any softer or periodic funding jeopardizes the ability of postsecondary institutions to deliver programs at all levels. Without this kind of funding and institutional commitment, programs may seem precarious to professors and students alike.

To attract highly qualified academic staff to offer these programs and thus to contribute to the minority official language communities, postsecondary institutions need the type of hiring commitment that is the standard in this area of postsecondary employment, that is to say positions that become permanent for universities and regular hires for colleges. Short-term funding programs, even those spread over five years, those agreements that we're living with right now, may not be able to attract qualified professionals in the official language minority communities. If they are able, there is a risk they will be unable to retain them.

● (0920)

I'm going to give you an example, then we will return to the discussion.

At the University of Moncton, the five-year agreements with the universities appear to be working quite well, but the preparation process for those agreements is very long and arduous. The other problem is that measures appear to be lacking for there to be any continuity between agreements once they expire. In other words, there is a problem of continuity to ensure continuity between agreements once they expire. At my university, the current five-year agreement has just expired. I imagine the same is true at the other New Brunswick universities. The university will send its applications out for April like all the other universities. We're told that we'll have to wait two years before we get an answer. In other words, everything that comes under that agreement is frozen, which represents a lot of things. We are reliant on Canadian Heritage and to the official language agreements. There is a kind of de facto two-year freeze, which causes a lot of uncertainty.

My sociology department has been working for three years to develop a new bachelor's degree in criminology, a field very much in demand across Canada. We get a lot of applications from students who want to take this training. The program has just been approved by all authorities and has arrived at the funding stage. Since it's a new program in a targeted field, this application is among the applications for the new five-year agreement. We're told we won't have any news for two years. It appears the province takes quite a bit of time to do its job. I don't know where the system is blocked.

The criminologist we hired developed the program and is now ready to give it, to promote it and so on. If it isn't right away, it will be next year. However, we don't have any money to pay her and we won't be getting an answer for two years. That's a major problem. We may lose that person, and program implementation will be delayed further. That's what I have to say on the funding question.

The third and final point concerns the unrecognized additional work that our members have to do with regard to official languages. Under the current funding formula, our members often face excess work to develop programs and the culture of official language minority communities. However, that excess work is not officially acknowledged or remunerated. For example, the documentary resources for teaching and research in the minority official language are frequently limited, whether it be textbooks, scientific works or electronic resources. Where they exist, books and material in French are generally more expensive.

At first, the teachers at the major francophone universities in Quebec were members of CAUT, which has been in existence since 1951, but, when the Quebec federation was established, around 1972, they obviously joined it. Consequently, only a few CAUT members are francophones. Our members work in smaller institutions, the Université de Moncton being the largest. There is also the Université Sainte-Anne, the Collège universitaire the Saint-Boniface and so on. As the libraries of the small institutions are often lacking in various areas, teachers are often required to translate teaching material not available in French. However, that additional work is not acknowledged and it undermines efforts to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

Investment is required at a number of levels. We could provide support for small publishing firms outside Quebec that translate English-language works that have no equivalent in French. People tell us to publish our own textbooks. That's what some colleagues

have tried to do, but the major publishing firms are located in Quebec and are not interested in publishing works not intended specifically for Quebecers. They say that the market outside Quebec isn't big enough. There should be support for the creation of a national consortium for the acquisition of French-language postsecondary libraries across Canada. Support could also be provided for the establishment of a pan-Canadian electronic network for universal access to electronic resources that are expanding as a result of increasing digitization. These are only a few examples, not an exhaustive list.

• (0925)

In conclusion, our main concern is currently the lack of firm, stable and ongoing funding for all official language programs in Canada at the postsecondary level. As I tried very briefly to show earlier, the current formula has a number of perverse effects: difficulty recruiting and retaining both students and teachers, and additional unrecognized duties required of teachers. If linguistic duality forms the very basis of our country and identity, it should be worth the trouble to provide adequate, permanent funding for programs that ensure support for and the development of the official language communities.

I will be pleased to answer your questions. Thank you very much.

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

We will now go to Mr. Hopkins.

**Mr. Mark Hopkins (Director General, Learning Policy and Planning Directorate, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development):** Thank you for inviting me to come and speak to you this morning. My opening remarks are intended to give you a factual overview of how HRSDC supports postsecondary education. Then I will give offer commentary on some policy areas where HRSDC supports official language minority communities. Finally I will note some actions where HRSDC supports post secondary education and official language minority communities.

First of all, the Government of Canada supports postsecondary education in three broad ways: through transfers to provinces through the Canada Social transfer; through support to institutional research; and through support to students.

Our department's specific support for postsecondary education is targeted directly to learners. That's our role. It facilitates access to PSE and to promote student choice in their selection of PSE institution. The department's support is focused on individuals, not on institutions or provinces.

Let me give you a description of HRSDC's efforts to support postsecondary education.

[English]

The Canada student loans program was created in 1964 as a statutory spending program within HRSDC. Its mission is to promote accessibility of post-secondary education for students with demonstrated financial need, by lowering financial barriers through the provision of loans and grants, and to ensure that Canadians have an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to participate in the economy and society.

Through the Canada student grant program, numerous grants are available to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in post-secondary education, as well as to encourage parents to start saving early for their children's post-secondary education. Grants are also available for students in a variety of fields who are at different levels in their education.

HRSDC also provides a number of savings incentives to students and their families, which are administered through the Canada education savings program. That program promotes family savings for post-secondary education by encouraging contributions to registered education savings programs.

● (0930)

[Translation]

The department promotes international mobility through its International Academic Mobility Initiative, which supports Canada's higher education community in developing and enhancing international education partnerships.

[English]

HRSDC also provides substantial investments in support of adult training and skills upgrading through bilateral agreements with provinces and territories. Many of these investments indirectly benefit post-secondary institutions, as community colleges in particular are providers of much of the training those funding dollars support.

[Translation]

Budget 2007 announced a new Labour Market Architecture acknowledging responsibility of provinces and territories for design and delivery of labour market programming.

While broad and comprehensive, GoC support for postsecondary education respects the provincial/territorial constitutional responsibility for education. Although there is significant national interest in postsecondary education, it is a provincial jurisdiction with clearly articulated provincial responsibilities in the domain of education which place the administration and practices of the postsecondary education under the accountability of provincial governments.

[English]

Further, HRSDC is home to a set of programs and activities that have indirect impact on the development of official language minority communities. There is some potential spillover in the area of learning in particular and post-secondary education, where, speaking broadly, between 2008 and 2013 these programs will receive \$94 million in funding.

I can give you a list of the broad funding programs. First, a \$69 million enabling fund, as it's called, provides resources to strengthen the capacity of networks to mobilize support for community economic development projects; to create partnerships between private, public, and non-profit sectors; and to optimize the financial resources from other levels of government. There is a pilot child care project, which aims to assess the impact of French language preschool programs on linguistic and cultural development. There is a family literacy initiative, which expands access to family literacy in francophone minority communities and in partnership with government agencies and various family literacy communities. In addition,

there is a \$4 million initiative to build capacity of non-governmental organizations for early childhood development.

I'm describing these not because they bear directly on post-secondary education. Rather, everything we know about post-secondary education points to the importance of early child development, for example, as critical to developing the capacity to participate later in life in post-secondary education.

I'll next look at how our activities as a department affect minority language communities.

[Translation]

One of the most significant areas of activity where HRSDC support for postsecondary education and for official language minority communities comes together is in the area of research.

[English]

Through participation in research and the use of survey instruments... There are a number of instruments here, which I can elaborate on later. They include the Programme for International Student Assessment, the Youth in Transition Survey, and the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. Some of the projects are undertaken jointly with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD.

Many of those projects do oversampling. They take larger samples from minority language community populations, specifically in Canada, in order to get a measure of skill levels and literacy levels among student and adult populations. Our researchers in HRSDC have contributed to greater understanding of official languages proficiency as a result of this research.

In addition, the Canada education savings program has targeted official languages minority communities through a set of outreach activities, with a view to raising the awareness and the use of the Canada education savings grants and the Canada learning bond in francophone minority communities in Ontario.

● (0935)

[Translation]

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning.

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

Now we'll go to the Canadian Association of Second-Language Teachers.

Mr. Erskine, go ahead, please.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Erskine (President, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers):** Hello.

[*Translation*]

I'm going to start and then Nicole will take over.

[*English*]

Thank you for the invitation to speak today.

I am John Erskine, president of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, also known as CASLT. In my regular work I am the French and languages consultant with the Winnipeg School Division and a sessional instructor in initial teacher education for the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

CASLT was established by volunteers in 1970. It has grown into a multi-level organization primarily supporting second language teachers, professors preparing future teachers, and second language researchers.

These second languages encompass both official and international languages. We represent over 4,000 members in all provinces and territories. The vast majority of our members are teachers of basic or core French, followed by teachers of French immersion, and then English as a second language in Quebec and New Brunswick.

It is important to note that over 85% of Canadian students learning French learn French as a second language through the basic or core French program in Canada right now. Currently, of those FSL students, a mere 16.5% complete their French high school graduation requirements. Only about 300,000 students are enrolled in French immersion programs.

Our main focus tends to be on supporting teachers and revitalizing core programs, French and English—in French for most of the country and in English for Quebec and New Brunswick.

Changing demographics have affected who and how CASLT supports teachers. We consider the variety of urban and rural contexts—for example, areas with declining enrollments and with a shortage of qualified specialists. It also affects the makeup of the student population within the classroom. We consider the teachers who work with learners who experience their schooling in languages additional to their home language or the dominant language of their community.

[*Translation*]

CASLT supports the importance of Canada's ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity. Based on its organizational and financial capability, our association recognizes and promotes excellence in second-language teaching in Canada. The Canadian Association of Second-Language Teachers works in the K-16 school system, that is from kindergarten to the end of high school, and then we are concerned with two components of postsecondary education.

[*English*]

First we'll consider what happens to our second language learners immediately following high school graduation and their ability to access programs and opportunities supporting their interest to utilize and to study in their second official language, whether this occurs at community colleges or within university studies. Next we'll look at what happens within the faculties of education at universities across Canada with the preparation of our future second language teachers.

We will present initiatives spanning the K to 16 spectrum that can be considered by post-secondary institutions and could receive support of the federal government.

[*Translation*]

Major challenges for the success of second-language teaching and learning have been identified in consultations on linguistic duality and noted in a number of research projects. They include the lack of prestige of second-language programs in the schools, particularly in competition with certain other subjects; a lack of uniformity of language skills levels possible for each type of program and from one field of application to another; as well as a lack of policies for the inclusion and participation of allophones in varied second-language programs.

We have also noted a high referral rate for second-language courses at the secondary level. If students drop their second-language courses before the end of high school, few will be motivated to continue those studies at the postsecondary level.

[*English*]

Actions to be taken could include: explore how school systems value or devalue French within their administration, their policies, and their practices, and identify barriers and potential solutions; explore bilingual identities and the socialization process of second language learners, including new Canadians, in order to bring forward the advantages and usefulness of second language learning, provide arguments, and promote why it matters to be bilingual; and explore how Canada can have a common framework of reference for languages so that there is a common approach to language learning expectations and skills evaluation to be used across the provinces and territories from K to 16 and by employers.

This last suggestion is based on a project that CASLT has facilitated over the last few years. We have supported the adoption of a common framework of reference for languages for Canada, a tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of language learning and for evaluating outcomes or student proficiency in an internationally comparable manner. We support this idea because currently provincial-territorial FSL programs all have similar achievement goals, but these goals have not been tied to recognized proficiency standards. Moreover, there is no standardized assessment tool to measure to what extent FSL graduates become bilingual. Thus, it has been difficult to report whether our second language programs are achieving the desired results. CASLT also supports the use of a tracking tool or portfolio for students to set goals for their language learning and document their language proficiency or achievement.



Since 2004, CASLT has coordinated interprovincial-territorial dialogue among education authorities at the Council of Ministers of Education, ministries of education, and departments responsible for assessment and evaluation to support this common framework. We are pleased that the CMEC has now accepted the framework for implementation in all the provinces. For example, the Edmonton public school board has incorporated the use of the framework and portfolio in all of its language programs. It has also piloted the use of internationally recognized assessments with its students.

At CASLT, we believe that using an internationally recognized framework will increase the status of the second language programs within the schools, provide credibility to the language programs offered, and increase motivation and retention of students in language studies.

I think I'll pass

[Translation]

to Ms. Thibault.

• (0940)

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Thibault, you'll continue. You have about four minutes left.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault (Executive Director, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers):** That's perfect.

I'll introduce myself. I am Nicole Thibault, executive director of the Canadian Association of Second-Language Teachers since 2003. During my career, I've worked as a French immersion teacher and as vice-principal in a number of schools here in Ottawa.

As regards the postsecondary level, two of our partner organizations, Canadian Parents for French and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, have gathered data on the types of programs and support offered to students interested in pursuing their studies and using their second official language in their college or university programs. They have noted innovative programs that are starting to be developed, and I think we want to encourage the development of other similar programs. In particular, I'm talking about the immersion system offered at the University of Ottawa, which provides a tutoring program for graduates of French immersion programs who are taking courses in the francophone sector with francophones. We've also noted an openness from francophone community colleges to welcoming immersion program graduates.

[English]

Further actions to be taken could include exploring the implementation of language entrance requirements or graduation requirements for certain faculty programs; exploring the potential use of technology in the delivery of second language programs to enrich the acquisition and the alternative and added learning opportunities; encouraging exchanges, apprenticeships, co-op programs, and work placements that can be completed in the student's second official language, and then providing an additional linguistic credit for the experience; developing a common research agenda that includes the different social and cultural aspects related to official languages and creating links and networks between researchers and practitioners of both francophone and anglophone sectors; submis-

sions related to language teacher preparation or language teacher education programs within the faculties of education.

There is a shortage of qualified language teachers to deliver quality second language programs, and this has been brought forward across the country. Many school districts have difficulty staffing the FSL positions for speciality areas, such as teaching sciences or math *en français*. So for immersion, it's very important.

[Translation]

You have to speak French, but you also have to know mathematics.

[English]

We also have issues related to rural areas in certain provinces.

[Translation]

CASLT believes that instruction in French as a second language must be presented as a viable career option. New teachers require support through professional development, information sharing and opportunities to enrich their language and cultural skills.

[English]

In 2006, CASLT, with two partners—the Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers—released a report on FSL teachers' perspectives of their learning and working conditions, and two things of interest came out.

Only 32% of the FSL teacher respondents actually held a specialist certificate—in other words, they actually had specific training to teach French as a second language. Our reality is that if you're in B.C. and you happen to speak German, you're the French teacher.

Almost 40% of FSL teacher respondents reported they considered leaving FSL teaching during the last year. Reasons cited included the marginalization of the FSL program—there's no status for the program, you're the person in the back and you're not important—and the lack of community and collegial support. This fall there was also another report released by CAIT, which looked at new language teachers with less than five years' experience and why they were leaving the profession. The findings were the same. What we're seeing is that we need to promote new teacher support mechanisms, such as mentoring programs.

CASLT has undertaken a study related to the development of a language teacher competence profile and portfolio. The reason is to understand better the basic minimum qualifications regarding pedagogical training, language proficiency, cultural competencies, and subject matter competence to provide guidance to the employers, as well as to monitor and guide teachers in the teacher education programs.

Further actions that could happen include exploring language proficiency and enrichment opportunities for those second language teachers, when they're being trained as well as when they're in the field; exploring teacher exchange opportunities; looking at new teacher support mechanisms and understanding the roles of the job as a teacher and as an FSL specialist; exploring the implementation of this language teacher competence profile or portfolio as a tool that school districts can use to evaluate their current practices and the methods with which they support the FSL teachers and their ongoing professional growth and development; and finally, supporting targeted professional development for practising teachers. We need to keep the linguistic skills up for our teachers over the course of their professional years.

• (0945)

[Translation]

CASLT wishes to recognize the financial support of the federal government through contributions from the Department of Canadian Heritage as part of the support program for English and French second-language programs. This assists us in our work with our members and teaching staff in Canada. Based on this expertise, CASLT is in a position to play a leadership role in certain projects and also in the coordination of projects with a number of participants that have complementary objectives, including federal and national partners. In our view, with respect to education at the provincial level, a dialogue must definitely be established among the provinces so that we can agree on the most effective way to provide further support for linguistic duality and official language learning in Canada.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** I thank you, Ms. Thibault.

Mr. D'Amours, go ahead, please.

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

Thanks to all those here present.

Mr. Hopkins, I listened to your remarks concerning your department. I think it would be worthwhile this morning to listen to the speeches, comments and answers of other people. Mr. Allain, among others, mentioned direct assistance for the translation of documents. He also mentioned assistance for expediting agreements and direct support for postsecondary institutions to promote bilingualism. Your department does not appear to have been very active in those areas. In any case, you didn't convince me of much in that regard. That is why I say it might be worthwhile to take note of what other people will say.

With respect to programs, Mr. Chouinard, I believe that you raised the question of integrating agreements and programs from place to

place so that we can monitor them. You also address the issue of the international program. Could you tell us what the good sides of that are? Among other things, are you facing barriers to the advancement of the international program, among other things?

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** First of all, with regard to coordinating the agreements, I believe it was Mr. Allain who raised that subject. What I mentioned concerning international mobility is that Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has an agreement through which funding can be obtained to recruit students who will be able to engage in international mobility.

Prior to 2007, I think there was a program that enabled our students to engage in mobility in Canada. The viewpoint of the colleges with regard to international mobility is that university students very, very often have access to that program, as compared to very few students from the colleges. We think that mobility in Canada, rather than international mobility, should be promoted first of all, in the case of students 19, 20 or 21 years old. We aren't opposed to the international program; we take part in it, but the objective is to enable students to get to know their country better, to acquire second-language skills, skills in different work places. We should have a program that enables our students, at least at the college level, and probably at the university level as well, to go from one province to another and do practicums or study for a semester at another institution, etc., a program that would enable our students to discover Canada before going international. That's not always easy. We have students who have taken part in the international program, and there are challenges. When they've never left home and they find themselves in Niger or Mauritania, it's not easy. I think we should have a program like the one we used to have.

• (0950)

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Allain, would you like to talk about the question of coordinating agreements?

**Mr. Greg Allain:** Yes, all right. As I pointed out, there appears to be a problem of lack of continuity from one agreement to the next, and the ideal thing would be for the official languages programs to be funded on an ongoing basis. Roads are, and manpower is as well, whereas, if official languages are so important, why are we always forced to come back with five-year agreements, particularly when there are breaks between agreements? If it isn't possible to get that ideal solution, in spite of all of the importance of official languages, there should at least be coordination. I don't know, I'm not in the field of public servants and federal-provincial agreements, but when a five-year agreement is to expire in two years, the work should begin immediately to prepare for the next one and, from the moment one expires, the other should go into effect so that at least there isn't a period of time between the two.

Going back to my example, we have an excellent criminologist in my department. We're going to lose her because there's no budget. The response to the budget application for the criminology program won't be ready for another two years, we're told. I don't necessarily blame the federal government; it seems the province takes a lot of time to prepare its package of applications as well. At least it should be possible to match that. The best, the ideal solution would be to have permanent programs.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. D'Amours.

We'll continue with Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, I want to bring it to your attention and to that of the colleagues from your party that, following the Quebec-bashing at the last meeting, it would be worthwhile for you to consult page 5 of today's *Le Droit*. You said, within your party, that English is swept under the rug in Quebec since it isn't taught to children. Here we learn that Quebec City is more bilingual than Ottawa. There may be food for thought here for the people from your party. I want to point that out to you. It's certainly something you'll have to take note of.

That said, ladies and gentlemen, we are here today to examine efforts to promote bilingualism in postsecondary institutions across Canada because we have information that they are lacking, or that there are too few or not enough people capable of speaking both official languages well enough to get jobs in the federal government, for example. It must be said that the federal government isn't doing its job either. When there are Supreme Court judges who aren't bilingual, when we have deputy ministers who aren't required to be bilingual, Canadian ambassadors who—

**The Chair:** Pardon me, Mr. Nadeau, but Ms. Glover has a point of order.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** With all due respect sir, we wasted a lot of time the last time. The witnesses are here to talk about postsecondary education. I hope we won't waste more time talking about judges. We have to focus on postsecondary education.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Is that a point of order, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** I remind committee members that we must focus on the subject under study.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** That's my introduction and it's worth hearing. I hope madam's remarks don't cut into my speaking time.

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, we'll continue.

• (0955)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I don't want to lose my speaking time, Mr. Chairman. That wasn't a point of order.

The other aspect concerns ambassadors, who are not required to be bilingual. Canada must set an example.

Messrs. Chouinard and Thibault, does your association have a mandate to make students officially bilingual?

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** No.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right.

Ms. Stewart and Mr. Allain, do you have a mandate to make students bilingual by the time they earn their degrees?

**Mr. Greg Allain:** No.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** If I understand correctly, the members of your association teach a second language at the primary and secondary levels.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** They also teach at the postsecondary level. So the faculties at the postsecondary level, teacher training—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** So to teach French as a second language—

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** We teach both French as a second language and English as a second language.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right. If I understand correctly, you have a specific mandate to ensure that people learn their second language across Canada.

I taught French in high school in Saskatchewan and Ontario. Groups like Canadian Parents for French encouraged their children, whose mother tongue was French, to study at immersion schools. So we had trouble retaining Franco-Ontarian students, whose numbers declined, with all the consequences that can have for the schools. So that increased the number of immersion students and hurt the French fact.

Is the situation still the same?

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** It's less and less the case; it's even the contrary. The policy changed a number of years ago. Minority francophone groups provide far more statistics to parents. The francophone schools can offer increasingly relevant and interesting programs. Students in immersion programs look at their genealogy and claim they are rights holders and enter minority francophone programs. Of course, they don't always enrol, but people are nevertheless interested in studying in a francophone minority school.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** If those rights holders attended an English school to learn French, they wouldn't be in the right place.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** Precisely. I see that people are increasingly in the right place.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** So the situation is improving.

When they're hired, do college and university teachers have to be bilingual?

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** No. The francophone colleges are trying to get francophone staff who are highly qualified in their field of specialization.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right, thank you.

Mr. Allain.

**Mr. Greg Allain:** The situation is slightly different. It isn't done formally. We represent the members of the academic staff of Quebec's anglophone universities. It is difficult to be a unilingual anglophone in that province. Even if it were a formal requirement, someone who couldn't get along in French would have trouble, whether it be at Concordia, McGill or Bishop's.

There are also bilingual universities in Ontario, such as the University of Ottawa and Laurentian University.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Are you telling me that all the professors at the University of Ottawa are bilingual?

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau, you'll be able to come back to your question.

We'll continue with Mr. Godin.

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

I'd like to welcome you. I apologize for arriving late. I was at the doctor's office. As you can see, I have the flu.

I had a point of order, and I agree that it wasn't really one. The five minutes are ours and we ask the questions we want to ask.

That's an example of the way the government operates. A Supreme Court judge could be appointed without being bilingual. The act is drafted in English and in French. It is not translated, but written in French. And yet, after all that, we ask the translators, with all due respect to them, to translate that act for the judge—even if we don't allow it to be translated—so that he can make a final decision, because there is no further recourse after the Supreme Court.

We're talking about deputy ministers who aren't bilingual. The government's message is that bilingualism isn't very important in the country, even if Canada is a bilingual country. The government is a major employer. I worked in the mines. I remember giving the following example. When the company wanted to hire people to operate heavy equipment, it said what it needed. It did the same if it needed an electrician. When the public service needs staff, what is the government's position? It operates as though bilingualism were not necessary, despite the fact that Canada is a bilingual country by law. And yet they are the ones who will have to train those people. Wouldn't it be preferable for it to be done by the institutions?

Why don't you make that request? Will you have the means to do it with qualified people by working jointly with the employer? In fact, you represent employers, since you provide training to the people they'll be hiring later. Isn't it possible to solve this problem once and for all?

•(1000)

**Mr. Mark Hopkins:** Thank you.

I'm not here to answer questions on the bilingualism policies of the Government of Canada.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You can answer in accordance with the act. We have an official, bilingual act.

**Mr. Mark Hopkins:** I'm here to talk about the postsecondary education programs offered by our department. I don't have the necessary jurisdiction to talk about—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, in those conditions...

Then answer Mr. Allain. He says there is a five-year program, but that they wait until the last minute and then they have to wait two years to get more funding. They're going to lose specialists. What is the government's response to that?

**Mr. Sylvain Segard (Director General, Program Policy and Planning Directorate, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada):** Thank you, sir. My name is Sylvain Segard. I am director general, program policy, at the learning policy directorate of the Department of Human Resources. I played a dual role when I was appointed outgoing champion of postsecondary recruitment for my department. In that capacity, I was responsible for working with all my manager colleagues at the department to organize a campaign to recruit talented graduates from university institutions. We're making efforts every year in this field. We're trying to improve year to year by attempting to reach most Canadian institutions as well as—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The question is that you have to pay to keep them.

**Mr. Sylvain Segard:** In the circumstances, the graduates that we recruit are subject to the Public Service Modernization Act. As public service managers, we are all required to apply the merit principle. Obviously, that involves the individual's basic skills and whether that individual meets the linguistic profile required by the position.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, the purpose of my question is not to determine whether the people they hire are qualified, but how they'll be paid.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, you can come back to that on the next round.

We'll now move on to Mr. Chong.

[English]

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to build on what Mr. Godin was saying about the whole issue of the public service, so I have a set of questions for the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

It seems to me that in recent decades the admission requirements for applicants going into undergraduate programs at Canadian universities have been relaxed with respect to another language and having second language courses or second language instruction. It seems to me that a number of decades ago, if you wanted to go to the University of Toronto, you needed to have a second language, whether that was Latin, or French, or the like. My understanding is that those admission requirements with respect to a second language have been relaxed. Is that correct?

•(1005)

**Mr. Greg Allain:** I don't know if there were actually requirements for the undergraduate level. There were quite a few at the graduate level. If you were going to do a master's degree or a Ph.D. in philosophy, you had to have German in addition to either French or English. There were things like that.

I think you're right. I think there has been a move to diminish those requirements—unfortunately, in my view. It's important to have these language requirements, I think, but there are a couple of places....

Is York one?

**Mrs. Penni Stewart:** No. We dropped it.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Yes. You dropped it.

When I went to the University of Toronto—and this is from my memory—my recollection is that I had to have French as a requirement to be admitted to the university.

**Mrs. Penni Stewart:** I don't ever remember that.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** I don't think this requirement presently exists. Perhaps the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers knows a little bit more about this, since they're actually teaching the high school students who are being admitted to these universities.

**Mr. John Erskine:** The value placed on second languages, both for exiting high school and for entering university, has greatly diminished. It used to be far more prevalent. There are the official policies and then there are what the guidance counsellors are recommending and what message is coming down, with the priority perhaps being put on other areas.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Is it true that, with respect to a language, the admission requirements for getting into an undergraduate program at a Canadian university have been relaxed?

**Mr. John Erskine:** Yes.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** So it's not my imagination that this is the case. The irony is that as we live in an increasingly interdependent world, in an economy that is increasingly reliant on international trade, we seem to be pulling back from the need to learn or encourage second- or third-language knowledge. It seems to me to be the exact opposite of the direction in which we should be moving.

The other set of questions I had is for the public servants who are here. We're the largest employer in the country. We employ, through agencies, crowns, and directly, close to half a million Canadians. What steps have the department or central agencies taken—I know you don't work for central agencies, but I mean central agencies that you're aware of—to indicate to universities that we are not getting the graduates we need from the universities? We spend a lot of time and effort training recently graduated students from Canadian universities because they don't have the skills we need.

The one skill in particular that they don't have is the need to be bilingual. What steps are you aware of, if there are any, that have been taken to have that discussion with Canadian universities, to say, listen, you're not producing the kinds of graduates we need for today's public service with respect to knowledge of both official languages?

**Mr. Sylvain Segard:** Thank you very much for your question.

It's a very good question. In that regard, the Clerk of the Privy Council has written to the Prime Minister about public service renewal on a number of occasions and has certainly shared his views about this topic in the past. I'm aware of a number of initiatives, but I may not be the best witness to answer this question. You may wish to bring in some colleagues from the Public Service Commission or other members of the federal government to answer that question.

I am aware, for instance, that the clerk has asked every DM to sort of adopt a post-secondary institution and develop a relationship with that institution, and is also encouraging assistant deputy ministers to do so. In that connection, then, I suppose these would be the kinds of issues that might be discussed, but I am not aware that they were given specific guidance with respect to bilingualism.

•(1010)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Segard and Mr. Chong.

An analyst told me that he had studied Canadian politics at Queen's University in Kingston. When he did his course work, bilingualism was required, and he is no longer bilingual today. That might be a point to retain when we draft our report in order to make a recommendation concerning it.

We'll now begin the second round. I would point out for our witnesses that the period granted to each parliamentarian is managed for each of them. If you want to intervene, I would ask you to speak to the parliamentarian who has the floor. I see some of signaling to me because they would like to say something. Address the parliamentarian who has the floor instead, if you want to speak.

I invite Mrs. Zarac to continue the discussion.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Good morning, gentlemen.

My question is for Mr. Chouinard. I examined your action plan 2006-2011. In the introduction, you mentioned that you have to work to improve access to francophone colleges in minority communities. You even cite the Prime Minister. I'm going to read the quotation.

[*English*]

It says the francophone and Acadian communities contribute to the nation's development and prosperity, from Nunavut to Point Pelee, and from the shores of Labrador to Victoria, through their resilience and ability to adapt and their sense of innovation. They are part of the process of building a proud, confident, modern, and united Canada. In this they represent a precious economic, social, and cultural resource for Canada. Thus it is essential that they be supported in pursuing their development in order to maximize their contribution.

[Translation]

The text continues, stating that, to continue in that vein, you will need tools. As this is 2009, and the plan extends from 2006 to 2011, do you now have the tools to achieve those objectives? Otherwise, what tools would you like to have?

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** In recent years, through our RCCFC network, which comprises 58 institutions, we have had a certain amount of funding for projects. The RCCFC is a network of exchange, of partnership and so on. I must be honest in my answer and tell you: absolutely not. We would need a lot more money. In the draft budget that was tabled, I believe there is \$2 billion for infrastructure. However, only 30% of that amount goes to the colleges as a whole. That's not really a lot when you're building a francophone network across Canada. Apart from those in New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba, I believe the colleges in the other provinces don't even have permanent facilities, apart from the Université Sainte-Anne in Nova Scotia. As for the others, they use premises leased here and there. We can't serve our communities from scattered premises. We can't create that synergy in the community to convince people to go and study there.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** You're telling us that what little funding you have must be put into infrastructure. You can't really invest in the programs that will provide a return.

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** The problem is bigger than that. When the federal government says it is ready to invest 50% in small institutions, those institutions don't get the other 50%.

When a province requests funding for institutions, whether it be \$1 billion or \$500 million, a percentage of that funding has to be earmarked for infrastructure for the francophone community, rather than leave it to the province's discretion to put that funding where it wants, forgetting the small francophone community. There should be a link between the federal government and the province to say that, if infrastructure has to be developed on the francophone side, a percentage of the budget is allocated to it. The province would be bound by that agreement. Otherwise, the provinces can spend the money as they want. That's why the francophone college institutions get peanuts.

•(1015)

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Thank you, Mr. Chouinard.

Do I still have time?

Perfect, thank you.

My second question is for Mr. Hopkins. You talked about student bursaries, and these are very praiseworthy programs. My children received bursaries. I'm currently contributing to the Canada Education Savings Program for my grandchildren. Do the criteria for access to these programs benefit minority students? Are there criteria that favour them in those programs?

**Mr. Mark Hopkins:** Mr. Segard will give you an answer.

**Mr. Sylvain Segard:** The department's learning directorate administers the BCPE program and education savings. To strictly answer your question, there are no specific criteria supporting the objective of bilingualism. It must be understood that—

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** If we want to achieve the objectives, couldn't we promote access for students in the official language minority communities through these programs?

**Mr. Sylvain Segard:** With your permission, madam, I would say that the basic objective of those two programs is to encourage Canadians to study at the postsecondary level to the full extent of their abilities. So they're trying to eliminate the financial barriers to their education. In that context, everyone who meets the basic financial criteria is eligible.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** That shouldn't be an objective in Canada. This is a bilingual country.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Zarac. I hope your investments don't fluctuate too much.

We're going to continue with Mr. Gaudet, from the Bloc Québécois.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ):** I have a brief question. Then Mr. Nadeau will take the rest of the time allotted to me.

My question is for the representatives of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. When you have meetings, are they held in English, or in French?

**Mr. Greg Allain:** First of all, I must say that we are a national and bilingual organization. Our board of directors, which consists of approximately 150 delegates from across the country, meets twice a year, and we offer simultaneous interpretation. All our communications are done in both languages. We publish a newsletter and news releases in both languages. Everything is done in both languages.

In practice, many of our activities in which mainly anglophones take part are conducted in English. We organize some 10 workshops and conferences a year on collective bargaining, grievance settlement, academic freedom and university funding. Those activities are generally conducted in English. I gave the reason earlier. Historically, at their inception, the major Quebec universities and teachers associations were members of the . When they acquired their own federation, around 1972, CAUT, the forerunner of the FQPPU, they joined that Quebec federation. So we have several thousands of francophone members who work in Ontario's francophone and bilingual universities, as well as individual members who work in anglophone universities.

We are officially a bilingual federation.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I know you're a bilingual federation, but you hold your meetings in English. That's what I wanted to know. I'm sure you don't hold any meetings in French. The francophone employees of the public service tell me that, when an anglophone is in the room, they all speak English because the anglophone doesn't speak French. That was my question.

**Mr. Greg Allain:** There's a committee that—

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** We can ask them; they're right here. I can put my question to all the representatives of associations here in the committee room. When you hold your meetings, do you do so in English or in French?

**Mr. Mark Hopkins:** The office meetings are usually in English.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you.

And you?

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** It's completely bilingual. We often start in one language

[*English*]

and we finish in the other one.

[*Translation*]

Our meetings are completely bilingual.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Have you ever held a meeting in French only? That's what I want to know.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** Yes, it happens.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you.

**Mr. Laurier Thibault:** We hold ours in French only, sir. The RCCFC's meetings are held in French only.

• (1020)

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I have a little question for you; I was keeping it for the end. I received your action plan, and it's in English only.

**Mr. Laurier Thibault:** Pardon me, but we sent both versions.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** So I got the wrong version.

Thank you very much. I've finished, and I now turn the floor over to my colleague Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Allain, in the case of the University of Ottawa, it's not because the university is bilingual that all the professors are.

**Mr. Greg Allain:** No.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right. That answers my question.

Now I'd like to turn to the representatives of the colleges and Cegeps. To conduct a study on access to postsecondary education in French outside Quebec in 1990-1991, I went to the Université Sainte-Anne. I spoke with one of the professors there. He had taught at Université Laval and was now teaching at Université Sainte-Anne in Church Point. This didn't appear in the report, but he told me the situation was ridiculous. As he lived in Church Point during the summer, he had been asked to lend a hand and to mow the lawn to cut maintenance costs. That's not a joke. It's not very glorious when you're at a university. They don't promote that aspect when they want to attract teachers.

Is the situation improving for small universities and colleges or is it increasingly critical?

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** I can't say whether the situation has improved at the small universities. The only member that offers or rather offered programming is the Université Sainte-Anne, because there's not much college programming left. We mainly represent Canada's francophone colleges and Cegeps. I would say the situation is improving in certain provinces and that it's scarcely improving in others.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** How much time do I have left, sir?

**The Chair:** Your time is up. Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Ms. Glover, go ahead, please.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Thanks to all the witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Allain, for drawing attention once again to your government's commitment to official languages. Regardless of what is said on the other side, we are committed. Everyone in the House is committed to bilingualism and wants a country that supports both official languages. I encourage you,

[*English*]

do your meetings in English or French, whatever you want,

[*Translation*]

you have two official languages. So, bravo!

Ms. Thibault, you said that we should establish proficiency standards. I think that would be a good idea too. How could we establish those proficiency standards that would apply to colleges and universities?

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** I'm going to answer in English.

[*English*]

The process has already started. What it takes is the Council of Ministers of Education—it's all the different ministries of education—which meets in Toronto regularly, coming together to discuss joint projects, because many of the decisions are done at a provincial level.

We started working on the dialogue in about 2003, and one of the biggest issues was exactly that: knowing what a French immersion program produces. What's the level of bilingualism in a French immersion program from kindergarten to grade 8 or from kindergarten to grade 12? What is the level of bilingualism, core French, and

[*Translation*]

English as a second language.

[*English*]

—it's the same idea in different provinces—so that universities can get a sense of exactly what entrance requirement you could ask for?

I think that goes back to the question of why some of those requirements were taken away. It was because if you were coming from different provinces, the expectations were different. If you finished your immersion in this province, you didn't get the entrance requirement for that university.

That's a little bit about why those things were relaxed.

The dialogue has already started. The agreement on what framework to use has already happened. We're now at the stage of having the different provinces look at how they can begin to implement it at the K to 12 levels. We're starting to encourage some piloting of actual testing.

The example John gave was Edmonton Public Schools. They are quite a leader in this area. They've actually tested samples of immersion students, core French students, and so on so that they can get a sense of their level on the grid.

They're also working at the Faculté Saint-Jean at the University Alberta, which is now looking to implement that entrance requirement to say that in certain faculties—not all faculties, but certain faculties—you would have to have a B2 or a C1 or whatever level those are.

I can give background information on what the framework is. It's based on a European model that was developed over 20 years. It's a very good research base. The Department of Canadian Heritage actually did a study on all the frameworks that have been developed, and that's why they've moved forward with this framework. It best fits the autonomy of the provinces in education but also the joint work that can happen at a pan-Canadian level. So it's moving.

The next stage for us is to push that project towards post-secondary. That means meeting with community colleges and meeting with university programs and encouraging them to use a portfolio and a tracking system with their students.

One of the pilot projects we have going on right now is having six different faculties of education developing this. They'll use it in the teacher education programs. We are a little closer to that.

• (1025)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I'm sorry, because I'm going to run out of time, but you brought it back to what my colleague was saying about having reduced the standards to get into university. So I'm glad to hear that it is being addressed.

Do you have an estimated date of completion?

We'll have to invite you back to find out the details.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** No, I don't. CMEC works very slowly, but we're very passionate to keep pushing them along.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Good.

And I suspect that may help with the teachers. I know you're trying to encourage more teachers...and you're trying to keep them.

Is there any province that's particularly negatively affected by the impact of these teachers withdrawing from French second language instruction? Is there a specific province?

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** It's the small rural provinces especially. If you're thinking of Newfoundland and Labrador, one of their biggest dilemmas right now is that they have no specialist teachers to teach core French programs in grades 10, 11, and 12. They're actually working on distance learning so they can have two or three students from different towns online at the same time with one teacher in St. John's teaching core French.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** How are our English—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Glover.

We'll now turn to Mr. Godin.

[Translation]

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

Now we're going to look for some answers. We asked some questions earlier; now I want to get some answers. The ones I'm looking for are those from the institutions. You are in the training, education field. So if the government—I'm going back to that again—which is the major employer, said it needed those qualifications

for its business and it gives you funding, which will help you, do you think you could succeed better?

**Mr. Greg Allain:** Yes, if I can answer you, absolutely. Funding is a major problem for universities in Canada. Since the cuts in the mid-1990s, funding really, even with cost-of-living adjustments and growth in the number of students, has vastly declined. But francophones have special needs. We were talking about small francophone universities earlier. Our association also has college-level members. We have three member federations of colleges in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, representing roughly 23,000 out of 65,000 members. Research is increasingly very important in the colleges as well.

The problem in a small francophone university in an outlying area is isolation. The professors who are at the Université Sainte-Anne, in Church Point, or Shippagan or Edmundston, who are members of our Université de Moncton, are isolated. The people at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface are isolated. So I think there should be more funding for travel.

A professor in Montreal or Ottawa has colleagues in other universities in the same city, not far away, to conduct research with, to talk to, to go to conferences with or to do all kinds of things. At the Université Sainte-Anne, or even in Shippagan, it's quite far away. It is expensive and people don't have a lot of money to do that. That's crucial for research: more funding is necessary for travel.

Immersion was mentioned earlier. I'm simply going to add a brief comment on that subject.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I want to go back to that too.

• (1030)

**Mr. Greg Allain:** I can wait until you've spoken.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I'd like to ask a question about immersion. I never thought I'd see that in New Brunswick: 350 Anglophones in the street, in Fredericton, saying that they wanted schools, that they wanted to be able to learn early, not start in grade 5. Do you remember that?

I remember that Parents for French came here to tell us that there weren't enough immersion schools. I've visited all of Canada with the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We went to British Columbia, where people are really interested in French and where they would like to recruit people to teach French, the other language, a task that should supposedly be that of the government, under the Official Languages Act. We don't have the time to read it in full, but the act is clear; that's what it says.

So do you agree with me that there isn't enough money invested in immersion schools to follow up and help those people? It's the same thing on the francophone side. I'd like to hear from Ms. Thibault.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** There's always a demand for more immersion programs across the country. It's greatly increasing in British Columbia right now, and in Alberta. It's at the provincial level that the departments decide where they're going to offer programs and in what circumstances.



**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We're talking about funding that flows from the Official Languages Act. The government says it doesn't want to listen to what the other parties say, that it is investing money. I want to listen to you rather than the other parties. There is a problem; otherwise we wouldn't have asked you to come here. If it were working well, you wouldn't be here.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** If I can simply make a comment, I would say that what you've mentioned are the MOUs spread over a number of years, and these are things that are done between the provinces and the federal government, when they conduct these negotiations. We've already seen improvements since the last MOU, but we still have a way to go; that's for sure.

**Mr. Greg Allain:** I simply wanted to add something on the subject of immersion.

At CAUT, we have eight committees, and one of them is the francophone committee. Everything there is conducted in French, of course. A great deal of money has been invested in immersion. In general, that's working well. It's variable. However, where there is a big problem is that, once students have finished immersion at the primary and secondary level, there's absolutely nothing to encourage them to continue in French at the postsecondary level.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, and when they enter a department, they only speak English.

**Mr. Greg Allain:** It's thought that, after primary and secondary school, they are supposed to be bilingual. It's over; they can continue their education at an anglophone university.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Take your test and things will be fine.

**Mr. Greg Allain:** The transition, the promotion of secondary education in French to immersion students is lacking.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your remarks, Mr. Godin.

Thanks to our witnesses.

That completes the second round. If committee members so wish, we could do a third round and set aside some time for Mr. Godin's motion.

Without further ado, I'll ask Mr. D'Amours to go ahead.

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

Mr. Chouinard wants to speak.

Mr. Chouinard, I'm going to give you a chance to speak, since it seems to be quite important.

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** These are remarks for Mr. Godin.

In my presentation, I talked about the need to establish a consortium of colleges, which would enable us to be recognized as second-language training providers across Canada. We have a base in all the provinces. With a little money, we could establish this consortium and provide second-language training in accordance with the needs of Canada's public service and in the provinces.

I also want to underscore what Mr. Greg Allain said. A lot of money is invested in immersion, but some thought will have to be given to investing in francophone postsecondary institutions. The more the anglophone institutions are enhanced, the more you make

those who are in immersion want to opt for them instead of our francophone institutions.

Currently in Nova Scotia, 4,000 secondary students are being trained in French and 4,000 more are rights holders, for a total of 8,000. However, there is no francophone community college. Only one program is offered at the Université Sainte-Anne. In Prince Edward Island, a small embryonic college was recently opened, but it really offers one, two or three programs. However, increasing numbers of francophones students are enrolling in French-language schools, and that's what has to be developed. At the same time, we have to develop colleges and university programs to accommodate these people.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Chouinard, even if a pool of francophones is interested in studying in French, if we can't offer those people programs they want to take, they may well opt for anglophone universities. We are seriously missing the boat here. As we are in the same riding, you know there are two community colleges. If you compare them to other colleges in the country, you can see they're not big. The campus of the Université de Moncton, for example, is not large, compared to others. Nevertheless, these are majority francophone places. Let's take the example of the Campbellton campus. If French-language training had not been provided in hospital care, our students would definitely have gone elsewhere to get their training. They would probably even have opted for anglophone educational institutions. If we don't have any programs, we won't get far. Even if we build them, without programs, students definitely won't stay to study in French.

●(1035)

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** Absolutely. That's a problem. There's also the issue of critical mass. It should be acknowledged that, in the case of the francophone minority communities, programs have to be offered even if there aren't 20, 25 or 30 students per class. If the standard is set at that level, we'll have to shut down half of our programs in all communities, except in Ontario and New Brunswick. In British Columbia, you can expect there to be 25 students in a college program. The demand for funding is the same whether there are one or two professors for a given class or two or 30 students.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** A little earlier, you said that immersion was one thing, but that, if we focused solely on that issue to the exclusion of our francophone institutions, we'd have another problem. There would be fewer and fewer francophones when it came to offering services. When you live in a minority setting, if you don't have the tools to develop, you won't be interested in continuing to study in your language. One of my sisters lives in Winnipeg, and my three nieces are francophones. They have an accent, but they're working hard to retain their French. On the other hand, it would definitely be more difficult if there wasn't a francophone unit, a francophone teaching institution. Francophones would be headed toward English and would ultimately go back to immersion. That's definitely not what we want.

**The Chair:** Mr. Chouinard, do you want to make a brief comment?

**Mr. Yves Chouinard:** A community college doesn't just aim to provide instruction. If you want the community to take an interest in the institution, you have to do more, but that takes resources. If you don't do that, the anglophone college, which is making the same approach to the community, will take an interest in the community and will invite it. It has the resources to do so, and, in that case, the community will automatically move toward it. We've seen the results of the school community centres. They've led the community into the institution. I did it in Campbellton, which is a 50% anglophone town. We have a francophone institution. We invited the community, and today the college is a community institution, but if we had merely taught a few courses and sent professors and students back home in the evenings, the institution would probably be dead today.

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

Mr. Chong, go ahead please.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for the representative of the Canadian Association of Second-Language Teachers.

All my cousins in Asia can speak two or three languages, and my cousins in Europe can speak two or three languages. Here in Canada, an officially bilingual country at the federal level, the vast majority of students are not bilingual. I find that quite ironic.

[*English*]

It's an irony, and despite all the attempts by various governments to try to address this, we don't seem to be going in the right direction.

The Government of Canada introduced the action plan on official languages about five years ago. We are halfway through that action plan, and it has been renewed. Over its lifetime, about \$2 billion will have been poured into second language instruction and instruction for minority language communities.

One of the goals of this action plan was to double the number of students between the ages of 15 and 19 who were functional in the other official language. My understanding is that halfway through this action plan we are not going to meet that target. Why is that?

• (1040)

**Mr. John Erskine:** There are probably many factors. One of the factors is even as fundamental as knowing what we mean by "functionally bilingual", which is where our focus on the cadre came into place.

Another factor is that it's a real battle to even keep kids in French until they get to that age level, because there are all sorts of other pressures and reasons why they do not continue with French. One is that they don't see a future in it. If you have schools that don't even offer it in some jurisdictions, it means there's no impetus to continue. They don't know what to do if they want to continue in French at the university and college levels; there are no opportunities to do that, or limited opportunities; the opportunities are there but they're not aware of them; or they don't see it as a viable alternative. So we need to let kids know what is available and then increase the possibilities to continue.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** The whole allophone population is most open to learning a second language. When we say that French immersion programs are booming in British Columbia, most of the

students enrolled in those classes are of Asian background because the parents value multiple-language learning. They've come to Canada with the concept that they want to learn both official languages, and they enrol their children in immersion programs right away. They're learning English in the community, etc.

The other interesting little comment is that the Alliance Française is saying that it's mostly allophone students who are taking classes across the country. That's what it's really seeing in their population.

There are two things here that are positive. We will have a more diverse population in Canada in the future, so I think they will embrace bilingualism more and more as we go forward. We may not meet our target of 2013—we're not anywhere close—but more and more young people see the goals of learning two languages, three languages, four languages, and that pluri-lingualism is the way of the future for Canada. So it encourages French as well.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** What do we as public policy-makers need to do to get to that goal of doubling the number of bilingual students? Is it money, allocation of resources, or a question of non-monetary solutions? What is the holdup?

**Mr. John Erskine:** One of the big challenges is having enough competent second language speakers to teach and encourage our kids. It won't happen by 2013, but the number of students choosing French, who have enough French to even consider doing that, is not very great in some of our western universities.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** Just a different process of the protocol with the provinces.... I think there's been a lot of work toward accountability and transparency in the funds that are transferred. This last grouping has really made people say where the money is going. If we could continue in that direction it would be very helpful.

**The Chair:** That's very interesting indeed.

We'll finish with Mr. Nadeau.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to continue along the lines of what Mr. Chong said in his introduction. I was born in Hawkesbury, the second largest bilingual town in Canada, and I live in the largest bilingual city in Canada, according to Statistics Canada. We read that on page 5 of today's *Le Droit*.

We learn French, but we catch English. That's what happens when you're in the minority. It isn't because I went to English school that that happened to me. In Gatineau, it isn't because they all went to English school either that people can speak English, but because they work in the federal public service. More often than not, they have to work in English. We had proof of that earlier. The place where I'm from is located between Montreal, the third largest bilingual city in Canada by size, and Gatineau. There's a social reality.

I have a few questions to ask about learning. Does the principal of an immersion school have to be bilingual in order to get his position?

• (1045)

**Mr. John Erskine:** That varies from one region to another.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** But he isn't required to be bilingual. Does that vary from province to province?

**Mr. John Erskine:** It varies from school board to school board.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right. The principal of an immersion school isn't required to understand French.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** He has to be a francophile.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes, but that doesn't mean he speaks French.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** There aren't enough francophones or people who speak French.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Being a francophile, that—

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** We select francophiles, but it isn't necessary that they speak French.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Being francophile means having a favourable prejudice toward French. So one can say that some school principals aren't favourably prejudiced toward French. I'm not getting an answer, but I see a nodding head in agreement.

The school boards have the power to close down classes and programs or to increase the number of students. At some point, in New Brunswick, they abolished school boards. If I'm not mistaken, that's come back. When a school is about to lose its high school immersion program, do you exercise any political pressure? Do you lobby to prevent that from happening? Do you have any influence? It's also possible that's not within your power.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** That's not part of our mandate. We form a professional association. The association you refer to, Canadian Parents for French, is a group that would do the lobbying.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** So the teachers don't mobilize when they see that immersion schools are going to be closed.

**Ms. Nicole Thibault:** These are our employers; so we have little leeway. We could write a letter, for example, but you mentioned lobbying. We don't have a lot of room to manoeuvre in that area.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** That's fine.

Mr. Allain and Ms. Stewart, you are representatives of a pan-Canadian Association of universities and colleges in certain provinces. I'm thinking of this region. There is Carleton University, the Université Saint-Paul, the University of Ottawa, the UQO and the École d'extension of the UNAM in Canada. So there are five universities. When there are conflicts among those universities, over student recruitment, for example, do you look into the matter? I suppose student recruitment is the universities' bread and butter. Is that a situation you look into?

**Mr. Greg Allain:** First, we represent unions of academic staff members at universities and colleges in three provinces. We handle union issues first and foremost. However, we also take a position on certain subjects, and we do lobbying, for example, on the chronic under-funding of universities and sharply rising tuition fees as a result of university under-funding. We don't intervene locally if two universities are competing over student recruitment.

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

With that, on behalf of committee members, I would like to thank our witnesses for your diversity of ideas, for your vast knowledge of the subject and for your written recommendations, which will be very useful. While you are leaving, the committee has to debate a motion. You will have the opportunity to read our report once it is made public. We'll continue to work hard.

Mr. Godin, are you ready to introduce your motion?

While Mr. Godin prepares to read us his motion, we will distribute the Air Canada correspondence we received.

• (1050)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we have to conduct a major debate, it doesn't bother me if we continue studying my motion at the next meeting. I don't know whether committee members were sitting when it arrived. The motion reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages express its opposition to the decision of removing the form to comment on services offered in both official languages from airplane seat pockets, and ask Air Canada to provide in writing the reasons for its decision and to reverse this decision immediately.

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, I find your motion interesting. We're going to go around to the political parties to see how the motion is received. If we agree, given the time allotted to us, we can settle this today. If necessary, we can postpone it. Without further ado, I—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I'd like to explain the reasons for my motion.

**The Chair:** I thought you had finished.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, you asked me to read the motion, which I did. I haven't finished.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limouilou, CPC):** With all due respect, you must have known that Mr. Godin hadn't finished!

**The Chair:** I must say that isn't a point of order.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, the entire matter of this card that was placed in the seat pockets of Air Canada aircraft started a debate. I don't remember whether our analyst, Mr. Paré, was here at the time, but this has been going on for quite a long time. It was the hobby horse of our colleague Benoit Sauvageau, who is no longer with us. I remember that Air Canada said it wasn't receiving a large number of complaints, but we knew that there were problems.

When you take a plane between Ottawa and Montreal and there's no service in French, you know there's a serious problem. When someone requests a can of 7UP and police officers wait for him when he comes off the plane, you see there is a serious problem. We all remember that affair. I took a plane from Ottawa to London, and the service wasn't.

The card was in the plane. It had been put there in response to recommendations by this committee. Mr. Sauvageau had had his own card made up because Air Canada said it was too expensive. He had it made up and showed them what it cost. It wasn't that expensive. Ultimately, they decided to put them in.

Today, they prefer to remove the card and to put it in the *enRoute* magazine. The Commissioner of Official Languages, I believe, wasn't entirely familiar with the matter when he came here a week or two ago, but he said that, if there was one organization that he had received a lot of complaints about, it was indeed Air Canada. How is it that Air Canada, which receives these complaints, now wants to remove its comment cards? I find it unacceptable. Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues that the committee send a letter to Air Canada saying that we do not agree and that the card should be left in the aircraft. When people pick up the card—

**The Chair:** I'd like some clarification. Before the card was placed in the aircraft for the first time, was it in the magazine? There was nothing.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, there was nothing in the magazine. They inserted it in a little place, a little corner, a little page somewhere, on page 40 of 50, something like that. In any case, they said they were respecting official languages.

**The Chair:** That's fine.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** If the card is in the *enRoute* magazine, will people have to tear out the page every time they take the plane? Come on! The card is there if you want to file a complaint; it's there if you don't want it. It stays there. No one's forced to do anything, but that affords the opportunity to do so. Air Canada is governed by the Official Languages Act. It's the law. Its representatives always say that other airlines don't have the same obligations, but it must be borne in mind that, when Air Canada was bought, they bought the whole package. The official languages had to be respected.

I believe I've said enough. I would like to hear from my colleagues.

**The Chair:** That's fine.

My list shows the following names: Mr. D'Amours, Ms. Boucher, Ms. Gallant and Mr. Chong. There are four speakers. We're clearing off the list. If we can't, we'll adjourn and continue at the next meeting.

Mr. D'Amours, go ahead please.

• (1055)

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Chairman, I'll be brief. We're in favour of Mr. Godin's motion.

We've received a brief note, which probably comes from Air Canada. If it thinks it appropriate to add a note in *enRoute* magazine, in addition to the card in the pocket, that its business. That will be even further evidence of its desire to improve the situation, but I believe the card in the pocket should not be eliminated. I also encourage Air Canada to take action, to include the comment card in *enRoute* magazine. That will double its visibility. Not everyone necessarily takes the time to read *enRoute*.

When you take the plane, you're often asked to pick up the little book, the security guide. When you pick that little book up, you can

also pick up the comment card concerning official languages. It's much easier for passengers to be aware that they can file a complaint than if the complaint form is merely inserted in the *enRoute* magazine. People may also think that employees will make a bigger effort with regard to official languages if they also have to put the cards back in the pockets when they're no longer there. If they're in the magazine, they don't need to do that.

**The Chair:** I have a list of speakers, and it's 11 o'clock. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to stick to my list. It shows Mr. Chong, Ms. Boucher, Ms. Glover—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I pass.

**The Chair:** That's fine.

We'll move on to Mr. Chong or Ms. Glover? I'm going to listen to the parliamentary secretary, then we'll see whether it's necessary to extend the discussion.

Ms. Glover, please go ahead.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I'm going to use my Canadian right to speak English, just to make sure we have a bilingual aspect, as Mr. Gaudet wants.

I am pleased to see your motion, Monsieur Godin. It's an important issue that we really have to look at, and I appreciate the history. When you explained the history of it to us new people, it really made a lot of sense. So I thank you for that and encourage you to continue to share the history of some of the decisions that have been made, because I find it very useful.

I am hesitant about a couple of the words in the motion. I'm a believer in getting the information first and making conclusions later, and most people seemed to be in agreement when we had other motions as well. So my recommendation is that we amend the motion to replace the words

[*Translation*]

“its opposition” in the first line, which reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages express its opposition [...]

I suggest that we replace the words “its opposition” with “its concern” so that the motion is less negative.

The sentence continues as follows:

[...] to the decision of removing the form to comment on services offered in both official languages from airplane seat pockets, and ask Air Canada to provide in writing the reasons for its decision and to reverse this decision immediately.

I suggest that we delete the words “and to reverse this decision immediately”. However, before removing those words, I would like to give Air Canada the opportunity to explain to us why it has done this. Then we can say what we think.

**The Chair:** Would you replace the words “and to reverse this decision immediately” with something else?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** We delete those words.

**The Chair:** All right. Your amendment proposes that the motion end as follows: “to provide in writing the reasons for its decision”.

I'll go to the mover. There is Mrs. Zarac. Then, if necessary, we can adjourn and come back to adopt the motion.

Mr. Godin.

• (1100)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I know Air Canada. I've sat on this committee since 1998, and I know the background to this issue. Air Canada completely lacks respect for official languages. It does not comply with the act. I would be prepared to accept that amendment, provided we set a time limit for Air Canada's response. It cannot respond in six months. We want an answer before the start of the next session.

Air Canada representatives are already interested because they heard me talk about this subject last week. They have already telephoned me to determine my concerns. And they're listening to us right now.

**The Chair:** Do we want a deadline of 60 days, 30 days, two weeks, one week?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The letter can be written very quickly and sent to Air Canada. A week would be enough time.

**The Chair:** If the committee members are in agreement, we can vote on the amended motion, which states a one-week time period, that is until the next meeting.

(The motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Do you want me to submit the draft of the letter to you? All right, you trust us.

That's the shortest time the Official Languages Committee has ever taken to agree to a motion. It's unheard of.

The meeting is adjourned.

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