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Mr. Steven Blaney

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• (0905)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)): Good morning everyone. There is a freshness in the air, a little hint of spring in the committee this morning.

I would like to call to order this 13th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today we will be talking about post-secondary institutions and their efforts to promote bilingualism in Canada. We have a great panel of witnesses this morning. I am going to begin by introducing you all.

Ms. Johanne Lapointe, from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, is here with Mr. Pierre Chartrand, who is the Vice-President of that organization. Welcome to our committee.

We are also pleased to have with us the President of NSERC, Ms. Suzanne Fortier, whom I met several months ago in Quebec City at a summit on the Arctic. I might just mention that another Fortier—Louis—has been appointed as Honorary Chair of a Symposium on Renewable Energy that will take place in the Chaudière-Appalaches region. Ms. Fortier is accompanied today by Ms. Barbara Conway, who is the Corporate Secretary. We also want to welcome Mr. Chad Gaffield, of SSHRC.

[English]

Welcome to the committee, Mr. Gaffield. Mr. Gaffield is president of the council.

[Translation]

Finally, we have with us Mr. Richard Clément, Director and Associate Dean of the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute at the University of Ottawa. Welcome, Mr. Clément. We are very happy to have you here this morning. You are the first representative of a university to appear in the context of our study. Mr. Clément is accompanied by the Associate Vice-President of Academic, Ms. Sylvie Lauzon.

Is everything all right, Mr. Rodriguez? Do you have naturally curly hair too? Are you in shape this morning?

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): I am raving to go.

The Chair: Perhaps we could begin with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Dr. Pierre Chartrand (Vice-President, Research, Canadian Institutes of Health Research): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research are pleased to have this opportunity to talk to you today about the steps that have been taken with respect to the promotion of Canada's official languages. Ms. Johanne Lapointe, who is responsible for the Official Language Minority Communities Research Initiative is with me today. I will refer to that initiative in my presentation.

As you know, CIHR is the main federal organization to provide health research grants in Canada. Guided by international principles of excellence in scientific research and its obligations to promote research in both official languages, CIHR provides grants to almost 12,000 researchers and fellows all across Canada.

In order to respond appropriately to the need for research on official-language minority communities, CIHR considered the results of consultations held with organizations concerned with the welfare of these communities. I want to stress the importance that CIHR places on cooperation and partnerships with organizations concerned with the health of their communities, as a means of attaining these objectives.

Out of a desire to fulfill their obligations under the Official Languages Act, CIHR established a strategic initiative in 2004 aimed at supporting health research on official-language minority communities. This initiative is aimed at reducing health disparities between official-language minority and majority communities, so that all Canadians have adequate access to quality health care, wherever they live and whatever the official language in which they wish to receive services.

Here I would like to point out the excellent work carried out by members of the Consultative Committee responsible for this initiative, whose task it was to advise CIHR on the health care research needs of Francophone and Anglophone official-language minority communities. This initiative is intended to increase the number of researchers engaged in an active program of research dealing with the health of official-language minority communities; to support research on health determinants and the specific needs of these communities; and, finally, to ensure that this newly created knowledge is passed on to researchers, clinicians, decision-makers and stakeholders, in order to improve the health status of members of these communities.

Because the primary goal of this initiative is to increase the number of researchers engaged in this research, expanding opportunities to receive grant money in this area is critical. Since December of 2005, CIHR has opened up 10 funding opportunities specifically targeting research priorities associated with this initiative. The programs involved operating grants and fellowships. Grant recipients include Cathy Vaillancourt, of the Institut Armand-Frappier, who recently was awarded a grant to study the effect of socio-economic determinants and language status on the health of pregnant women and their future child, the idea being to improve the quality of life of both the mother and her child; Steve Kisely, from Dalhousie University, and his team are studying the quality of mental health services provided in French in Nova Scotia; finally, Anne Leis of the University of Saskatchewan is conducting a study on the social, environmental and cultural factors that affect health disparities among minority-status Francophones.

Despite efforts in this area, results have so far been modest, and in order to address that, a number of measures have been taken. First of all, we are taking steps to make people aware of the specific programs available through CIHR as part of this initiative, by making presentations, in particular to the two national health research forums. Furthermore, we are providing training sessions to new researchers to help them complete their grant applications, and sessions have already been given in Sudbury, Moncton and Ottawa. Finally, we are offering young researchers a summer institute dedicated to official-language minority community health, and already held such a summer institute here in Ottawa last June. This educational exercise was a tremendous success and, as provided for under our Official Language Action Plan, it will be repeated in the years to come.

• (0910)

[English]

As CIHR's initiative is relatively new, building partnerships and promoting the program has been paramount. *Le Consortium national de formation en santé* is an important partner for CIHR, and we were pleased to work with them on their two national forums on health research for French-speaking minority communities.

In addition, CIHR has been engaged in other activities to build the initiative. For example, just this past week we collaborated with McGill University and other partners on a research symposium to promote networking and awareness of the health care issues of English-speaking minority communities.

[Translation]

I am also pleased to inform Committee members that CIHR supports the training of researchers in small French-language universities, with a view to improving their ability to receive grants through general CIHR competitions. This is a key activity that will strengthen research capacities in official-language minority communities.

CIHR is also keen to raise awareness among members of peer review committees of the challenges facing official-language minority communities. This process will help to ensure funding applications are assessed fairly in both official languages.

In 2006, CIHR participated in a study being conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages on practices in federal research funding agencies that could promote linguistic duality and the Anglophone and Francophone minority communities. This study resulted in a report by the Commissioner in 2008, entitled: "The Role of Canadian Federal Research Funding Agencies in the Promotion of Official Languages". The report cites the CIHR's initiative to help the official-language minority communities. In addition, it contains nine recommendations aimed at federal funding agencies.

In response to that report, CIHR presented the Commissioner with an action plan setting out what we would do to act on those recommendations. Some of the measures proposed in the action plan have already been implemented, such as allocating funding for research on health issues in these communities, access to software allowing researchers to submit their grant applications on-line in the language of their choice, as well as some promotional activities aimed at raising awareness of the OLMC initiative in the health research community.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to emphasize that CIHR is fully committed to abiding by the principles of excellence in health research. They help to guide all our activities and decisions. That is why advancing research dealing with official-language minority communities is an ongoing commitment for CIHR.

However, in order to understand current challenges, we must do more than just create opportunities to fund research projects. As a result, CIHR continues to be proactive and to promote the initiative I have mentioned, to provide support for training, to strengthen research capacity, to provide appropriate training to members of our peer review committees and, finally, to put into practice the knowledge that results from that research.

Finally, I believe our committee of consultants, composed of experts from official-language minority communities, will help us to ensure that we meet the needs of those communities. I am confident that, by heeding the advice of that committee and working closely with our main partners, we will build a solid body of research which ultimately will provide the evidence we need to improve health outcomes and health care for members of official-language minority communities.

Again, thank you for inviting CIHR to appear before the committee and I will be very pleased to take your questions at the appropriate time.

The Chair: Mr. Chartrand, thank you for your presentation and for the study you have provided on the subjects you addressed.

We will move now to Ms. Fortier from NSERC.

Dr. Suzanne Fortier (President, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank all the members of the committee for inviting us to take part in today's meeting.

I am accompanied today by Ms. Barbara Conway, NSERC's Corporate Secretary.

First of all, NSERC's vision is that we help make Canada a country of discoverers and innovators for the benefit of all Canadians. NSERC invests in people, discovery and innovation through programs that support post-secondary research in the natural sciences and engineering in post-secondary institutions on the basis of national, peer-reviewed competitions.

In the document you have been given, you can find detailed information about NSERC's budget, which totals about \$1 billion per year, divided into these four main areas.

● (0915)

[*English*]

Our clients and partners are roughly 27,000 university students and post-doctoral fellows, 12,000 university professors, 1,400 Canadian companies who are partnered with us, and 108 universities and colleges of all sizes across the country.

[*Translation*]

Our responsibility as regards official languages is to provide client services to researchers, educational institutions and partners in their official language of choice.

Both official languages are obviously used for all literature and other documentation, as well as on NSERC's website. Information sessions at institutions and conferences are given in the official language requested.

NSERC has regional offices in Moncton, Montreal, Mississauga, Winnipeg and Vancouver, all of which operate in both official languages.

[*English*]

All of our investments are done through peer review processes. These processes ensure that we have the capability of reviewing applications in both official languages. The programs have clear selection criteria. The primary consideration is excellence. All of the written reviews by experts from around the world are solicited in both official languages to ensure that our applicants can have the reviews in their selected language.

We also have, in our process, expert peer review committees that meet in person to recommend funding. At least two francophones are present on each peer review committee, and sufficient numbers of bilingual members are also part of these committees. Our applicants receive feedback from our committees in the language of their choice. We also provide simultaneous translation for committees, if requested, as well as special procedures if necessary.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to talk briefly about the global context of science and technology, particularly the natural sciences and engineering. We collaborate extensively with researchers both nationally and internationally, and there is tremendous researcher and student mobility. Often many of our researchers, including Francophone researchers, write their proposals and scientific articles in English, English being the language of work of most of the scientific communities internationally.

To illustrate that specific reality in our area, I would just like to give you some statistics. For the competition associated with our largest program, the Discovery Grants Program, we received 3,000 applications this year, 5 per cent of which were written in French. We have 381 selection committee members, 55 per cent of whom are able to assess proposals in French. In terms of individuals who act as external referees, we have almost 6,000 reviewers, 35 per cent of whom can read French.

In conclusion,

[*English*]

NSERC takes its responsibility to implement the Official Languages Act very seriously. Our primary responsibility is to provide access to our programs in both official languages, and to ensure that applications are fairly evaluated, independently of the language of submission.

Research on promoting bilingualism falls outside of our council's mandate, but we indirectly support institutions in their promotion of bilingualism by providing client service in both official languages.

[*Translation*]

Once again, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fortier.

We will now turn to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Mr. Gaffield, you have the floor.

Dr. Chad Gaffield (President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada): Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to speak to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages about the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's activities relating to official languages.

The Council, or SSHRC, is the federal agency that promotes and supports university-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences. We enable the highest levels of research excellence in Canada and facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration across research disciplines, universities and all sectors of society.

In delivering on our mandate, SSHRC's key value is in ensuring that the people and the research we fund is of world-class excellence. We ensure this excellence by our process for awarding grants and scholarships: that is, through national competitions using a rigorous system of independent peer review.

SSHRC supports official-language minority communities and bilingualism in two important ways: first, by ensuring that SSHRC's peer review and adjudication processes are structured such that applications received in either official language will be fairly assessed; and second, by supporting research that furthers our knowledge and understanding of the social, legal, educational, cultural and economic issues related to bilingualism and minority language communities.

Indeed, these issues fall squarely within SSHRC's mandate to fund, and, as I will elaborate, Canada's social sciences and humanities research community has developed world-class expertise in these areas.

I should also say that I am very privileged to be next to two examples of the research talent we have here in Canada. We may have an opportunity to benefit from the presence here this morning of experienced researchers working for the University of Ottawa. It is very encouraging to see them here with us.

● (0920)

[English]

Service delivery in the official language of the applicant's choice is particularly important to SSHRC as a research-granting agency. Applicants to SSHRC must have confidence that the intellectual content of their research proposal is fully understood and fairly assessed, regardless of the official language used in the application. Sensitive to these concerns, SSHRC is careful to ensure that the adjudication committees are composed of anglophone and franco-phone members from across Canada who have the ability to read and understand orally the other language. Adjudication committees are composed mainly of academic experts who volunteer their time as a service to the community.

When it comes to the research and research-related activities that SSHRC funds, Canada's social sciences and humanities research community has developed a particular capacity that deserves mention.

[Translation]

In 2004-2005, in partnership with Canadian Heritage, SSHRC launched a new, three-year program to support research questions related to official languages and bilingualism. The idea was to mobilize the social sciences and humanities research community in Canada to address this very distinctly Canadian issue. The community stepped up to this challenge, and over the three years, 52 projects were funded, for a total investment of \$3 million.

We distributed to you today a compendium of SSHRC-funded research awarded in 2007-2008—this is something we produce annually as part of our report on our implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act, a report which is available on our website. Funding allocated for research projects in 2007-2008 amounted to roughly \$3.4 million. In addition, there are 19 Canada Research Chairs focused on issues related to official languages and bilingualism. In other words, this is a robust topic of research in Canada, and the research itself is of top quality.

The compendium you have is full of research topics of direct interest to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

● (0925)

[English]

Over the past decade or so, SSHRC has actively promoted research that links scholars and communities, particularly through a program we call community-university research alliances, or CURAs. This program funds partnerships between university-based researchers and community-based organizations on a research topic

of mutual interest. The community-based organization is a full partner in the research, participating in every stage of the project. Because community partners are present and engaged at the very beginning, it is more likely that the outcomes of the project will be relevant and useful to the communities. CURAs receive up to \$1 million over five years.

I would like to describe two projects that were recently awarded CURA grants.

[Translation]

In 2007-2008, a large team of researchers, led by Léonard Rivard at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, launched a project entitled: "Identités francophones de l'Ouest canadien: définition, valorisation et transmission". The research team includes researchers from the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, Concordia University, the Université de Moncton and the University of Alberta as well as partners, such as the Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta, the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and the Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta.

Here is another example. In 2008-2009, in the most recent CURA competition, a team of researchers led by Linda Cardinal at the University of Ottawa was awarded a grant for a project entitled: "Les savoirs de la gouvernance communautaire: de nouvelles modalités d'action pour la francophonie canadienne et les minorités linguistiques." Partners on this project include the Association of French-Speaking Jurists of Ontario, the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne and the Observatoire sur la gouvernance de l'Ontario français.

In 2007, SSHRC engaged in the Commissioner of Official Languages' initiative to identify best practices of federal granting agencies to effectively promote linguistic duality and the vitality of official-language minority communities. The Commissioner released a report on this initiative in January of 2008, and we will be using the report's recommendations to develop our new Multi-Year Action Plan for the Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act. We have been working closely with representatives from Canadian Heritage throughout this process, and have hired Ronald Bisson and Associates, an experienced consulting firm, to assist us with this important initiative. SSHRC will also be consulting the official-language minority communities on the Action Plan. SSHRC recognizes that renewing our Action Plan represents a real opportunity to develop new and creative positive measures that can be taken in the support of official languages and the vitality of official-language minority communities in Canada.

[English]

The focus of my remarks today has been on how the Canadian social sciences and humanities research community contributes to the important questions this committee investigates. SSHRC is proud to be a key enabler of the development of new, world-class knowledge, understanding, and expertise on issues of bilingualism and official language minority communities. Questions addressed by the social sciences and humanities community help Canada as a whole and its linguistic communities to define and address issues vital to their identities, their social, cultural, and economic development, and their futures.

[Translation]

I look forward to your questions on this and other aspects of SSHRC support for bilingualism and official-language minority communities.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gaffield.

Another person sitting at this table received a scholarship through your program—our analyst, Mr. Paré.

• (0930)

Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré (Committee Researcher): Thank you.

The Chair: From one grant recipient, we now move to the next. Ms. Lauzon is Assistant Vice-President, Academic, at the University of Ottawa. Please proceed.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon (Associate Vice-President, Academic, University of Ottawa): Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for inviting us to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

My name is Sylvie Lauzon, and I am Assistant Vice-President of Academic, with responsibility for Undergraduate Programs and Francophone Affairs. I am accompanied today by my colleague, Richard Clément, Director of the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts. We will both be making the presentation this morning.

Your committee's study of federal government support for the efforts of post-secondary institutions in promoting bilingualism in Canada is of great interest to the University of Ottawa. We sincerely hope that the results of this study will have a positive impact on the quality of our curricula, as well as new initiatives that we are planning in order to continue to promote bilingualism and the development of Francophone minority communities.

To begin with, I would like to briefly introduce our institution and some of its achievements as regards official languages. After that, we will tell you a little about some of our new initiatives.

Since its creation in 1848, the University of Ottawa has distinguished itself by its bilingual status, its commitment and its leadership in promoting bilingualism and fostering the development of the French culture in Ontario, Canada and across the globe, as well as by its openness to cultural diversity. The University enshrined that commitment in its incorporating act, which includes very specific objectives, such as fostering the development of bilingualism and preserving and developing French culture in

Ontario. It also adopted a by-law on bilingualism which provides that the University's bilingual character must be reflected in all its components—governance, programs and services—and recognizes that all have the right to express themselves in the official language of their choice.

In its governance structure, there are requirements associated with so-called active bilingualism for all executive positions. In our opinion, the University of Ottawa is a role model, as a bilingual institution where Canada's two official languages are on an equal footing. Therefore, the law of numbers does not apply to us.

Thanks to an increasingly range of programs of study in French at all three levels—undergraduate, Masters and Ph.D.—the University is attracting a growing number of Francophones. Their numbers exceeded 11,000 last September, which makes the University of Ottawa a leader in Canada for studies in French outside Quebec. This year as well, more than 3,000 students graduating from high school immersion programs across Canada registered at our institution.

In addition to its research activities in French, the University has also established the Research Chairs in Canadian Francophonie Program and, since 2004, eight Chairs have been created. I also want to take this opportunity to remind you of the leadership role the University has played as regards health care training in French in minority communities and the creation of the National Health Care Training Consortium.

In 2008, the University established the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages, which is co-chaired by the Vice-President, Academic and the Vice-President, Resources. As you can see, this is very important to us. The mandate of that committee is to take responsibility for planning and implementing initiatives that enable the University to fully carry out its mission and fulfill its commitment to the promotion and development of the French culture in Ottawa, while fostering the vitality of the University community in both official languages. As part of that effort, the committee has also established the University-Community Consultative Committee, with a view to strengthening ties to leaders of the Francophone community.

I will now turn it over to my colleague.

Mr. Richard Clément (Director and Associate Dean, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute, University of Ottawa): In its strategic planning document entitled "Vision 2010", the University of Ottawa placed leadership in official languages among its top priorities. This planning exercise was guided by two values: a university engaged in the promotion of the Francophonie and a bilingual university that enhances cultural diversity. One of the results of the strategic plan was the launching of two major initiatives: the French immersion system and the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute, or OLBI.

The French as a second language immersion system has been in place since September 2006 in more than 50 programs. Unique to Canada, this system allows students from immersion and basic French language programs to pursue their undergraduate studies in the discipline of their choice, while perfecting their second language skills. The diploma they receive recognizes their linguistic proficiency. We expect more than 1,200 students to be registered in the immersion system by 2010.

The Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute was created in July of 2007. Its goal is to make the University of Ottawa a national and international centre of excellence for the teaching of official languages, the measurement and assessment of language skills, and language research and planning. Furthermore, with a view to playing a leadership role with other Canadian university institutions as regards research, the OLBI has established the Canadian Centre for Studies and Research in Bilingualism and Language Planning, or the CCSRBLP. This centre is intended to act as a national forum for research on language teaching and the development of language public policies and language planning strategies.

The OLBI has also established a Development and Promotion Office, one of whose responsibilities is to coordinate the marketing of Canadian expertise in Canada and abroad in the area of official languages and bilingualism. It was in this context that, in January of 2008, OLBI entered into a cooperation and exchange agreement with the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages, or ECML, and is now recognized as being the Canadian hub for the ECML. We believe that OLBI is a major tool for the federal government in implementing the Official Languages Act and promoting the Canadian approach to language in the international arena.

The University of Ottawa is not seen as an institution that is content to rest on its laurels—quite the opposite. Consequently, we would like to share with you a number of innovative initiatives that we intend to take in order to make an even greater contribution to the development of minority Francophone communities and official language learning.

Let us begin with our mobility grants. The University of Ottawa offers more than 250 programs of study in French in 10 faculties and has a generous grant program associated with the Francophonie and French immersion for its students. However, in the wake of the Accent program, mobility grants allow Francophone students registered in other Canadian universities to do part of their studies at the University of Ottawa and join the 11,000 or more Francophone students already registered there. For immersion program students registered at Anglophone universities who would like to pursue their studies or part of their studies in French, these mobility grants give them access to our French immersion system and language training that is unique in Canada, for a set period of their studies.

The second project is the Health Care Translation Program. For several years now, the University of Ottawa has offered a legal translation program which has been very successful. A health care translation program will support initiatives brought forward by the University of Ottawa and the National Health Care Training Consortium, or NHCTS, in terms of health care training and services in French for minority Francophone communities.

The third project relates to the French immersion system. More than 50 undergraduate programs are currently offered as part of the immersion system. In its development plan, the University of Ottawa makes provision for an increased number of undergraduate programs and extension of the immersion system to the graduate levels. It also includes a training program for immersion school principals.

The summer university for young official language researchers constitutes the fourth project. The area of official languages in

Canada is in need of a new generation of researchers. The University of Ottawa is considering creating a summer research training program that would be led by a team of eminent Canadian researchers. Such a program is completely in keeping with SSHRC's training and research priorities.

The fifth project relates to bilingual programs in public administration, policy development and international affairs. The federal public service and some provincial public services are greatly in need of graduates in key areas who have a mastery of both official languages. The University of Ottawa is currently developing an action plan intended to increase the number of programs where bilingualism would be a condition of graduation, so that graduates enter the job market with a working knowledge of the two official languages.

• (0935)

The next topic is language planning training and support. With a view to helping Canadian institutions to develop language and language planning policies, the University of Ottawa is currently studying the possibility of creating a Chair in Language Planning Studies at the OLBI, as well as launching a Master's degree in language policy.

I would just like to mention one final project, which is the Canadian Observatory on Official Languages. The role of official languages in Canada and the resulting level of activity in all segments of society warrants the creation of a Canadian Observatory on Official Languages. The University of Ottawa and the OLBI would be pleased to consider such a pan-Canadian initiative and coordinate its implementation, in concert with the main government players and civil society.

Thank you.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: A bilingual institution that lives and operates in both official languages, that offers quality education in French and English, that concerns itself with putting French and English on an equal footing and promotes the Francophonie and bilingualism inevitably faces higher operating costs than a unilingual post-secondary institution. That is the reason why, in February of 2005, the University of Ottawa undertook a comprehensive study of the cost of bilingualism. That analysis showed us that the bilingualism support grant which we receive from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities—an amount that is provided partly under the Bilateral Education Agreement with the federal government—covers less than 60 per cent of what is needed to provide the current level of service in both languages.

Annual financial requirements total \$30 million, whereas the government subsidy, which remains unchanged in 10 years, is \$17.4 million. As a result, the University of Ottawa requires additional funding of \$13.7 million per year—an amount it has requested, in fact—in order to maintain the quality of its existing programs, and would need a further \$13 million to provide access to more programs that are not currently offered in French.

I would just like to conclude by saying that my colleague and I have the honour of representing a great bilingual post-secondary institution where Canada's two official languages are on an equal footing; an institution that has a much larger Francophone student population than any other institution outside Quebec; an institution that has implemented a system of French immersion which is unique in Canada and elsewhere in the world; an institution which, using its own resources, recently established an Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute which truly ensures that its expertise in language teaching, research, bilingualism and policy development will be recognized nationally and internationally.

We believe that our specific mission to promote bilingualism and foster the development of French culture in Ontario and Canada, as well as the diversity of our curricula, enable us to make an important contribution and play a leadership role in promoting Canada's linguistic duality. We also believe that we are very well equipped, as a Canadian university, to provide a new generation of competent, bilingual civil servants to the federal public service.

Thank you for your kind attention and we are now available to take your questions.

● (0940)

The Chair: Thank you.

Your conclusion is certainly in keeping with the goals we are pursuing through this study.

We will now open it up for questions, starting with Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for being here today.

I am going to begin with Mr. Chartrand. When you talk about health care studies, are you talking about studies on access to health care for Francophones across the country?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I see.

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: The projects relate specifically to that kind of situation, in other words the impact on access to health care services among people whose official language has minority status in their environment.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I have heard about some serious problems for Francophones outside Quebec. I was discussing this with a lady last week. She was telling me that in Northern Ontario, it is really awful, that there is no one available to answer them in their own language, either at the intake stage or elsewhere, to the point when people have to switch to the other language if they want to receive service. In fact, this particular lady asked if she could speak to a Francophone. She was told that she could wait until someone could answer her in French or agree to receive services in the other language. So, she chose to be served in English.

Is this a pervasive problem in Canada?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: That is the very reason why we launched this initiative. We want to be able to measure the extent of the problem, on the one hand, and, going one step further, to assess the

impact this has on the quality of health care provided to people who form a minority in their community.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Before even talking about quality, the first thing is to be able to get answers in one's own language—access, in other words.

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Would you not say this is a major weakness? I really started wondering about this myself after that. I have the feeling it is quite common across the country. Unfortunately, Francophones give in and accept it, partly in order to receive the care they need. As far as I am concerned, access to health care and justice in one's own language is a fundamental right. We are talking about circumstances where individuals feel particularly vulnerable and nervous, and want to be able to communicate in their own language. There seems to be a serious problem in that regard right across the country.

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: Yes, indeed. As I was saying, we are conducting studies in a context where population groups are vulnerable, partly because they form a minority. The idea is to determine the extent of the problem, but also to see what solutions can be found.

● (0945)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Is it possible that this problem is linked to a rural exodus—the fact that people are leaving their regions to pursue their studies and do not want to go back there afterwards to practice their profession, particularly if they are doctors or nurses?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: It would be very difficult for me to give you an answer based on evidence. We are conducting these studies precisely to obtain answers to those questions and determine the root causes of this problem.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: As regards the Anglophone community in Quebec, a lady I spoke with was telling me that the population is aging and that seniors, who frequently require health care, are often afraid they will not be able to receive services in English in Quebec.

Have you noticed that?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: Last week, a research symposium was held at McGill University dealing specifically with that kind of question. There was discussion of minority Anglophone populations in the hospital environment.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: And what came out of it?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: I am going to ask Ms. Lapointe to answer that question.

Ms. Johanne Lapointe (Team Lead, Institute Affairs, Canadian Institutes of Health Research): It was a symposium with representatives of the Anglophone communities in Quebec. We also invited researchers to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to see how to establish partnerships where researchers could develop research programs based on problems identified by the minority linguistic communities in Quebec—in this case, the Anglophone communities. People presented statistics relating to that population in Quebec. At the present time, the Canada Institutes for Health Research are trying to establish closer ties between the researchers and the communities that have identified specific needs, in order to see how they can work together. We believe that the results of that research will help to inform our work in terms of program development, services and access.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Nadeau.

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

Good morning to you all.

Mr. Chairman, I am a little taken aback. The purpose of our study is to look at how universities can train bilingual graduates so that the federal public service can respond to citizens in their mother tongue. I have nothing against the people who are appearing today. They are doing excellent work in their respective areas. However, perhaps we should be hearing from witnesses who are able to address the specific goals of our study. It seems to me we have strayed well beyond the topic on the agenda. We may have to take another look at our study schedule.

I would like to address my question to Mr. Gaffield, from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

I would like to know whether, in your fields of study or the programs you have looked at, you have found any data indicating at what point a student should learn a second language in order to be fully bilingual by the time he or she graduates. Should the learning process begin at the primary, secondary or university levels? What should we be focusing on so that more graduates are able to read, write and speak both languages?

Dr. Chad Gaffield: Thank you very much.

Your question touches on a problem that communities across Canada are facing, and that I myself have experienced personally. For example, in our family, we discussed this in relation to our children, as to which immersion programs should be selected and what level of training was required in order for our children to become bilingual. It is an interesting subject.

Recently, we funded a project that I mentioned earlier, which relates directly to that question. I am talking about CURAs, the Community-University Research Alliances, which bring together school board experts and university researchers. The following gives you a brief description of this initiative, which directly addresses that problem:

For the first time in the history of Francophones in Western Canada, a team that includes highly qualified researchers and community representatives will look at the challenges facing minority Francophone communities that have been feeling the effects of assimilation for more than a century.

That directly relates to education in the minority communities.

● (0950)

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Yes, Mr. Gaffield, but the idea is that the federal government will be able to recruit public servants who can work at an appropriate level in French and English. Perhaps the study still needs some work. You talk about FL1—French as a first language—which is being lost through assimilation. We know that it is a real cancer from a sociological and ethnolinguistic standpoint.

I wanted to know whether you are aware of any studies that give a formal indication that university is not the place to start learning a second language, and that the learning process has to begin in primary or secondary school.

Dr. Chad Gaffield: Yes, we do have a number of studies. I will prepare a list of them for you, and perhaps provide some examples and results.

We may want to take advantage of the presence here this morning of Mr. Richard Clément, who is one of the experts on this in Canada.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: By all means; Mr. Clément, perhaps you could respond.

Mr. Richard Clément: Thank you.

Of course, this is not a recent issue. It is something that we have been looking at through research on bilingualism for many years now. In terms of the best time to begin, I would say, the earlier the better, for all kinds of reasons: first of all, because a child has a more flexible brain, and also, for reasons that relate to the types of educational methods that can be used with children, methods that are not effective with adults. That does not mean that an adult cannot learn another language later on. That is absolutely possible, but there are pedagogical questions that come into play at that point. They cannot be taught a language the same way others are.

To summarize—and this was a trend and major Canadian find that has been exported outside of Canada, all across Europe—it is about immersion beginning as early as possible.

I would just like to add, in another context...

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Clément, I only have five minutes.

Do you think it would be better for the federal government to hire people who are already bilingual right from the start, rather than training unilingual employees to become bilingual, with a view to staffing positions in the federal public service?

Mr. Richard Clément: Based on our institutional experience at the University of Ottawa, I can certainly say that, as a department head, it is preferable to hire people who already have a certain level of proficiency in the second language, even if they may require additional training subsequently.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Fine, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

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

I would like to thank all our witnesses for being here today.

To be perfectly frank, I was having a bit of trouble, and that is why I left earlier. We are here to look at post-secondary education and how young people can be taught the two official languages. We are talking about programs here, but it seems to me that it is almost a topic in itself. Don't worry, though, we are not trying to be mean; we support you, because there is a need for a lot more money.

Mr. Clément, could you not pick up the phone and call our premier in New Brunswick who brought a lot of young Anglophones together and put them into an immersion program in Grade 5? Do you remember that?

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes, I do; there was a lot of reaction.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think he missed the boat. Then he went from a big boat to a small boat, because he ended up going back to Grade 3. I am sure they told you that you are the expert and that adults can learn, but that it was better... Do you not think New Brunswick should have stayed the way it was? Particularly since it was supposedly the only bilingual province in the country, except when it comes to health care! We are bilingual for everything else, but we have to fight tooth and nail in our province when it comes to health care. I wanted to make that point, just in case Mr. Shawn Graham reads the "blues".

• (0955)

Mr. Richard Clément: The research community reacted strongly, and particularly my colleague, Rodrigue Landry, from the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities. We all agreed. At the time, I also got in touch with him, with a view to bolster our argument. Unfortunately, researchers do not always have the desired political impact.

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, but we did go from Grade 5 to Grade 3, right?

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That is a step in the right direction for young people, in terms of immersion.

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes, it is.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We have to continue to use your arguments to make them understand that they are wrong. I appreciate your saying that. At the same time, you say that adults can learn, but that it is not as easy for them. Without wanting to discriminate, it must be much more difficult to learn another language when you're 50, 55 or 60 years old.

Mr. Richard Clément: It cannot be said that this ability deteriorates continually as you age. However, you reach a plateau. Adults can learn another language, but a completely different teaching style is required. You have to rely on the structural knowledge of the first language and transfer that to the second language. Children do not learn that way. Adults learn that way. What are the similarities? Well, if you are learning Spanish, and you already know French and have some knowledge of French grammar, you can learn by transferring your knowledge. The teaching method has to focus on that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: It would be better to appoint a judge to the Supreme Court who speaks both languages right from the beginning, rather than trying to teach him or her a second language after the appointment. That judge may not have learned the second language by the time he has to retire, at the age of 75.

Mr. Richard Clément: Well, that is your opinion!

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes, can you support me on that, you who are the expert?

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes, I can.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You support me, then!

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes, I do.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's great; I made the statement, and you support me. Thank you, Mr. Expert. That will help me with my bill.

But, let's come back to you—the agencies. Do you believe, like Mr. Clément, that second-language teaching should begin at the right age?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: We work in the health care field. I believe that answer should come from people who work in the social sciences and humanities.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I am sure you understand why I am a little mixed up this morning. It has to do with post-secondary studies.

Voices: Ha, ha!

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you for supporting us, despite the mix-up.

Dr. Chad Gaffield: Given your interest in this, I can certainly provide you with the results of subsidized research that deals directly with this. We will prepare a package of information very quickly and I think it will be of assistance to you.

Mr. Yvon Godin: A little earlier, you said that researchers will learn... In English, there is no problem. I think there are already enough books and information out there. On the other hand, in terms of health care in French, things are not quite so easy. I know people who have taken health-related courses in Montreal in French. There were studying at McGill University, and their books were English, even though the course was given in French and they were taking the course with a view to working in a Francophone hospital.

Do you agree with me?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: Yes, that is a very major challenge. As Dr. Fortier pointed out, the language of research, generally speaking, and certainly in the health care field, is English. The fact is that there are a lot of publications and volumes written in English for which there is not necessarily a translation available, given the costs associated with that. As a result, access to the same quality of scientific information is a challenge for any Francophone student.

Mr. Yvon Godin: What is France doing? That country has...

The Chair: Excuse me for interrupting you, Mr. Godin. You can come back to this at the next round.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I will come back to France later on. Thank you.

The Chair: Our parliamentary secretary, Ms. Glover, now has the floor.

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to begin by welcoming our witnesses. I also want to say that I agree with my colleagues, Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Godin. In fact, maybe we should be talking as a committee. I don't understand why—with all due respect for you—we are hearing from these witnesses this morning.

My questions are for our guests representing the University of Ottawa.

Mr. Clément, you said that you have an action plan that includes a class or something of the sort. I am not really sure what this involves. You also said that you want to increase the number of students who can eventually work for the public service. You are also going to be carrying out a study this summer dealing with that. I would like to know a little more about this, because it is really the main focus of our study. Could you explain to me how that would be done?

• (1000)

Mr. Richard Clément: The immersion system falls within my colleague's purview. So, I will let her answer that question.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Fine, thank you.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: The immersion system is intended to allow graduates of high schools that offer an immersion program for English-speaking high school, or students who have taken basic French courses, to continue to study in English in our university. However, French is also a very important component, if they are to maintain the language proficiency acquired through their previous studies. As they progress through their university program, they take more and more courses in French. It gives them a kind of safety net. They can continue to learn French by taking courses given in French, but there are also certain incentives provided—first of all, to encourage them to register in the program, but also to reassure them that they should not be concerned that their average will go down. We know that this is a very important factor for students wanting to receive grants, in particular.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Pardon me for interrupting you, but I only have five minutes and I really want to know exactly what we are talking about. Is this the first program? You mentioned another one which is very important in the context of our study. Through this program, you want to try and increase the number of students who will enter the public service. How does that work?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: With many of our programs, University of Ottawa students who graduate subsequently enter the public service. Our goal is to increase the number of bilingual graduates, in order to provide the public service with new employees who are already bilingual. Those students would be part of the immersion system—in other words, they would be in these programs.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: But that is only a proposal for the time being; it has not yet been implemented.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: No, but our immersion system is already in operation. In addition, some of our programs require that students be bilingual—the environmental studies program, for one. We would like that to apply to a whole list of programs, so that being bilingual on graduation would really provide added value for students.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: That is excellent. I think it will certainly encourage our young people to learn the language so as to be ready to enter the public service.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Yes, exactly.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: You also talked about money, and I am interested in hearing more. You referred to a shortfall of some \$13 million. How did you arrive at that figure? What is the cost of your proposal? Have you made an application under the Roadmap for Linguistic Duality in Canada, as a means of enhancing your funding?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: You have touched on a number of issues. By stretching our resources, we are able to provide our current programs and services. However, because we do not want to cut them, we have to withdraw other services.

As regards our shortfall, we need a little more than \$40 million in order to provide what we would like to provide—that is, fully bilingual programs and services.

What was your last question?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: In terms of your new programs, have you made an application under the Roadmap?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: We have submitted our plan for the next five years to the government of Ontario, and this plan is intended to provide better access to students while favouring the retention of students pursuing their university studies in French. We submitted that application along with all the other Francophone and bilingual universities in Ontario. Together, these institutions form what is known as the Consortium des universités de la francophonie ontarienne. We are part of a group of seven universities that has made that request of the government. We are awaiting the results and are anxious to know how the funds to be allocated under the Canada-Ontario Agreement on French-Language Services will be paid out.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Glover.

We will now begin our second round. In the meantime, our clerk will be distributing the schedule of our upcoming meetings with witnesses to all committee members. We could try to reserve some time to discuss this at our next meeting. Just to remind you of the purpose of the study, it was decided that about eight or ten meetings would be held to debate the topic of interest to us this morning. The key issue is whether the Canadian university system is preparing students adequately to meet the requirements of the labour market, and particularly the language needs of the largest Canadian employer, which is the federal public service. I would invite our witnesses to keep that in mind when answering questions, and committee members are also encouraged to ask their questions on that basis. We have organizations appearing today that focus their university research on that very issue. For example, in terms of human resources, some of your programs have that specific orientation.

Ms. Lauzon, your university is a Canadian leader in that field. Do you feel that your university and the system as a whole are properly preparing young people to respond to the needs of the labour market and the public service in terms of bilingualism? We know that the public service often has to hire young graduates and train them on the job. However, when you hire an engineer, there is no need to give him a course in thermodynamics. That is the basic issue. How can we improve the situation? What recommendations can you make to the committee in that regard?

• (1005)

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: I think it is important to point out that universities in Canada do not have the same approach to, or perspective on, language training—far from it. For example, universities that are part of the Canadian Francophonie—in other words, institutions outside Quebec—are in a minority environment, and as a result, are all dealing with populations that are very engaged in terms of bilingualism.

I cannot speak for all universities, but the University of Ottawa is very aware of this very particular situation. We provide a whole range of programs that allow those students who are interested—we do not force anything on anyone—to perfect their knowledge of or learn the other official language. We offer second-language courses to both Francophones and Anglophones. We have second-language proficiency tests. Thus, at the end of the course, if they so desire, students may ask to have their level of bilingualism or proficiency in the other official language assessed.

We also provide language support and mentoring. For example, a student who registers for a course that is taught in French or in English, but does not fully master that official language, can avail himself of the services of a tutor who will take the course with him and review the course content with him in that official language. Tutors will discuss the course content with students and ask them questions. These are what are known as language mentoring courses. They are given by language teachers who explore in greater depth the content presented in class, in a course taught in a language that the student does not fully master. So, that is what language mentoring is all about, and it is available in both languages. In fact, we offer incentives. We may also offer the option of not receiving a numerical mark at the end of the course, so that the student's average will not drop. We offer the same kind of language mentoring or support to university teachers who have to teach their course in their second language.

So, a whole range of measures are in place to foster language learning. And it is possible for students, since most of our courses are offered in both French and English. Therefore, students can register in a French-language or English-language program, but also take many of their courses in the other language.

There is also the matter of proximity and the environment. It is an important point that I would not want to forget to mention. We have access to both films and theatre in each of the official languages, for example. Because learning does not only occur in the classroom. Research clearly shows that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lauzon.

Mr. D'Amours.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You see the kind of flexibility you have with us on this side of the table, since we do not demand that you go and sit—

The Chair: This is the best committee.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Maybe everyone will finally understand that today.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here. My questions will mainly be addressed to Ms. Lauzon or Mr. Clément.

If I understood you correctly, Ms. Lauzon, you are facing a funding shortfall of \$13 million that you will have to take from somewhere else. You said that you need an additional \$13 million, is that correct?

• (1010)

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That brings the total amount of money that you require to meet your needs to a little more than \$40 million.

Also, you talked a lot about the public service. I am from a rural area of New Brunswick. Students from back home are studying at the University of Ottawa. However, students do not necessarily always want to enter the public service. At the same time, you seem to focus a great deal on the public service.

Do you also focus on other areas of study, or do you direct your efforts only towards supplying the public service, given that the University of Ottawa is at the very heart of Canada's public service?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Our goal is not just to train people who will then enter the public service. However, because of our geographic location—we are only a few minutes away from here—many of our students are interested in the public service, in all the different disciplines. We very often think of public administration or political science studies as being more directly related to the public service, but a lot of people studying communications and even health disciplines are interested in the public service. In any case, there is never any mention made of this in our programs or our courses. It is really open to everyone and there are openings in every area.

Just to give you an example, we have a coop education program whereby students can do an internship, and the public service remains the largest supplier of coop job placements. So, that is certainly one of the options, but it is not the only one.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: It is because of the region that you serve.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Let's move now to the subject of our study, which is federal government support for post-secondary institutions. You said earlier that providing bilingual courses or training results in additional costs, compared to training in one language only. You talked about a shortfall of approximately \$13 million.

You also mentioned an immersion program. Would it be easier and less costly for you if some steps in the process were completed earlier, so that when the student arrives at university, he already has an ability to express himself in the other language—his second language—more easily. There would be less of a burden if that were the case—in other words, if the federal government focussed its efforts on teaching the second language before students enter university, so that when they get there, they would already have completed the first step? Would that be a less complicated and costly system, as far as you are concerned?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: As regards that data, that is more Mr. Clément's area of expertise than it is mine. I can tell you that we do have students who have come to us from immersion schools, but they are not the only ones to attend our institution. Even between immersion schools, there are wide variations. Some immersion schools are in communities where there is very little exposure to French outside the classroom. As a result, those students are less able to master their second language, and when they arrive at university, they require a little more support than students who have attended immersion schools in areas where they are exposed to the other official language. That makes a huge difference. In terms of what can be done before, that is more Mr. Clément's area of expertise.

Mr. Richard Clément: You are absolutely right. If students were better trained in their second language by the time they arrive at university, it would be easier for us to integrate them into our own immersion system. There is no doubt that they can be better trained. However, if it were decided that language training would no longer be offered at the post-secondary level, that everything had to happen at the primary and secondary levels—we would have a problem, because students arriving at university—we encountered this problem ourselves, and that is the reason why we created our immersion program—would no longer be using their second language and, within the space of a year, would lose their ability to speak that language. It would probably happen even faster than that. Of course, students attending university are very conscious of the pressure on them to get good marks, and so on, because that directly affects their future. All of a sudden, they become very serious. So, at the university level, they must be given the means of preserving their language proficiency. Otherwise, it will be lost.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: A combination of the two might be helpful. Without eliminating post-secondary level programs, if more were done prior to students arriving at a post-secondary institution, it would make your job easier.

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: And you could probably provide better service.

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

We will move on now to Ms. Guay.

•(1015)

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here today.

I have a problem. These are two very different issues, in terms of our public service which is not bilingual, judges who are not bilingual, people being hired and deputy ministers who are not bilingual—who are recruited for their skills; I understand that—but

who are then given five years to learn the second official language, be it French or English. If they do not learn it in five years, they can ask for another five years. In other words, the process is never-ending. Ultimately, these people never really learn to speak the second language.

I don't think that really concerns you. Yes, you have students. I know you are doing a good job. I know many young people who are pursuing their studies at the University of Ottawa and they are very happy to be able to learn both languages. The environment is important, as you said; there are both Anglophones and Franco-phones studying there, they talk to each other, and even couples are formed.

That does not necessarily relate to our current area of study—the problem we are experiencing here, which has gotten worse and worse every year since the Conservatives took office. I am not saying it is their fault, but there is definitely a need for the government to look closely at what its role may have been. The minister must make an effort in that regard.

I want to come back to your funding shortfall, because that is important. Have you made a specific request? The fact is that you provide services that are different from the other universities. What response have you had from the federal government?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: As you know, education is a provincial area of jurisdiction. As a result, we always make our representations to the Ontario government, so that money is set aside under the Canada-Ontario Agreement. Funding for bilingualism has been provided to bilingual universities in Ontario for several years now. As I was explaining earlier, the amount we receive at the University of Ottawa has not changed in 10 years. Our president has made representations to a number of government authorities in Ontario, and we continue to do so. We also submitted—

Ms. Monique Guay: I am sorry to interrupt you, but I only have five minutes.

Are you still awaiting a response?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Yes.

Ms. Monique Guay: That is really a shame, in my opinion, because it is very much needed.

Do you think we should be focusing much more and putting greater pressure on the public service, so that senior officials really learn the second language—particularly when they are deputy ministers, that being an important position—and learn it as quickly as possible, rather than spreading the learning period over 10 or 15 years?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: I think the best strategy is always for many different sources and people to deliver that message.

Ms. Monique Guay: It has to come from the universities as well.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Yes, but I would just like to mention one thing...

Ms. Monique Guay: Go ahead.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: We said that we had not yet received a response, but we have been given one-time funding. That money is not part of our base operational funding, but we have received additional funds in recent years.

Ms. Monique Guay: For other programs.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: In the case of the University of Ottawa, there were for the Francophonie.

Ms. Monique Guay: Great, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Guay.

Mr. Godin, you are getting a second chance.

Mr. Yvon Godin: It's the chance to go to France.

The Chair: Here is to France!

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would not want to just abandon France. Obviously, people in France study in French. Are there any agreements in place with France to receive textbooks, for example, so that physicians or people studying at McGill University in health-related disciplines can pursue their studies in French?

Dr. Pierre Chartrand: Professional medical training is offered in French in Francophone universities. However, I was referring to research where the material used is essentially scientific articles. Unfortunately—and this is absolutely universal—research is conducted in English, particularly medical and health-related research, with some variations, depending on the field of study. But even France has stopped releasing some of its prestigious publications in French; they now publish them in English.

• (1020)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

You were saying a little earlier that we must not leave that up to the universities or primary or secondary schools alone; that it has to be extended everywhere. I agree with you on that. At the same time, education is a provincial responsibility. You said that you received some additional one-time funding. Organizations have told us that, as a general rule, that money arrives at the very last minute. This is money that you were not expecting to receive, that is not there for the long term and, even if you were expecting to receive it, you have to keep fighting to get more. You must have to devote a lot of staff time to preparing applications for this additional funding. I imagine you waste a lot of time in the process, and when the money arrives, there is not much time left to spend it.

Are you really able to take full advantage of this money? Should it come from a specific program? For example, if a program has not changed in 10 years, it should be. Then you submit a proposal setting out the university's requirements.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: We have already told the government exactly what you just said.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The more often it is said, the better.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Exactly. There have been some changes, because we have multi-year agreements. Previously, we only had annual agreements. At least we are moving towards multi-year agreements. There used to be a lot of different programs: a program for this or for that; it was very difficult. At least now, there is money available that the university can spend as it sees fit.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The government is the largest employer in Canada. Does the government ever say to the universities that it needs bilingual employees and that they should be giving them language training? There is even talk of training at the primary and secondary levels. Do you feel that the government is prepared to tell

everyone that, although they may have received excellent training, students will not have a job when they graduate from university, because the government only intends to hire people who are bilingual?

It may take four years to become a welder, seven or eight years to become a physician, but it does not take that long to learn a language, if students are told when they are very young that the labour market in Canada, which uses two official languages, needs people who are bilingual.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Is that a question?

Mr. Yvon Godin: It is a question and a comment.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: As I said, we have close ties to the Ontario government. Being a university—

Mr. Yvon Godin: I know education falls within the jurisdiction of Ontario, but as a major employer, does the Government of Canada tell the universities that it needs people who are bilingual?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: That is the kind of message we might be given informally but, to my knowledge, there is no specific forum for relaying that kind of message.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Is there no agreement?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: No.

Mr. Yvon Godin: There is no agreement, nothing concrete?

A lot of civil servants will be retiring in the next few years. The baby-boomers will be leaving soon and there will be a need to hire a lot of staff—people who are already properly trained. Is that not what is happening now?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Perhaps not directly at the university. The Commissioner, Graham Fraser, has decided to undertake a study to assess the capacity—

Mr. Yvon Godin: There are already a lot of studies. This has been studied to death. I am talking about something concrete.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: There is a study on the universities' ability to train people to be bilingual. We are expecting the results of that study to be released any time now. I believe there will be a meeting next week. When that discussion takes place, representatives of the public service will be very curious to see the results, so that they can go out and hire bilingual students. I have certainly received that message loud and clear.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Godin.

The next one to speak is Mr. Petit, whose turn I skipped earlier.

Mr. Petit.

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): When Mr. Godin asks question, it is always very interesting.

There is one thing I would like to say, by way of a preamble to my question. I am from a province where we have Bill 101. Therefore, you will understand that my questions to you are going to be very specific. You represent an Ontario university and, if I understood your explanation, the money you receive comes primarily from the Ontario government. You also said in your opening statement that the University of Ottawa has, or at least seems to have, more Francophones than any other university outside Quebec, and that the Ontario government is providing the necessary funding.

The study we are conducting is intended to try to help us understand how it is, in the public service—because this has been a criticism aimed at the public service for quite some time, long before my arrival here—that so-called bilingual positions are staffed by unilingual employees, be they Francophone or Anglophone. A lot of available positions are offered to people who have completed their university studies, meaning that they were educated in a university. If they send us students—and I am not talking about the University of Ottawa—who are not bilingual, what we have to know is whether they should be required to be bilingual or whether they should be given training, as you were saying earlier.

If I hire someone from Saskatchewan, who has extraordinary skills as a chemist or in another area and he becomes my deputy minister, without knowing a single word of French, then we have a problem. I am sure you understand what I am getting at.

My question is more specific and is addressed, first, to our guests representing the universities and, second, to Ms. Fortier. Laval University is located in my riding. We have a wonderful faculty of medicine, a faculty of dentistry and there are many areas of specialized study, like psychology, and so on. A lot of material is produced in English. I would not say everything, because that would not be true, but a lot of it is in English.

Conversely, at university, we also receive a lot of material that comes from France. My area of expertise is the law, where both French and English are used, and in order to study the Civil Code, when I am appearing before the Supreme Court of Canada, I have to understand both of the judge's decisions—in French and in English. Even in my own province, where we have Bill 101, information is produced in English.

How can we put a stop to this, so that French is not considered to be the language you use only to receive a grant or achieve notoriety? I am a little shocked. How can the universities go along with material being produced in English? I am also talking about institutions in my own province that also go along with this. I really don't understand that.

• (1025)

Mr. Richard Clément: Your question is a complex one. I fully agree with you as to what might be called the international hegemony of the English language. That is the case in the field of science, just as it is everywhere else. How can a university allow that to happen? Well, first of all, academic freedom means that university teachers can produce material in the language of their choice. I am not sure you wanted to address that, but it is an issue in itself.

Mr. Daniel Petit: No, it's dangerous.

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes, it is.

In terms of the level of bilingualism of university teaching staff—because we also have the problem of recruiting high-level researchers who are extremely competent and bilingual—on a small scale, the university deals with that by including in the initial hiring contract an obligation to become bilingual in order to achieve tenure. If that obligation is not met, the teacher simply does not receive tenure.

It is a fairly draconian measure. It may not be the kind of action that could be contemplated in the public service. Also, the studies that have been done in places where this occurs show that people can only retain a minority language as a second language in an environment where that second language is valued.

That is a major operation. There needs to be a culture in the public service, an institutional culture that values the other language. In order for that to happen, deputy ministers will probably have to be convinced of the need to reflect that requirement. It is all about the culture in the public service. I cannot really give you any other answer, except to say that it is a substantial problem.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your comments, Mr. Petit.

• (1030)

Mr. Daniel Petit: We are not finished yet.

The Chair: You may give a very brief answer.

Dr. Suzanne Fortier: In the sciences and innovation, there is a local context and a global context. I spend a great deal of time in Francophone universities, including Laval University, and I have observed at the local level that people do talk and work together in French; however, when it comes time to publish, they often choose English because publishing means they are competing at the global level and the dominant language of science is English.

I would like to give you two examples of actions we have taken to promote bilingualism among scientists and engineers. First of all, we have partnership programs where we create linkages between researchers in different regions of the country. For example, we have just established such linkages between Laval University and the University of Alberta. On both sides of the partnership, they speak and work in both languages.

Second, we have programs in place to encourage student mobility, so that they can have experiences in another context, another country. Other than Canada, the three most targeted countries, in terms of mobility and partnerships, are the United States, the United Kingdom and France. This is a way of allowing Francophones to improve their English through partnerships with the United Kingdom or the United States, and Anglophones to improve their French in France. We are seeing the positive spinoffs of these partnerships and this kind of mobility.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Petit.

I would like to add one thing to your comments, Ms. Fortier. Only 5 % of grant applications are written in French, even though it is clear that French-speaking universities use that language to write their applications. I guess we can conclude that the work which flows from those projects that receive grants will also be in the same language.

Dr. Suzanne Fortier: Yes, exactly.

The Chair: Mr. D'Amours.

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

I will be sharing my time with my colleague, Mr. Rodriguez.

I would like to clarify one thing. Mr. Petit, you did say earlier that it would be great if all deputy ministers were bilingual, did you not?

Mr. Daniel Petit: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Well, that is exactly the line of questioning I would like to pursue. It is a little ironic to hear that. In fact, last week, Mr. Dulude, who had worked previously for Mr. Chong, said that all deputy ministers in the public service are bilingual. Now, though, you are saying that it would be great if they all were. It is difficult to know whom to believe.

Mr. Clément and Ms. Lauzon, we were talking about the public service and training a little earlier. I would like you to confirm one thing for me. You said that you receive students from immersion and that it can be difficult at times for them to continue to use their second language. If the person in charge of the organization is not proficient in the second language, then it is more difficult for the subordinate employee to retain second-language skills.

Like the people who came before you, you are doing the best you can to ensure that these individuals have a good understanding of the second language and a good level of proficiency. However, once someone has been hired, the problem is that the person in charge of the organization is not even able to speak that second language. What that means is that the student that you have trained will end up going back to his or her mother tongue. This kind of situation is far more likely to occur than the reverse.

Mr. Richard Clément: The loss I refer to with respect to students who stop using their second language after being in immersion in high school also applies to people who end up in a job where they cannot use their second language, or in an environment where that culture does not exist. Ultimately, the culture of the organization depends on the leadership of the person in charge of the department, who will impose that culture.

I fully agree with you. And that culture is a lot more intangible than simply saying to people they will take 40 hours of courses in French as a second language for six months. It requires other strategies and very definitely a political will to bring about change.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: As you say, it is a question of leadership.

Mr. Richard Clément: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: If you want to ensure that things are working well in the lower ranks, you have to set an example at the top. However, Mr. Petit seemed to be saying earlier that deputy ministers are not automatically bilingual. That means that leadership is lacking at that level in terms of ensuring that people in the lower ranks can continue to speak their second language.

•(1035)

Mr. Richard Clément: It is a question of both leadership and values. I don't know that it is easy to change the values of a well-entrenched group, but we can certainly try. It is also possible that language planning skills are not part of the training given senior officials. For example, if you are going to ask deputy ministers to

ensure that their department reflects the Canadian duality, they have to know how to go about doing that. That is something they can learn. We are starting to provide that kind of training.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: In that connection, do you have the impression that federal deputy ministers are interested in receiving that kind of training or that they have to be asked to take it? Does it seem to be something that occurs regularly?

Mr. Richard Clément: I have no evidence that it is, because I have not conducted any research in that particular area, nor have I interviewed deputy ministers.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Ms. Fortier, you are shaking your head. Do you think the answer to that is no?

Dr. Suzanne Fortier: We have not studied it. All I can say is that the deputy ministers we work with in areas of interest to NSERC can generally carry on a conversation in both languages.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: You said “generally”.

Dr. Suzanne Fortier: Yes, at NSERC, we tend to switch from one language to the other, often without realizing it, because our organization is truly bilingual. To my knowledge, the deputy ministers we work with can also switch between French and English without a problem.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: It is not necessarily automatic. As Mr. Clément was saying—

Dr. Suzanne Fortier: The deputy ministers that I work with are bilingual. That is all I can tell you.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chairman, I realize that there are people opposite who have questions and that my time is up. But, I really do not understand. Some people are saying they are bilingual; other are saying they are not all bilingual, and some people on the same side of the table are telling us they are all bilingual. Perhaps we should get them all in here and give them a test, to find out what the reality is.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Chong, you have the floor.

[English]

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

I believe that all deputy ministers are bilingual. They certainly were when I was working with them during my time.

This study that we're undertaking here today is to better understand the root causes why French is on the decline in Canada, both in and outside Quebec. So I think your testimony has been useful. I think the other reason why we're undertaking this study is to better understand what we can do to arrest this decline.

According to the 2006 census, there are nearly as many Canadians with a non-official language as their mother tongue as there are francophones in this country. I have no doubt that in the subsequent census in 2011, we'll see for the first time in Canadian history the number of francophones exceeded by the number of Canadians with a non-official language.

Clearly there are big demographic changes going on in our country. In fact, the number of people with Chinese as their first language now exceeds the number of francophones in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. In fact, in Quebec, the number of people who speak French at home as their first language has declined from about 83% in the 2001 census to 82% in the 2006 census. So even in Quebec, the French language is under pressure.

The rate of bilingualism of anglophones outside of Quebec is declining among young people especially—and this is the worrisome statistic. This is one of the reasons why we're focusing in this study on the educational aspects of language policy. We know from StatsCan that the number of bilingual high school students outside Quebec has declined in the last number of years, from about—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Pardon me for interrupting, Mr. Chong.

I am having trouble hearing the questions and answers because there are people chatting among themselves. I would ask those who would like to chat to please leave the room so that we can all concentrate on the subject at hand. Thank you.

Mr. Chong, please proceed.

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong: StatsCan reports that from 1996 to 2006, the number of bilingual high school students in Canada has declined from about 16% to 13%. These numbers are disappointing, especially in light of the fact that in 2003 the Government of Canada came forward with an action plan on official languages to try to deal with this. It had an ambitious target of doubling the number of bilingual students in this country by 2013. By all reports at this juncture, it appears that we're nowhere near meeting those targets. So these are worrisome trends.

We've heard from witnesses at previous meetings that second-language requirements for admission to Canadian universities have declined over recent decades, and that second-language requirements for graduation from undergraduate programs in Canada have also declined in that time. It's interesting.

I'd like to hear from the University of Ottawa, because it is interesting to hear in your testimony that you may be strengthening some of the graduation requirements with respect to second languages, as part of the changes to undergraduate requirements you're making. Perhaps you can tell the committee exactly what you're looking at doing, and perhaps tell us if any other universities are considering doing similar things.

•(1040)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: I believe the statistics you refer to affect us. We would like to see how that trend could be reversed. A number of actions have to be taken at several different levels. To begin with, we want to establish very close links with primary and secondary schools, in order to show them that it is possible to continue to study in French at university. In minority language families, children are often told they should study in English to be sure they will secure a job afterwards. But we tell them they should continue to study in French, in order to retain their language proficiency. Also, they will then be bilingual when they complete their education.

We do not impose language requirements on most of our students, except in those programs where bilingualism is mandatory. And we would like there to be more of these programs. At the present time, we are asking each of the faculties to prepare a list of all the programs where being bilingual, when you complete the program, provides real value added for students. We will be looking at what can be done to foster increased bilingualism among our students.

In 2000, a study showed that 51% of our students were already bilingual. That is probably the highest percentage of all the universities in Canada. So, we are ahead of the others, but we would also like to see bilingualism increased, without it being imposed. As a result, we are introducing incentives, so that students see that it is to their benefit—value added—and therefore decide to maintain or improve their proficiency in the other official language.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Mr. Nadeau.

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

By the way, I would like to thank Mr. Gaffield for offering to send us the titles of these studies. I believe they will make an important contribution to the committee's work.

Mr. Clément, I taught in French schools in Saskatchewan. When the children were starting school, they were already bilingual. Here I am referring to Saskatoon, which is clearly a very Anglophone environment.

One of the problems we had at school was that, after Grade 8, the parents—Franco-Saskatchewanians, old stock Franco-Manitobans or Quebeckers whose language and culture were French—would decide to send their children to an immersion school or even an English school because French was not enough to ensure that they could earn a living. That is part of the mindset, and it is very sad and very difficult for teachers to accept the idea that, having fought for these schools and having finally secured them, young people would not remain in the system. When that happens, we lose these young people. It is a real shame, and it simply is not true that if they go into immersion, they will remain Francophone, particularly since they are in a very Anglophone environment.

When you conduct studies with a view to finding ways of keeping young people interested in pursuing their education in French as a first language, do you find there are old stock Francophones who went to English school, that you consider to be Anglophones, and who learn their second language when they are admitted to your programs? Do you look at their educational path when you are looking at admission?

•(1045)

Mr. Richard Clément: Admission—

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Sorry.

I will address that to Ms. Lauzon.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Registration is left up to the students. However, we are seeing a change. There are more and more Francophones deciding to stay in the French system and register in French at university. There are few Francophone students who decide to register in English-language programs at university.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I understand. I was afraid that there could be a negative result from an initiative that is trying to do good.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: I would just like to come back to our experience in Saskatchewan. What you described is something that many parents have also told us. A major promotional effort is needed there to bring home to people that there is value in pursuing one's studies in French. In Ontario, the results of math and literacy tests are released every year for both primary and secondary schools in French and in English. Since promotional campaigns have been underway, we have noted an increase in the number of students registering in French schools, because it has become clear that students are just as successful in French as they are in English. So, promoting and valuing studies in French is an important part of this. There are just as many opportunities to get a job afterwards, because it is well known that in minority communities, young people are bilingual.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: What you have said is fundamentally important. As part of our study, we are focussing on the capacity of our universities to train bilingual graduates.

In the federal public service, there are people whose usual language is French but who almost always speak English at work, which is perfectly abnormal. They feel pressured to speak English because their superior does not understand French. It is fine to say that deputy ministers are all bilingual; the fact is that there are different levels of bilingualism.

I would like to take this analysis one step further. To be a minister, you have to be bilingual and set an example for your employees. That should be the reality in a bilingual country, a country that claims to have a bilingual federal public service able to provide services in the language of the individual wanting to speak to a minister, deputy minister or other official.

If the prime minister is bilingual and ministers are bilingual, then we will have demonstrated that capacity. You have to lead by example.

The Chair: Please be brief, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: It is extremely important to highlight the need to avoid losing Francophones who are studying in French, and who could become people who see themselves as bilingual but end up working in English.

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: Yes, exactly.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

That completes our three rounds of questioning.

Mr. Godin, you have one final question.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you. I agree with Ms. Lauzon, who was saying earlier that, at the University of Ottawa, people have an opportunity to practice both languages. I believe the problem really arises when you go to other regions of the country. I believe there is some difficulty in that regard at the University of New Brunswick in

Saint John. I was talking to some students there last week, who were telling me that no one promotes French. A student from Nova Scotia was saying that she had left Nova Scotia to come to New Brunswick, thinking she would have an opportunity to learn French, but she is studying at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John and does not have that opportunity.

I just want to add as well that we were able to secure French schools, colleges and universities only after court challenges. For example, the Collège Boréal in Sudbury is doing very good work; a lot of young people are registering to study at that college.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask our researcher to prepare a list of all the current deputy ministers along with their level of bilingualism.

• (1050)

The Chair: Is that a question or a request?

Mr. Yvon Godin: It is a request.

The Chair: Perhaps we could look at that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We were told two things repeatedly: our deputy ministers are all bilingual and...

The Chair: We can ask our analyst to prepare an answer to that question. We can talk about this at our next meeting. I simply want to take full advantage of the witnesses who are with us today. Mr. Chong is the driving force behind this study.

By the way, I would just like to remind colleagues that the list of witnesses, including this morning's witnesses, was provided to all members of the committee. I wanted to point that out and commend people for trying to reconcile our main study with subjects such as the one we were reviewing on Tuesday.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In the end, it turned out quite well, Mr. Chairman. We had a good discussion.

The Chair: Yes, and you were closely involved in it, Mr. Godin. Thank you.

Mr. Chong, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a brief question for Ms. Lauzon. Have other universities communicated with you, at the University of Ottawa, to find out what you have been doing to promote bilingualism at the university level?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: The seven bilingual universities that are part of the Francophonie in Ontario are all working together. We know what is going on in each of the other institutions. We are also in touch with the Association of Universities of the Canadian Francophonie, which represents all Francophone or bilingual institutions outside Quebec. We are part of that network. We are also part of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie. So, we have connections to other universities, who see what we are doing. We also have connections at the international level. Not so long ago, we hosted visitors from Ireland, who are also dealing with linguistic duality. We definitely have connections with many other universities as regards research in this area.

Hon. Michael Chong: And what about English-speaking universities?

Ms. Sylvie Lauzon: We have very few connections there. We really don't have any to speak of with Anglophone universities, in terms of language proficiency. As a general rule, universities do not have that mandate. Like all universities, the University of Ottawa's primary function is education, knowledge dissemination, the generation of new knowledge through research, and in our case, this other special mandate. However, that is not part of the mandate of many other universities.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Gaffield, please.

Dr. Chad Gaffield: I have one last comment or word of encouragement.

[*English*]

Last year we recognized that we had real potential to contribute to the federal public service renewal effort, in the sense that our graduates are such a huge proportion of the pool of potential recruits. As you know, we occupy about 60% of the university campuses, and so on. So we contacted the clerk and offered to help by ensuring there was better contact between the recruitment efforts of the federal

government and our scholarship winners, fellowship winners, key researchers, and so on.

I can tell you about the details of those efforts. Just as an example, in the coming weeks, the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, which gathers together graduate students and researchers from across Canada and around the world, will be here in Ottawa, and the federal government will be present there in terms of recruiting students.

[*Translation*]

Given that the language question is at the very core of the humanities, our students are well equipped to meet that need. We are working hard to improve the recruitment process. Thus far, we note that the progress achieved in collaboration with our colleagues seems encouraging.

The Chair: We have to find a new generation to replace the baby-boomers. This is something that is causing concern.

I would like to thank all of you for being here this morning and contributing to the work of this committee.

The meeting is adjourned.

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