



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Official Languages

LANG • NUMBER 011 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, March 26, 2009

—
Chair

Mr. Steven Blaney

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

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

Standing Committee on Official Languages

Thursday, March 26, 2009

•(0905)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP)): Order, please. We are going to start the meeting. First, I would like to welcome our witnesses.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are conducting a study on the federal government's support for postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada.

Today we have Mr. André Dulude, Vice-President for National Affairs, from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, and Mr. Luc Rainville, Coordinator of the Office of the President and Senior Advisor, Francophonie Affairs at that same association. Then we will hear from Ms. Marielle Poirier, member of the board of directors of the Fédération des cégeps.

We give you about 10 minutes to present your proposals. Then there will be a period of questions and answers concerning this study.

Mr. Dulude.

Mr. André Dulude (Vice-President, National Affairs, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada): Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for inviting the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) to speak to the Committee as it examines the federal government's support for postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada.

My name is André Dulude. I am Vice-President, National Affairs of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. I am accompanied by my colleague Luc Rainville, Executive Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor, Francophonie Affairs.

[English]

AUCC was created in 1911 and incorporated by an act of Parliament in 1965. For nearly 100 years it has served and promoted the interests of its member institutions in the official language of their choice. AUCC represents 94 public and private not-for-profit universities and degree-level colleges across Canada. Some of our members teach primarily in English and some primarily in French, and some are completely or partially bilingual.

An important role of Canadian universities is to ensure that the new generation it is educating is aware of and can respond to not only the realities of Canadian society but, increasingly, international realities as well. In the Canadian context, AUCC's position is that relations and improved communication between our official

language communities are important aspects of the Canadian identity, which universities and AUCC should help foster.

[Translation]

AUCC believes that:

- bilingual competence is most effectively developed at the elementary and secondary levels and that universities should encourage prospective students to have acquired a working knowledge of their other official language;

- universities have an important role to play in promoting and further developing bilingual competence in Canadian society;

- universities should work toward improving bilingualism in Canada by providing opportunities within their own institutions for the development of bilingual competence;

- universities should encourage students to become competent in their other official language;

- universities should develop their ability to foster bilingualism;

- universities should encourage bilingualism by providing opportunities for student and faculty exchanges with universities operating in the other official language;

- universities should promote among students, faculty and the communities in which they are located, knowledge of and interest in the cultural heritage of Canada's two official language groups; and

- governments should provide to Canadian universities sufficient financial resources to facilitate the promotion of bilingualism as outlined above.

For these reasons, the President of AUCC gladly accepted the invitation of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, to join him in a study of second language learning opportunities in Canadian universities.

Members of this Committee may remember that Mr. Fraser announced the study when he appeared before you in November 2007.

• (0910)

[English]

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is now at the point of concluding the study that began in early 2008. The advisory committee overseeing it will hold its final meeting in April. The study's findings, including the suggestions and recommendations made, will be reviewed and will form the basis of proposals and plans for the future. We are as eager as you are to know what the findings of the study will be.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, we thank you and the committee for your time, and we would welcome any questions committee members may have. *Merci.*

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin): Now we'll go to Ms. Marielle Poirier.

Ms. Marielle Poirier (Member of the Board of Directors, Director General, Cégep de l'Outaouais, Fédération des cégeps): Mr. Chairman, committee members, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for inviting the Fédération des cégeps, whom I am representing this morning. I am Marielle Poirier, Director General of the Cégep de l'Outaouais and member of the board of directors of the Fédération des cégeps.

Despite the short period of time allotted to us to prepare these remarks, it is my pleasure to provide you with some essential information on the second language issue and, more particularly, on instruction and support for the English language minority at Quebec's colleges.

I'll begin with a brief introduction on Quebec's special circumstances. I'll be telling you nothing new by stating at the outset the Quebec government's position that it wants to ensure the preponderance of French in a North American context with a very strong anglophone majority, in particular the obligation for allophones to enrol in francophone institutions for the entire duration of their education at the primary and secondary levels. However, our government acknowledges the strong anglophone community within its borders whose development it wishes to support.

To better understand the Quebec government's policy choices respecting postsecondary education, particularly at the college level, I must inform you of certain special characteristics of the CEGEPs, a unique educational model in the world. First, their twofold mission is to prepare students for a university education through a two-year training program, which they are required to take before enrolling in a bachelor's degree program, and to prepare students for the labour market, a three-year program.

The CEGEPs are institutions that report to the Government of Quebec. Their programs are determined by the government and diplomas are awarded by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sport. Some 85% of CEGEP funding is provided out of public funds. Free tuition is another of our special characteristics and applies to all students enrolled in regular programs on a full-time basis and to most adults enrolled in full-time programs.

The actions of the colleges must be viewed in this broader context: they have less independence from the department than Quebec

universities and less independence than the colleges in the other Canadian provinces. The operations of the colleges are conducted in accordance with their constituent legislation and the College Education Regulations, which does not alter the fact that considerable effort is made on an institutionalized basis and in accordance with the national approach. I'll return to that point in a few moments.

This special Quebec context also derives from our vision for the mission of a CEGEP, for what it is, the reason why it was conceived: an institution that prepares students to pursue a university education or to enter the labour market, but that also promotes students' social and cultural development in as broad a manner as possible and encourages openness to the world. Hence the importance attached not only to proficiency in the language of instruction, but also to proficiency in the second language and even a third language, for the purpose of student mobility and for students' future as workers across Canada, North America and the world.

What do Quebec's colleges do to promote second-language learning? My answer is that they do a great deal and more than elsewhere in Canada. A great deal, through all the programs offered in the regular teaching stream, a number of programs offered to adults and through the wealth and variety of learning activities: courses, international practicums, exchanges between anglophone and francophone colleges, and extra-curricular activities, in both the socio-cultural and athletic fields.

Now let's talk about general training study programs.

All the study programs offered at pre-university and technical anglophone and francophone institutions have a general training component, a core curriculum equivalent to a full year of training which, in addition to philosophy, physical health and two additional courses selected by students in disciplines other than that of their field of study, provides for students to learn the language of instruction and its literature and the second language to a high degree of proficiency based on knowledge acquired at the primary and secondary levels. The objective is to reinforce second-language proficiency in all college diploma holders.

The study programs themselves, because they address labour market requirements, provide second-language courses and practicums, as are found, for example, in the multimedia, administrative technologies and tourism programs, to name only a few.

• (0915)

There are also double DEC's, which emphasize second-language and even third-language proficiency. I'm thinking of the Human Sciences and Languages program and the Science and Languages program at the Cégep de Lévis-Lauzon, and of the language profile in the Arts and Letters program and in the History and Civilization program.

We also have help centres and other support measures to consolidate students' second-language learning.

Program summary tests are another feature unique to Quebec. To earn a college diploma, students must, in addition to all program courses, take a comprehensive examination that attests to their acquisition of all program competencies, including second-language proficiency.

The same is true of continuing education programs. We offer a lot of training at the request of businesses that may demand second-language proficiency as a diploma requirement.

Second, what do Quebec's colleges do to support anglophone minority development? The five anglophone colleges offer the anglophone community exactly the same college services, in their language, as are offered to francophones. Anglophones are subject to the same obligation respecting the general training program and second-language learning. They are offered a broad range of programs, in a rich living environment, and socio-cultural, athletic and other activities. In the regular education program, 24,000 students attend these institutions, including nearly 5,000 francophones, depending on the year, which represents more than 15% of the total college student population. In other words, the 24,000 anglophone students at the anglophone colleges represent 15% of the total clientele of Quebec's colleges. Quebec's largest public college, Dawson College, is an anglophone institution. In addition, approximately 800 anglophones, their numbers varying from year to year, choose to study at a francophone CEGEP.

We also have bilingual colleges; there are two in Quebec, the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles and the Cégep de Sept-Îles, which offer a number of programs in English to the anglophone minorities in their region.

Lastly, the various service organizations in the college system, which mainly support the work of the colleges' teachers and professors are increasingly developing services in English as well, through budgets under the Canada-Quebec Accord. In particular, these include the Performa program, a new teacher integration program offered in English and in French, Cégep@distance, which prepares courses and material in English, and the Centre collégial de développement de matériel didactique, which develops teaching material in English and in French.

In conclusion, I will say that the anglophone minority is well served, institutionally and nationally, and that we offer the francophone population extensive resources for achieving proficiency in English as a second language. New measures are on the horizon. The department is currently working with the colleges to record college-level second-language proficiency levels on college report cards. We are developing a sixth additional general training field that could be used to afford students who already have good language levels but wish to go further the opportunity to further develop their language proficiency.

I will close by citing the example of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, which manages a permanent commission on issues and concerns related to English-language instruction in Quebec.

Thank you.

• (0920)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you for your presentation.

We now come to the part where members ask questions. We'll begin with a member of the official opposition.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez, go ahead please.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for being here today.

I'm a bit curious. Ms. Poirier, you said there were bilingual CEGEPs in Quebec. Is that correct? I didn't know. Are there a number of students taking English courses in Gaspé?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: As I was director of studies at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles, I can tell you a lot about that. While the Cégep de Sept-Îles only offers one program in the second language, the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles offers the following programs: Natural Sciences, Social Science, Forestry Technology, Industrial Maintenance Technology, Office Systems Technology and Adventure Tourism. The CEGEP even has agreements with New Brunswick, which I developed when I was director of studies. The population of Campbellton, in particular, comes to study at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles in programs in English that are not offered in English in the Campbellton region. That's the case in particular of—

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: That's interesting for Jean-Claude D'Amours, who is the member for that region.

How many students are studying in English?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: I can't give you the exact number, but they should represent approximately 25% of the total student body at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: How big is that student body?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: At the time, it was about 1,800 students. As the regions are emptying, there are fewer and fewer of them. However, the anglophones are staying, as a result of which the percentage has tended to increase rather than decrease.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Does the mix of French and English programs work well?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: It works very well. As director of studies, I was responsible for all programs in English and French, and the English-language programs had their own supervisory infrastructure.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Are there any second-language instruction programs?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: The requirements in Quebec's CEGEPs are all the same, whether you're at an anglophone, francophone or bilingual college. It's the language of instruction that takes precedence. So if you're taking a program in French, you have to take the English-second-language training program to meet the requirements. If you're studying in English, you have to take the French-second-language general training program.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Do you have any relationship with the federal government or is it really the Government of Quebec?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: It's really the Government of Quebec.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: There aren't even any special programs. All right.

I'm going to turn to you, gentlemen. Are there any university programs that require functional knowledge of both languages in order to be admitted to them?

Mr. André Dulude: At the universities, there is no requirement for admission or graduation.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: No program requires that a student know the other language for certain reasons.

Mr. André Dulude: One may assume, however, that there are requirements for French literature programs. At Queen's University, certain specific programs require knowledge of French, but that's not general.

Luc, do you want to add something?

Mr. Luc Rainville (Coordinator, Office of the President and Senior Advisor, Francophonie Affairs, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada): Every university is responsible for establishing its admission and graduation criteria. It's a matter of academic freedom, which is a recognized principle across Canada and around the world. Currently, no university requires that a student know the second official language upon entry or at graduation. In a number of programs—André mentioned French literature—whether it be business administration, international administration or international trade, the universities will very often require a student to know the other language, English or French, or even a third or fourth language.

At HEC, most students are required to have functional proficiency for the international aspect of administration. They are obviously asked to have very good knowledge of English. The same is true at Ottawa and other universities.

• (0925)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Do you receive funding directly from the federal government as part of a program?

Mr. André Dulude: The association does not receive any funding, but funding is allocated to official languages. In 2006-2007, it was quite small: a total of \$150 million was allocated to a number of programs, but not all were official language programs.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Nadeau, of the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Ms. Poirier, Mr. Dulude and Mr. Rainville.

We are studying the fact that the federal public service has a duty to ensure that government employees are bilingual. We thought of universities as the place where you have to go to earn a degree, to be able to apply for a federal government position and eventually to get a position.

My question comes in the wake of some thoughts shared with some of your colleagues. I would like to know what you think about the idea of inviting people whose first language is English to study in a university environment where the first language is French—in Quebec, for example, in a francophone environment—so that those people actually become bilingual. That method might perhaps be more effective than federal government grants to universities that take that money—and I understand why—to create programs that are too often worthless. We saw an example of that in certain universities in British Columbia, where the quality of French is very poor. People who took those courses, and whose first language was French, were extremely disappointed.

My question is for all the witnesses.

Mr. Luc Rainville: The entire issue of renewal of the Canadian public service is a considerable concern for current senior officials. The Association of Universities, which represents all Canadian universities, has met with the clerk of the Privy Council on a number of occasions, at the clerk's request. He gave us the same message as you, Mr. Nadeau: that the public service must be renewed and in such a way that it is functional in both languages. He asked us whether we could contribute to that effort. The presidents responded to Mr. Lynch saying that they were more than ready to help him meet the challenge of public service renewal. They told him that one of the ways of doing so was to urge students to learn the other official language. That can be done in many ways.

To go back to your example, I think that establishing interprovincial mobility programs enabling students from Brandon, Manitoba, to go and take courses in Trois-Rivières for a semester or a full year as part of a program comparable or similar to their own and then recognizing those studies would be a major event in the history of university education in Canada. That would be magnificent. That already happens internationally. For example, a student from McGill can go and spend a year at the Université de Bordeaux in France. However, if that exchange is possible between McGill and Bordeaux, why wouldn't it be between Brandon and Trois-Rivières, between the Université Laval and UBC or between Simon Fraser University and the Université de Moncton? Everything is possible. I think that's a very good way to operate. However, as we were saying, universities do not receive funding for these mobility programs. When a young student leaves for three months or a year, that represents costs. There are also costs to administer the program. It's all well and good to say that we have an agreement with a given university, but you still have to manage the mobility program.

All that's possible. That would definitely help students acquire knowledge of the language, but knowing the language isn't enough. You also have to immerse yourself in a reality. That would be the case, for example, of a student who left Brandon to go to Trois-Rivières. That would be a completely different experience from the experience of taking French courses or courses in French in Brandon, Winnipeg or elsewhere.

• (0930)

Mr. André Dulude: I'm going to add something to Luc's remarks.

There's currently a mobility program between Simon Fraser University and the Université Laval at the third year level. It's a great, unique model that works well, and it could be applied elsewhere.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: The program depends on the choices of the government in power. Currently, as a francophone CEGEP, I don't have access to that funding to send my students outside the country, to another francophone country. You have to understand that anywhere beyond Quebec's borders is considered foreign as regards eligibility for mobility programs. You absolutely have to send them to study in a country where the majority language is other than French. There are nevertheless certain measures that promote bilingualism.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I normally sit over there, not here. Since it's my turn, I'm going to speak right now. I'm going to leave the chair and sit over there.

I want to tell you that Shippagan is not on foreign soil. We're next door to Gaspé; you need only cross the river.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: It's a very beautiful region. I lived in eastern New Brunswick for five years.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Are the institutions comfortable with having two groups? I spoke with a group of students from the CASA and the University of New Brunswick at St. John. They told me that the second language isn't even promoted and that no one at the university tells them how important it is. Is there a deficiency in that regard?

Last week, the committee was wondering whether the government would go to the universities and tell them that the people it hires need to speak both languages. Yesterday, those students said that they would like to learn the other language, but that there weren't any programs for it, that they weren't urged to learn it. I'd like to hear what you have to say on that subject.

Mr. André Dulude: The public service has a deputy minister university champion program. A deputy minister is assigned to a university and is responsible for promoting bilingualism on the campus, in the public service and in Canada. That program was established by the Clerk of the Privy Council, Mr. Kevin Lynch.

I went through that program, and it works very well. The message has been sent to York University, Glendon College and Ryerson University. It is up to every deputy minister responsible for a university to promote bilingualism.

Mr. Yvon Godin: But are they doing it?

Mr. André Dulude: Are you asking me whether the deputy ministers are doing it?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes.

Mr. André Dulude: Of course, the deputy ministers leave Ottawa and go and preach bilingualism on the campuses.

Mr. Yvon Godin: They don't seem to be preaching a lot; people say they don't hear them.

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): I don't think it's practical for the Chair to ask those kinds of questions when he is seated there. I would be more comfortable if he were there in order to respect the balance.

• (0935)

Mr. Yvon Godin: We won't waste any time discussing that. I know that bothers the Conservatives a little.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: No, but Ms. Zarac is here and she—

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'm going to ask the Vice-Chair to take my place, please.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you.

Mr. Yvon Godin: If the chair makes a difference, it doesn't trouble me to change places.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: That's fine. Thank you, Ms. Zarac.

She can chair what's left of the meeting.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.)): Mr. Godin, go ahead please.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Good morning once again. I'll introduce myself. I am Yvon Godin, member for the NDP. I am currently a member of the committee, not its vice-chair.

I'd like to continue what I was saying. Yesterday evening, the students said they hadn't heard about the promotion of bilingualism. It's as though it wasn't a need. Students from Nova Scotia, Fredericton and St. John said the same thing.

You who represent the universities and colleges, what do you intend to say about that?

Mr. Luc Rainville: It's possible that people don't hear about the objective of promoting bilingualism everywhere, on all floors, between all the walls of the university. However, some people are more sensitive to the issue than others. You also have to make students and professors responsible for promoting bilingualism. Simply, in most of our universities, professors are bilingual, francophile or anglophile. In some programs, it's much more important than in others. It's also up to students to say that they are making a personal commitment to become bilingual. To do that, by being at a university, let's say in St. John, New Brunswick—I'm using the Brandon expression—it's important for every individual, student or professor to take responsibility for making promotional efforts.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I don't agree, Mr. Rainville, because the institutions are there to provide education and leadership. It's not the responsibility of individuals who don't know what's waiting for them in life. We need education in life. It's up to the institutions to provide it. I am forced to disagree with you. What is the university or college doing about the poor students who arrive at the university and don't know what's waiting for them? It's up to you to do that promotion, to show them how important the issue is?

Mr. André Dulude: Where we can play a role, Mr. Godin, is really by encouraging presidents to promote this message. I believe that Allan Rock is doing that very well at the University of Ottawa. I think it's being done very well at UBC, with Stephen Toope, who is perfectly bilingual. It's being done at a number of universities. I entirely agree with you that more must be done and that it must start at the top. It starts with leadership and moves downward. Mr. Rainville said that, as regards the students, it had to come from below. I'm also telling you that it has to move downward, that it must come from the top. It's a matter of leadership. We at the AUCC don't have any resources. We rely on our members' dues. We can nevertheless speak out and encourage our 94 presidents to get out and talk to their communities, student communities first, and to promote this great message which is the message of bilingualism in Canada.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

We're playing musical chairs. We'll do it again on the next round.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Lise Zarac): Ms. Glover, go ahead please. [English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you very much for coming today. I'm going to speak English, although I speak French, as you well know.

I believe in rules and regulations. I believe it is much more practical to serve this committee by following the rules and regulations, so I apologize for the outburst by my colleague. Nevertheless, we're going to continue.

I really appreciate that you're here today. I grew up taking French immersion, and I was in a school where

[*Translation*]

there were francophones with anglophones. So *voilà*, I can speak English and French. That's really thanks to the francophones and anglophones who promoted our program.

[*English*]

I'm very pleased that we have Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface in my community. We see a lot of promotion for our minority community and our anglophones to attend Collège universitaire. If Brandon students ever want to come, Collège universitaire is much closer, and I would encourage them to do so. It's a fantastic program. I myself went to Collège secondaire de Saint-Boniface, which was in the same school.

I understand how it's working in Saint Boniface. I know there's promotion there. But I see kids, as you said Monsieur Rainville, who are not taking the initiative themselves. There is an individual responsibility—I agree with you entirely—and choice to practise their French, but I think it's two-sided.

I think you're both right when you say it's two-sided. We need promotion by the university; we need leadership, but we also need the youths to take advantage of what is being promoted and to really insert themselves into the situation. I hate to say this, but unfortunately I see a lot of francophones speaking English in the hallways of their French schools, just as I see anglophones taking immersion who are still speaking English in the hallways.

So again, individuals have to make a choice. They have to do what they need to do to improve their French.

● (0940)

[*Translation*]

Would you say that, in general, because I don't really understand the situation in Quebec, anglophones are well served in Quebec? Can more be done for anglophones in Quebec?

[*English*]

Ms. Marielle Poirier: I would say they are very well served. As you know, we have three universities where the main language is English. Actually, I would say one of the universities in Quebec is among the most sought after by the anglophone population in Canada. In our colleges, we have 8% of the Quebec population whose first language is English. We have 15% of the total college population within our anglophone colleges. So I would say they're very well served.

As of now, there is absolutely no pressure and no demand to add other colleges. Actually, what they would like—and we have the same request from our government—is maybe more choice in terms of the programs that are offered. But I would say that it's not really an issue in Quebec.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: What role would you say an anglophone university outside of Quebec would play in the development of a francophone minority community in its regions or provinces? I would ask that to....

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Rainville: What would an English-language university do in an anglophone environment to promote bilingualism and serve its students? In general, the universities exist to provide education and to certify studies by awarding degrees. The universities are also important players in the community and socio-cultural lives of their regions. In general, they will serve the needs of those communities by seeing what goes on around them. In certain—

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Pardon me for interrupting you. We don't have a lot of time. I was wondering what anglophones are doing for francophones?

Mr. Yvon Godin: The five minutes are up. It's now Ms. Zarac's turn.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: My first question is for Ms. Poirier. Your federation represents more than 48 public colleges in Quebec and has more than 30 years' experience. Earlier, during our discussion, I noticed that you personally have a lot of experience. One of the committee's objectives is to ensure fairness in minority situations.

Do you believe that all the colleges have all the necessary tools? Is there fairness among the colleges?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: In fact, the colleges are 40 years old. I proudly wear the pin of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Cégep de l'Outaouais. It was one of the system's first 12 founding colleges. I believe there is total fairness among the colleges. The resources allocated to the anglophone community are of the same quality as those allocated to the French-language CEGEPs. The best way to answer that question is to emphasize that the principle of fairness is applied. All Quebec students must be equally served in the colleges. The Quebec-Canada Accord, among other things, probably makes it possible to achieve that. That's not an issue.

● (0945)

Mrs. Lise Zarac: And you have all the necessary tools for that learning process.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: For example, the department of second languages at the Cégep de l'Outaouais has 28 teachers. So it's a very big department. We of course have an obligation to teach the second language, but we offer much more. I'm going to change topics and go back to the question that Mr. Gaudet asked earlier. Students are seeking proficiency in the second official language and even a third language. The most taught languages are currently English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Mandarin and Portuguese. All those languages can be taught at our CEGEP.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Do you think we should give English and French special status relative to a third language, since you mention that a number of languages are taught?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: That's already the case.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Perfect, thank you.

My second question is for Mr. Dulude. You have more than 40 years' experience in managing scholarship programs and you supervise more than 2,000 projects on all continents. Ms. Glover mentioned earlier that students were responsible for their learning, but that they had to be given the necessary tools.

What is your assessment of the scholarship and research programs that we currently have?

Mr. André Dulude: A significant amount is spent on research. Let's recall that research is obviously a federal jurisdiction, whereas education is a provincial jurisdiction.

In research, according to the data from 2006-2007, \$2.7 billion out of a total of \$2.9 billion is allocated to the universities. Most of the funding is thus allocated to research. That includes research fellowships in all disciplines and also infrastructure.

Under the 2009 budget, the association was very pleased to receive an additional amount for infrastructure. The 2009 budget allocated \$2 billion to the universities and colleges. That \$2 billion is in addition to the \$2.9 billion allocated in 2006-2007. The amounts are considerable.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: What do you think about the 2009 scholarships for business studies?

Mr. André Dulude: When we spoke to the person responsible for scholarships at Social Sciences and Humanities, the granting council, he said the definition was very broad, that it could include business, but also history, if, for example, someone was concentrating on the history of recessions. That fell within the definition of the word "business". It's a very broad definition.

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

Mr. Nadeau.

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

Still within the context of our exercise related to the training of individuals so that they can speak the second official language in this country as well as their first language, I would like to know your opinion on the following question. In the study we are conducting, we're asking universities to provide leadership in promoting second-language learning. Don't you believe that we're starting backwards? I know I'm going into jurisdictions that don't necessarily affect your institutions, but shouldn't we start teaching the second language adequately at the primary and secondary levels? As a result, students entering university would be able to feel comfortable studying subjects at a higher level in their second language.

● (0950)

Mr. André Dulude: That was the first point in my statement. I entirely agree with you. The approach should start with the primary and secondary levels. There's no doubt about that. At university, it's not too late, but it's already late. We should devote more resources and effort to the primary and secondary levels.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: I entirely agree as well. We know that second-language learning in Quebec now starts in grade 1 at the primary level. I must say that we, the colleges, are working and focusing a great deal on the issue. We administer a national exam to determine students' second-language proficiency levels on leaving secondary school, but we would like to take the matter further. We're

seeking second-language proficiency standards or levels that students must meet at the end of their primary and secondary education.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you.

In another line of thinking, we all know that the fiscal imbalance issue is not resolved and that \$3.5 billion remains to be transferred to the universities for postsecondary education for Canada as a whole. In Quebec, that represents approximately \$830 million. For the UQO, which is located in Gatineau, in my region, that's \$16 million that isn't going into its coffers. That's quite a significant sum.

What is the status of your efforts to have the federal government transfer that money to assist Canadian and Quebec postsecondary institutions in getting more up to standard?

Mr. André Dulude: An increase in the postsecondary education transfer was not one of our demands for the 2009 budget. I already said that we had obtained the \$2 billion we requested for infrastructure. We didn't want to be too greedy. We limited ourselves to one priority and we got it.

Mr. Nadeau, that could be part of our platform of submissions for the 2010 budget. We haven't yet consulted our presidents on priorities. In 2008-2009, it must be admitted that the \$3.2 billion cash transfer for postsecondary education is already a considerable amount. However, I can't tell you what our demands will be for the 2010 budget.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: What is the situation with regard to the CEGEPs?

Ms. Marielle Poirier: Our federation makes submissions to the Government of Quebec. For the moment, we're very pleased that the government is allocating the CEGEPs their share of the total budget allocated for postsecondary education. We've also obtained a 40-60 share—40 being the CEGEP share—which exactly corresponds to the percentage of funding allocated to our two systems by the Government of Quebec.

The federation makes submissions to the Government of Quebec, but none to the federal government. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges handles that for us.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Petit.

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Good morning, Mr. Dulude, Mr. Rainville and Ms. Poirier.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Dulude say that Mr. Fraser was currently conducting a study. It comes at the right time because that is precisely what we're trying to get with you. I understand that time is very limited.

Mr. Dulude, you represent all Canadian universities. I come from Quebec City, and Université Laval is part of your group. I'm in both systems, the old and the new. We used to enter university after completing a classical education. Now you go through a CEGEP before going to university.

Correct me if I'm wrong. On the anglophone side, you have to do four years of university. You do part of the Quebec CEGEP program, then you enter the university program. In fact, when you speak on behalf of Canadian universities, it's as though you were talking about one year of CEGEP within your group.

• (0955)

Mr. André Dulude: We also speak on behalf of Quebec universities.

Mr. Daniel Petit: I understand. Ms. Poirier rightly says that she has to negotiate for the money for her students to come from a single source, the Quebec government. Her hands are somewhat more tied than yours in certain respects. You have one year in which you can negotiate with the Government of Canada, which she can't do. For two years, she can only turn to the Government of Quebec. In the anglophone universities, where the education is a bit different from ours, it's one year.

As regards the public service, you were asked earlier whether it was possible for students leaving university or college to be bilingual in order to work in Ottawa, for example. In that way, the federal government would not have to act as a second-language instruction institution. We're trying to determine what the possible options are in this direction.

Mr. André Dulude: I've just left the public service after 35 years of service. So I've seen bilingualism evolve in that environment. In the past 10 years, I've seen perfectly bilingual anglophones, like your colleague Ms. Glover, emerge from immersion programs. They hadn't necessarily studied at francophone or bilingual universities, but their French was more than acceptable, nearly perfect, as a result of those immersion programs. So there have been significant and positive developments in the federal public service. There's no doubt on that subject.

Mr. Daniel Petit: In the public service, certain high level positions such as deputy minister positions, for example, require highly developed skills. We're not just talking about legal or medical training, but also scientific training, in certain cases. From what we've been told, many deputy ministers do not know the second language. They have come out of university, have extraordinary skills, but are incapable of expressing what they want or understanding what is going on in the other language. Is the federal government required to teach these people the basics of their second language, whatever it may be? Is that our role or yours?

Mr. André Dulude: I must correct you. I worked for Mr. Chong at the Privy Council. I spent 12 years at the Privy Council as a public servant, not in politics. As part of those duties, you only deal with the 49 deputy ministers. When I was told, and I'm a francophone, that I couldn't address the 49 deputy ministers in French, I couldn't agree. They're bilingual.

• (1000)

Mr. Daniel Petit: You should tell them that, not me.

Mr. André Dulude: I'm telling you: I spent 12 years at the Privy Council. My minister can confirm that for you. We spoke in French with the deputy ministers.

Mr. Daniel Petit: Are you sure of that?

Mr. André Dulude: On a daily basis. I didn't speak English or Spanish to those deputy ministers, I spoke to them in French. I'm not

talking about the assistant deputy ministers, the directors general or all public servants, but about a group of 49 deputy ministers. They aren't stupid; they spend time learning French.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Lise Zarak): They're bilingual, but is bilingualism one of the criteria in their case?

Mr. André Dulude: They aren't required to be bilingual, but they have enough common sense to become it.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Lise Zarak): Thank you.

It's Mr. Godin's turn.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I wouldn't want to move from the post-secondary field to the situation of deputy ministers, but the fact remains that I don't agree with you. When they are appointed, some deputy ministers don't speak French and are required to learn it in Ottawa.

Do you agree with me?

Mr. André Dulude: They learn it.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's it. Now we're hearing another story.

Mr. Dulude, if they learn it, that's because people are forced to speak English to them for a period of time.

Mr. André Dulude: There is a learning period for some.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Ah, there's a learning period for some. Thank you for clarifying that.

Mr. André Dulude: I never said they were bilingual on arrival. I said they were bilingual after a period of time.

Mr. Yvon Godin: They are after a certain period of time, but they aren't for a while.

Mr. André Dulude: They aren't always bilingual when they arrive, but that's a minority.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Can you tell the government that, please? It seems they understood something else.

Mr. André Dulude: I think they heard me.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think they heard you, yes. We're going to set that aside.

Earlier we were talking about the promotion done by deputy ministers in the universities. That's a program.

Mr. André Dulude: Of the School of Public Service.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You also mentioned a lack of money, I believe. Can you tell us more about that? You seem to be someone who is very well informed. You just told us what happened in the past. Tell us about the lack of money.

Mr. André Dulude: I told you that we had \$150 million that was not research funding. Of that \$150 million, there is funding for the universities, but intended for official languages. It's a very small amount, I agree with you. More money is needed, but there are economic circumstances that I accept as a citizen and that I accept as Vice-President of the Association of Universities and Colleges. I talked about priorities. Priorities have to be set. You can't appear before the government with a shopping list, Mr. Godin. You can't do that. That doesn't work. There's no money. We know there is no money.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You mean there's no money for official languages, the two official languages—

Mr. André Dulude: In the \$150 million budget.

Mr. Yvon Godin: —recognized in the act. It's been around for 40 years and we still have a problem: there isn't any money or there isn't any will.

Mr. André Dulude: No, I didn't say there wasn't any money. Mr. Rainville is taking out his list of all the programs. There are programs, federal programs. There is money, but I'm telling you there definitely isn't enough. However, as an association, we establish a strategy, we prepare a list of priorities and we try not to show up with 29 priorities.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You establish your priorities based on the money you have. I can understand that.

Mr. André Dulude: No, it's based on what our presidents want. We have 94 presidents. We sit down with the presidents, we say to ourselves that the budget cycle is starting and we set our priorities.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Rainville.

Mr. Luc Rainville: I was simply going to say that we could tell each other some long stories, but you only have five minutes.

Minister Moore was talking about his Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality before this committee two days ago. He said that the Roadmap was essentially the renewal of what was called the Dion Plan in our jargon. Under the first plan, MOUs were signed between the federal government and each of the provinces. Those MOUs concerned minority language education and second-language instruction. They covered the period from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009. So the MOUs have expired.

Mr. Moore told you that the MOU between Ottawa and Victoria, the British Columbia MOU, had been extended by a year. Under those MOUs, the extension granted to British Columbia leads me to say that people are going to want to negotiate extensions for every one of those MOUs to enable the parties to negotiate the second component of the agreements.

Under those MOUs as a whole, \$656 million was paid to the provinces to provide assistance for official language minority education and second-language instruction.

How is that money being spent in each of the provinces? The MOU binding Ottawa to each of the provinces will determine that because ultimately, the projects and what they want to do with that money are determined by each of the provinces, education being a provincial jurisdiction. There's no money for that in particular.

As regards the universities, which may come under those MOUs and receive funding based on that, it's different. When we talked about a shortage of money earlier, for example, that would be to enable us to create and ensure the proper operation of exchange programs that would enable young Albertans to go and study in Acadia or Mauricie or students from Mauricie to go and study in St. John, New Brunswick, that kind of thing.

• (1005)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Lise Zarac): Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours, please go ahead.

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

First of all, Mr. Dulude, thank you for informing us about your past employer. I am convinced that everyone was surprised, even on the other side of the table.

You say there is no more money as a result of economic circumstances. If I correctly understood your logic, you understand that, so you don't ask for any. However, the economic situation was different in 2006, 2007 and September or December 2008. I wonder at what point the current situation really began and people realized we were in a crisis. In all that time, no one said we were in a recession.

Your remarks earlier surprised me somewhat. I couldn't repeat them word for word, but you said there was no more money as a result of the economic situation and that you understood that. That made me wonder whether the universities and colleges of Canada that your association represents are really pleased to hear that today. They send representatives to testify before the Standing Committee on Official Languages possibly to request additional funding for colleges and universities, but they won't ask for any because we're in a recession. That surprises me enormously.

There are one university campus and two community colleges in my riding. We should check the relationship between you and those institutions, but it would be an enormous surprise to me if they thought as you do. What did we do all those years? Suddenly, a few months ago, someone woke up and understood that we were now in a crisis and a depression. Before that, however, and I'm not talking about some distant past, there wasn't any crisis or depression.

What is your position? What is your action plan in order to try and get additional funding so that you can help your association and the universities and colleges of Canada that you represent?

Mr. André Dulude: The association's primary mission is to seek funding for the universities. As you'll understand, I'm going to continue to knock on the government's door for additional funding, regardless of the economic situation.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Pardon me, but you said earlier that there was no more money.

Mr. André Dulude: No, I said that we were in a recession, that there was less money and that priority had to be given to some of our demands. I said that, this year, our main demand was for infrastructure funding, which we got. Next year, we'll draw up a new list. It won't be long, but it may include infrastructure again, research funding or official languages. That remains to be determined. We won't stop requesting funding for all that.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: I understand, Mr. Dulude.

I'll have the opportunity to reread the exact transcription of what was said. However, as I remember it, you said that there was no more money, that we were in a recession and that you had to wait for money. That disturbs me.

You talked about the infrastructure program. Let's consider the example of the small universities. You must represent them as well.

Mr. André Dulude: We represent all the universities, small, medium and large.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: You know that it is in fact very difficult for the small universities to get a red cent out of the infrastructure program if they don't have a scientific research and development section.

That was your shopping list. I hope there was something else on your list.

The Edmundston campus of the Université de Moncton may have trouble getting a single red cent out of that program. That institution doesn't necessarily need assistance for infrastructure associated with future research, but has other infrastructure needs instead. But that doesn't seem to be covered.

Your comments earlier woke me up. I'm not telling you I was asleep, but I was listening to what was being said and I was trying to make the connection. Suddenly, you woke me up by saying that something isn't working in the system and that you are virtually giving up.

• (1010)

Mr. André Dulude: I'd like to go back to the infrastructure question. The list of projects from each of the universities will be submitted to Industry Canada by March 31 at the latest. We'll see what happens after that date. It will be up to Industry Canada and to the two ministers responsible to decide based on the established criteria. If you consult Industry Canada's website, you'll see that the criteria are quite broad. I have reason to hope that most universities will get funding.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Pardon me, but the small university campuses that don't have a research and development component will have trouble getting any.

I'm referring back to the fact that you seem to be satisfied with the infrastructure program. That was your comment.

Mr. André Dulude: Yes, that's correct. We're very satisfied with it.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: It's as though that was your only demand. Did you request anything else that was necessary to assist the colleges and universities across the country, but that you didn't get?

Mr. André Dulude: We requested funding for indirect research costs. We didn't get it, but we can come back. There will be another budget next year and we'll be able to come back. We got \$2 billion for infrastructure.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: You can probably come back when the economic situation is different.

Mr. André Dulude: No, not necessarily. However, we will take the economic situation into account.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin): Thank you. Mr. Chong, go ahead please.

[English]

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

It's good to see the witnesses here today.

My question is directed to the Universities and Colleges of Canada. It seems to me that admission requirements to Canadian undergraduate programs with respect to French have been relaxed over the last number of years. Is this a correct impression?

Mr. André Dulude: There used to be some admission requirements at the University of Ottawa, for example. They have been relaxed in some institutions where there were admission requirements.

Hon. Michael Chong: At the same time, I have the impression that graduation requirements from arts and science programs with respect to having the second language also have been relaxed in the last number of years. You used to have to have knowledge of a second language to enter a graduate degree program. Is that also a correct impression?

Mr. André Dulude: It varies from one program to another. Maybe "relaxed" is a strong word, but it has decreased.

Hon. Michael Chong: At the same time, Statistics Canada has noted that for that 10-year period from 1996 to 2006 the number of bilingual high school students in this country has declined from about 23% or so to about 22%, so in some respects we were going in the wrong direction over that 10-year period.

We have to think these three things are somehow related: the number of bilingual high school students who are coming out of our country's public schools is declining; the admission requirements with respect to French are being relaxed; and graduation requirements with respect to a second language for entry into graduate programs are being somewhat relaxed. It seems to me that is all part of this same overall trend, which is a de-emphasis of the knowledge of a second language and a de-emphasis of a requirement for French.

Is this of concern to the association, and if it is, what sort of work is being done or what discussions are being had to take a look at this and address this?

Mr. André Dulude: The study by the Commissioner of Official Languages has been mentioned. It could be part of it. The association is working with the commissioner, as you know. We are preparing the advisory board for the study, and we'll see from there, but we certainly hear you.

Again, it is a matter of financial resources. To ask universities to come up with such requirements would mean that some investment would have to be made.

• (1015)

Hon. Michael Chong: Perhaps, Mr. Chair, Ms. Poirier could provide some comments on this as well.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: I'm reacting to my colleague who was saying it's a question of resources. I don't agree. I think it's a question of choice. Are you committed to this? We have a responsibility. I will wear my hat as the CEO of a college, and I think we have a responsibility. We, after all, with our board, decide on what the priorities will be in terms of the use of the funds that are allotted to us. To me, if more people had this commitment to what is a major—my words are not okay, but Canada is a bilingual country. There are two founding languages in Canada, so we should have that obligation if we are heads of teaching institutions. We should feel it is our responsibility to make the appropriate choices.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you.

I'll add a final point, just briefly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chairman, I would like to confirm what Mr. Dulude mentioned, that the public servants at the Privy Council Office use French. In my opinion, when I was at the Privy Council Office, they used French more than English.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin): I don't believe it was that, sir. It was more a question of all the departments. We're not asking questions about your department, and we understand the importance you attach to respect for Canada's two official languages.

Now we'll go to Mr. Nadeau.

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

Mr. Rainville, earlier, when I asked my question about the imbalance, I believe you had something to add.

Mr. Luc Rainville: I simply wanted to say that I wouldn't offer an opinion on the imbalance, but Mr. Dulude mentioned a cash transfer of \$3.235 billion in 2008-2009 for what's called the Canada Social Transfer. Obviously, the Canada Social Transfer goes to assistance for early childhood, postsecondary education and social programs. Those amounts are paid to each of the provinces based on the agreements.

For example, for postsecondary education, the total amount was \$3.2 billion. It must be clearly understood that postsecondary education means the college as well as university levels and that the systems vary somewhat from province to province. For example, earlier we were talking with Mr. Petit about the specific case of Quebec, where postsecondary education represents a whole. In Quebec, since the pre-university level is included in the college level, a portion of the funding or of the larger Canada Social Transfer goes to the CEGEP sector. We're talking about a 60-40 proportion in Quebec, in round figures: 60% to the universities and 40% to the colleges to cover the pre-university portion of pre-university college education.

In the rest of Canada, precisely because the systems are different, we're talking about a 70-30 ratio instead. So we take that into account.

In response to Mr. Petit, we don't consider the pre-university component as part of our association. These are really two different wholes because they are different education systems. In Quebec, they've chosen to establish a somewhat different system from that of Ontario and British Columbia, and so on.

I simply wanted to clarify those ratios in response to your remarks and that of Mr. Petit.

• (1020)

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I'll continue with a question for Mr. Dulude and Mr. Rainville.

What challenges are you facing today? I'm asking you that for the committee's benefit. Are there any specific challenges that we should know about?

Mr. André Dulude: The challenge is really to do more for second-language learning, to do more for the official language minority communities. We are lucky to be on the ground virtually everywhere. Mr. D'Amours talked about Moncton, but we're also in Saint-Boniface and Saint-Jean, Alberta. There are bilingual universities like the University of Ottawa and Laurentian University in Sudbury. However, we can always do better. We'll continue to do more by working with Mr. Fraser, among others, in the coming days and weeks.

Mr. Luc Rainville: That's one of the reasons why the AUCC must do more. The AUCC represents 94 universities and colleges, from the smallest to the largest. Our mandate is essentially to defend their interests, which are much more general than that of strictly learning the second language. We are an area of consensus.

That said, the question is very important for some universities. Most of the time, the official languages question arises for institutions operating in a minority setting. I'm thinking of the Université de Moncton and its two campuses, apart from the Moncton campus, the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface and the Université Sainte-Anne, in Nova Scotia.

Those institutions decided to join forces to create the Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne, the AUFC. At the start of your study, you heard the comments by François Charbonneau. That association's mandate is essentially to see that the interests of its members are protected and that there is a response to the needs of a small group within the universities.

The AUCC is proud to say that it contributed to the founding of that organization. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when those universities wanted to join forces, a subgroup of our association helped them do so. We provided them with start-up financing. It obviously wasn't much, but it enabled them to set up their association and get prepared. The AUFC has been in existence for nearly 25 years and it defends its specific interests quite well.

We must also meet the needs of Toronto, UBC and Moncton in other areas. We really are a forum for consensus. The issue of language learning and protection for Canadian bilingualism is important because we are a good citizen. We try to do this in various ways. Earlier André mentioned Mr. Toope, who is perfectly bilingual, as well as Mr. Rock. There is an increasing number of bilingual presidents, which will have an effect on every campus. And we're counting on that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin): Now we'll start our final round.

Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you. As you said so well, Mr. Rainville, linguistic duality is central to Canada and it is important to preserve it. That is why our government has made a commitment in that regard. Our Roadmap provides for \$240 million more than what was provided under the Dion Plan. That's our commitment to linguistic duality, and we're proud of it. I simply wanted to emphasize that.

Apart from the federal government's measures, I want to know what more we could do. Some students who enter the labour market aren't completely ready. You suggested some initiatives, such as the mobility program. However, we haven't really talked about standards, but other witnesses have.

Could we develop examinations for students to determine their ability to speak and write in French?

•(1025)

Mr. Luc Rainville: All I can tell you on behalf of the members of our association is that every university is responsible for establishing its admission and graduation criteria. It prepares the curriculum necessary for earning a diploma. That's a question that could be put to our presidents, to our senates and our academic councils.

One of the university's fundamental values is precisely university and academic freedom. Even as an association, I couldn't offer a position on that. It's not a bad idea. We'll simply have to examine that question with the academic councils and university senates of those institutions. As André said, the example will start at the top and flow downward; it can also start at the bottom and move up. If pressure is brought to bear on the bottom and that meets a need, people will meet. It's possible to do that. In a number of programs, knowledge of the other official language is necessary. We're talking about programs, not an institution or establishment in general.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Ms. Poirier, I'd like to know what, in your view, would happen if criteria were applied.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: We are demanding that standards be enforced at the end of mandatory study, that is to say at the end of the secondary level. We are now seeking that for the end of college. We may consider that that is partly the case at the secondary level since there is a departmental exam to assess students' language levels at the end of secondary school. Incidentally, a pass mark on that exam is necessary for students to be admitted to college. The problem is with the universities.

As I was saying, when we compare ourselves with the universities, we often lament our colleges' lack of independence. To all intents and purposes, the government can impose what it wants on us, and we have to follow. We are 85% funded out of public money, and, in that respect, we are held to a very strict accountability. The problem remains unchanged for the universities. That brings me back to the answer I gave earlier. We have to convince our institutional heads that this is a sensible choice to make and that it concerns as much the budget as the prioritization of programming and graduation requirements.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you. I encourage you to talk about it more. That may be another initiative. Are there any others? We really want to offer our help. Your ideas are very good. I'm going to ask you—and you have another chance to speak—if you have any other ideas concerning the way we can help students.

Mr. André Dulude: I mentioned the mobility program. You've also discussed that. Other ideas will come out of Mr. Fraser's work in a few weeks. I think we're going to focus on that. I want to briefly go back to standards. There's obviously work to do with the education departments of all the provinces, not simply Quebec's. It should not be forgotten that there is an association of provinces in education. These people have a forum, and that could be a good place to launch this discussion. We have to ensure we are partners with the provinces in the context of that kind of discussion.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: That's good. I encourage you to talk about that.

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

Mr. Nadeau.

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

Ms. Poirier, by way of a conclusion, at least as regards my remarks, I would like to know whether you would like to put us onto any specific challenges, concerning Quebec's CEGEPs, which should be considered in the short or medium term.

Ms. Marielle Poirier: Your question concerns everything relating to official language learning. We're currently concerned with establishing a college-level finishing standard for second-language learning. That will apply to both anglophone colleges, for proficiency in French, and francophone colleges for proficiency in English. I think that's the major issue right now.

I must say that we are a bit overwhelmed. I think we're doing everything that can be done. I am the director general of the Cégep de l'Outaouais. As you'll understand, the second-language proficiency level there is perhaps higher than elsewhere. These students are subject to general training core curriculum requirements that involve a fairly large number of courses given in the second language. We offer these students the opportunity to study English literature, Shakespeare, for example, but they can also choose to learn a third language once they have demonstrated their language proficiency by means of an evaluation. Spanish and German are the languages most taught at my college.

I think we've gone as far as we could. These requirements apply throughout the curriculum. I was even awarded a booby prize by the defenders of the French language. We have an agreement with Heritage College. In administrative technologies, for example, the business law course is given in English at Heritage College for students from the Cégep de l'Outaouais, and in French at the Cégep de l'Outaouais for Heritage College students. There are second-language proficiency requirements for all courses in the program, which is three years long.

•(1030)

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

I'd like to thank our witnesses.

Our study will continue. We don't particularly like the situation, but we must take note of it. I believe we could draft a report expressing the wish that services and bilingualism will be improved in Canada.

Thank you and good day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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

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

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

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

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