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**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**

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• (0910)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** I'd like to call the meeting to order.

While committee members take their places, we'll begin the meeting. This is the 19th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It concerns the federal government's support for postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada. This morning's meeting is the last that we'll devote to this subject until the Commissioner of Official Languages appears.

This morning, we have some prominent guests, starting with Mr. Labrie, who is Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages, Mr. Labrie.

We also have Ms. Bernadette Kassi, who is Director, Module of Arts, Department of Language Studies at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. You have a supporter with you this morning.

You will be with us for the first part of the meeting. The committee will then hold a teleconference. Without further delay, I invite Mr. Labrie to start with his opening address.

**Mr. Normand Labrie (Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto):** Good morning, everyone. I'm honoured to be here today to represent the University of Toronto as Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies of the OISE, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, which is the Faculty of Education of the University of Toronto.

I'm going to use the six minutes allotted to me to provide an overview of what the University of Toronto is doing to promote French and bilingualism. You know as well as I do that the University of Toronto is essentially an English-language institution, and the actions taken at the University of Toronto to promote French are often little known. I'm going to provide this overview to show you everything the University of Toronto is doing.

The University of Toronto has a special history and mandate. It has been in existence for nearly 200 years, but, since 1853, the university has offered courses in French as well as courses in French literature. It thus started doing so 14 years before Confederation and 12 years after the union of Lower Canada and Upper Canada.

The university has imposing collections of works in its French-language libraries, and a number of institutes, research centres are

advancing knowledge on issues concerning the French language and the Francophonie.

With regard to demographics, as is the case for most Canadian universities, the vast majority of students at the University of Toronto come from the immediate region: 82% of students are from Ontario, 1.2% from Quebec, and 9% from foreign countries. This situation is typical of Canadian universities in general. We have 72,000 students, including 25,000 whose mother tongue is a language other than English or French. Today I could talk to you about everything the University of Toronto does for English as an official language, but I'm going to focus on what it does for French. So there are 25,000 students whose mother tongue is a language other than English or French and 613 students for whom French is their mother tongue, which represents roughly 1% of our student body.

However, we have a larger number of francophone students because the figures we have do not enable us to determine who consider themselves francophones. We only have figures from students who apply for admission and say that French is their mother tongue. We know and you know as well that these kinds of statistics are often not entirely clear. Three hundred and seven students come from member countries of the Francophonie, that is 4% of our 8,000 foreign students.

In a study I am currently conducting with Professor Sylvie Lamoureux of the University of Ottawa, we have examined data from the Ottawa University Application Centre to determine in which Ontario universities Ontario francophones enrolled from 1998 to 2006. We discovered that, out of 15,000 francophone students—who are students completing high school in French-language schools or graduates from English-language schools, but who say their mother tongue is French—half went to the University of Ottawa and 15% to Laurentian University in Sudbury. In third place, for the largest number of francophone students enrolled, was the University of Toronto with 618 students. During that eight-year period, the universities of Windsor and Carleton came next in terms of enrolments, and the bilingual Glendon College, of York University, in Toronto, was quite far behind with 212 students, one-third of the number of students we took in.

We offer French-language university programs. Undergraduate students at the University of Toronto have the opportunity to choose a major in French. We currently have 321 students who have opted for a major in French studies. They specialize in language, literature, culture, civilization, economics and so on. We also have a number of students who are taking French courses, but who are not included in that group of students really specializing in French. The department offers a number of courses in Quebec history, culture and literature as part of this major in French. We also have 13 students in the master's program and 73 students in the doctoral program in French studies at the University of Toronto.

You see that we are producing a lot of sources of knowledge and future researchers who will be specialists in French later on.

● (0915)

French-language knowledge is not a requirement for admission to our programs, except for students doing a major in French. They have to have an adequate knowledge of the language to be able to do those studies.

In addition, a number of master's and doctoral programs in the Faculty of Arts and Science require knowledge of French, whereas the master's or doctoral thesis requires students to work on Francophone issues in Canada. In that case, students must have knowledge of the French language.

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, where I come from, every year trains 1,300 students in education, all future teachers. We are offering a French cohort for future teachers of French as a second language, immersion or core French.

In the past three years, we have trained 173 future teachers of French as a second language. A study by the Ontario College of Teachers recently showed that 70% of graduates from a French teacher training program, whether it be for French as a second language or as a mother tongue, find a permanent job in the year after they complete their education, compared to only 25% of graduates from English-language programs. There is a much higher permanent employment rate if you graduate in French. This rule applies to our students as well; they very easily find work in the first year.

The Institute also offers master's and doctoral programs. In the past 10 years, nearly 435 students have taken French courses at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education or have conducted research and prepared theses on francophone issues. Some of those theses are written in English, others in French. In all, a very large number of theses and essays have been written on French or the Francophonie in education.

We also offer courses to provide additional qualifications for active teachers who have to go back to university to specialize. The Institute offers 100 different additional qualifications courses and seven of those courses are for teachers of French as a second language. They attract approximately 240 teachers every year.

Lastly, the University of Toronto also has a school of continuing education, which offers adult courses in French as a second language. This year, we had 12 different courses, with 44 sections, and more than 600 students were enrolled in our French second-language courses for adults.

Allow me to say a few words about research. The University of Toronto is the number one university in Canada in research supported by outside funding every year. We have a number of research centres that focus either directly on French or the Francophonie or on other subjects, but with a francophone component.

I'll cite only four examples. The purpose of the Centre d'études de la France et du monde francophone, established by the French Embassy and the Faculty of Arts and Science in 2007, is to combine everything that is done at the University of Toronto in the area of French-language teaching and research on francophone issues, and to promote student exchanges and maintain bridges with the francophone communities in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

The second important research centre is the Centre Joseph-Sablé, whose research focuses on 19th century France and which houses archives that exist nowhere else, such as the Émile Zola archive, which comes from the Zola family. People come from around the world to work on those archives at our university. It is a centre that houses an enormous number of documents on 19th century France, and it is an important place.

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has two education research centres that are no doubt of interest to you. The first, the Modern Language Centre, has been in existence for more than 30 years. It conducts research on second-language instruction. Research on French as a second language has always been a very important component of that centre.

● (0920)

By conducting research and demonstrating that immersion is a program that works well, the centre has really popularized the idea of immersion in Canada in the past 30 years.

The Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne focuses on linguistic minority issues, the francophone minorities in Ontario and across Canada. It was my pleasure to be the director of that research centre for 10 years. It is a centre that is very active and that receives a number of research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. It is very successful in that field.

The University of Toronto has entered into research partnerships. The most important one on the francophone side is with Laval University for the writing of the Dictionnaire biographique du Canada. This is a fully bilingual resource, on line and accessible free of charge, which provides biographical information on prominent Canadians who died between the year 1000 and 1930. This partnership has been in existence for 50 years and has also been funded through federal research funding granted over the years.

We still have a lot of research partnerships. For example, over the past 10 years, approximately 200 researchers from the University of Toronto have cooperated on research projects conducted by Quebec universities at francophone universities and have been involved with those research teams directed by researchers from Quebec.

The University of Toronto has an exchange program with Laval University. Every year, one of our students can study at Laval University on a full one-year scholarship.

We've also entered into agreements with six universities in France and a number of student exchange agreements with several other francophone universities. Last year, some 40 students from the University of Toronto studied at francophone universities around the world.

This year, 265 students from the University of Toronto took part in international exchanges, while the university received 377 foreign students from 33 different countries. France was the country most often selected by our students: some 40 students went to that country. As part of those exchanges, we also welcomed some 40 students from France. This is the fourth contingent from a foreign country to come to Toronto.

Before closing, I am going to say a few words about the library of the University of Toronto, which is the largest in Canada and the fourth largest in North America, following those of Harvard, Berkeley and Columbia. Out of a fund of 13 million to 14 million works, 472,000 are in French. Every year, the library buys more than 4,000 volumes in French published in foreign francophone countries and more than 1,000 volumes published in French in Canada. We generally buy everything in print so that our students and researchers have access to it.

The library also includes two collections linked to the research centres I just mentioned: that of the Modern Language Centre contains approximately 4,000 works on second-language teaching and learning, and that of the Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne, which has more than 1,000 works on minority language and francophone issues in Canada.

To conclude, the University of Toronto is truly an international-level academic, intellectual and scientific environment. It offers considerable opportunities to students, society in general and the university world in French to develop and acquire knowledge.

We think our efforts to promote French and bilingualism in the context in which we operate—I would recall that the vast majority of our students speak a language other than English and French—could benefit from increased federal government financial support, mainly through scholarships for our master's and doctoral-level students who wish to specialize in various fields, including French. We also hope to see funding for research in the social sciences and humanities increased. That will be one way for us to help our researchers continue conducting research and to benefit society in general as a result, including people who are interested in the French language.

• (0925)

We also hope that the federal-provincial agreements on official languages will be extended and reinforced because our research centres benefit from them, in particular the Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne, which receives federal government grants. This is essential for the continuation of its activities.

Thank you for your attention.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir, for your opening address.

We'll now continue on with Ms. Kassi, from the UQO.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi (Director, Arts Module, Department of Language Studies, Université du Québec en Outaouais):**

Mr. Chairman, committee members, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for this opportunity to express my university's vision of federal government support for universities in promoting bilingualism in Canada.

After briefly introducing my university, I will then discuss the federal funding it receives and the teaching programs it offers, then address a few initiatives that have been taken to develop the minority communities and second-language learning. Lastly, I will ask the federal government to support projects designed to increase the success rate of action taken to reinforce bilingualism in the federal public service.

The UQO is a francophone university institution that trains nearly 5,500 students by offering them nearly 100 study options in the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels, in fields as diverse as business administration, nursing, accounting, information technologies and computer engineering, industrial relations, social sciences and social work, psychoeducation and psychology, the arts and heritage, as well as language studies. Our university also houses the Centre de recherche en technologies langagières, the CRTL, which was founded in 2003 and opened in the spring of 2006, in partnership with the Translation Bureau and the National Research Council of Canada.

Federal funding in support of CRTL's activities has been as follows over the years: \$9.2 million from Canada Economic Development for the Quebec regions to UQO for the construction of the CRTL building, which also houses the department of language studies; \$2 million a year from the National Research Council of Canada, one of CRTL's three partners; approximately \$450,000 from 2004 to 2006 to complete and the distribute the technological roadmap for the Canadian language industry; and, lastly, approximately \$100,000 received from Canadian Heritage in 2008-2009 for a project in the field of religious archives.

These various items of support funding have been of capital importance to UQO and the CRTL, given the central role that this research centre intends to play in the language industry, and, especially, in the development of the industrial cluster of the National Capital Region.

It should be noted here that, according to Industry Canada:

Overall, the Canadian language industry represented a GDP of \$2.7 billion in 2004. Expressed in real terms or 1997 dollars, this is equivalent to \$2.3 billion, or 0.2% of the Canadian economy. Some 51,700 jobs can be attributed to the language industry in 2004. Lastly, federal and regional government coffers benefited from net contributions of \$764.9 million and \$215.3 million, respectively.

It should also be recalled that UQO is a francophone institution located in a francophone province, Quebec, which excludes it from all provincial funding for minority official language community development. And yet UQO's location, in a border area with Ontario, a majority anglophone province, gives it contradictory status as a result of which it receives no additional public funding. However, although the University of Ottawa defines itself as a bilingual university with "very specific objectives" such as the promotion of bilingualism and development of minority francophone communities—that is, in Ontario—we can only note that it mainly serves the same francophone populations as the UQO, that is the pool of nearly one million francophones in the Quebec Outaouais and eastern Ontario region, a strong majority of whom are Quebecers. And yet, unlike its Ontario counterpart, the UQO receives no provincial or federal funding to encourage the retention of francophone students or the development of anglophone minority communities because it falls within the jurisdiction of a francophone province.

● (0930)

This precisely illustrates the "atypical [status] of the Outaouais region, particularly with regard to its proximity to Ontario [and especially the] proximity of two different education systems [with two equally different funding arrangements] whose ability to adjust is being tested," as Ms. Nicole Boutin, Chair of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, noted on her recent visit to the region on November 13, 2008.

Despite the UQO's francophone character, as outlined in its recently adopted language policy, there is an institutional will to develop bilingual and multilingual programs, provided the support of the federal and provincial governments is consistent with this young university's development objectives.

We already offer undergraduate programs in translation and writing—translation from English to French—and a master's program in second-language instruction—French, English and Spanish—and we are preparing a master's program in language and technology studies, a program that is not yet completed. In addition, the Department of Language Studies intends to establish a language school that would offer effective language training to anglophones wishing to learn French in an immersion context.

Most of the experts and witnesses who have preceded me unanimously agree on one fact: starting second-language learning in primary and secondary school is an excellent strategy. However, adults can also learn a second language, provided they use teaching methods that are quite different from those used with children.

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the AUCC, believes that "universities should work toward improving bilingualism in Canada by providing opportunities within their own institutions for the development of bilingual competence."

The UQO offers immersion programs in a francophone university setting for anglophone students who wish to learn French as a second language. The combination of courses, extra-curricular activities in French and the francophone environment is a lever for making second-language learning a living experience for these anglophone students.

In addition, contrary to some still widespread beliefs, the majority anglophone environment of so-called bilingual institutions is not conducive to promoting proficiency in the second language, French, among students from secondary immersion programs. A second language is acquired more quickly and readily at a fully bilingual immersion site.

The UQO believes that the federal government would do well to invest more in funding for postsecondary institutions if it wants to achieve the main purposes of the Official Languages Act, by ensuring that the public service succession is qualified and effective in at least the two official languages. The representatives of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada also recalled that "universities have an important role to play in promoting and further developing bilingual competence in Canadian society."

But how to achieve that praiseworthy objective? According to the UQO, it can be achieved by:

- promoting research and the language industry through its financial support for the CRTL, the Centre de recherche en technologies langagières;

- by funding research into official languages and bilingualism, the languages and literatures of the world and cultural diversity, even multilingualism; learning a number of languages, including the official languages, is a fundamentally important issue for Canada, which moreover is very proud of its cultural diversity;

- and, lastly, by funding French immersion programs at the UQO and other university institutions offering a fully francophone environment, an ideal framework for French second-language learning by anglophone public servants, instead of French courses given in their offices a few hours a week. How can they assimilate the second language by remaining in a majority anglophone context on a day-to-day basis?

The above observations clearly show that the federal government will not achieve decisive results if it continues to invest in educational formats that produce no results in the short or long terms.

● (0935)

In conclusion, I would say that the UQO is definitely a unilingual francophone university, but it offers enormous second-language learning opportunities in a total immersion context that would help reduce dissatisfaction with current programs designed to teach anglophone federal public servants French pursuant to the Official Languages Act.

In view of the fact that all experts agree that the best time to learn languages is before university, that adults can learn a second language, but by using a teaching method suited to them, and that there is an urgent need to improve the language proficiency levels of current federal public servants, we believe that investing in immersion training for a number of weeks in a totally francophone environment, such as that at the UQO, would help the public service solve the bilingualism problem in the short and medium terms, while establishing strategies for future generations.

Thank you.

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

Without further ado, we'll start with Ms. Rodriguez.

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

Good morning, Mr. Labrie and Ms. Kassi. Welcome. I am very pleased that you are here with us.

Mr. Labrie, I'm going to speak to you first. I heard your statistics concerning francophones and I found them somewhat surprising. I'm curious. I'm of Argentinian extraction, and my mother tongue is Spanish. I speak French at home. Based on your statistics, who am I?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** The only figure we have at the University of Toronto is the figure on mother tongue. When students file an admission application, they have to state their mother tongue. That's the only figure we have.

As I said, we no doubt have more francophones than our figures indicate.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Based on your statistics, I wouldn't be—

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** We don't ask people for information on how they view themselves, how they identify themselves.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** So, based on your statistics, I wouldn't be francophone.

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** You wouldn't be according to the statistics in the data bases of the University of Toronto. However, you would be according to our integration notions.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** You said that 60% of people who complete their studies in French get jobs in the labour market in the first year. That's a much higher rate than in the case of those who complete their studies in English. How do you explain that?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** There's a shortage of French second-language teachers in general. There are also needs in the area of French mother tongue instruction. Education graduates, those with a bachelor's degree in education who want to become teachers, very often find jobs because there is a shortage—

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** They mainly find jobs in minority areas, in the francophone communities in the country?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** That's a study by the Ontario College of Teachers. That includes students who have training in French second-language instruction and French mother tongue education. That 70% figure applies to both groups who find permanent jobs in the first year after graduation.

● (0940)

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Do you know whether those people stay, remain in the Toronto region, or whether they work across the country?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** We have enormous shortages of French second-language teachers in Toronto. Our Toronto graduates find jobs in the region. There are a lot of young people who come from elsewhere and who live in Toronto to teach French.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Are there links between your university and the francophone community?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** There are very strong links, especially through research centres such as the Centre de recherche en éducation franco-ontarienne, which has been in existence for more than 30 years. There are links. We conduct research on francophones, but also with francophones.

We've worked everywhere in Canada, particularly in Acadia, with teams from the Université de Moncton. This is research that very often includes the communities. There are organic ties that exist and that are very strong.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** These are mainly professional ties? There are no informal ties, such as the organization of activities or festivals, in particular, to integrate the university into the community.

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** We do a lot of things together. I could mention a research project that was started by the Association des femmes africaines francophones de Toronto, which wanted to further integrate women in the schools. We formed a partnership with them. We helped that association fit into the school fabric, and at the same time analyze what was going on and all the problems they were having in moving toward that objective.

That's the kind of research activity that involves the community. The members of the centre are personally involved in the francophone community as members of the board of directors of the Centre francophone de Toronto, for example. We have quite strong personal involvements.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Turning to you, Ms. Kassi, do you have any agreements or exchange programs with anglophone universities across the country?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** We have agreements with most Canadian universities for students wishing to take courses for a semester or two. There is even a scholarship program that enables them to go outside Canada.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Is there a program that enables anglophone students across the country to come and study at your institution, for example?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** No, we don't have that kind of agreement for the moment because the program we offer, at the department of language studies, for example, is an English-to-French translation program.

So if anglophone students come and study at our institution, they have to be in a position where they already master French in their curriculum so that they can enter the courses we offer in our programs, which is not the case at this time.

That's what we want to develop to enable those students to spend a semester or two of their program at the UQO.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, both of you.

We'll continue with Mr. Nadeau.

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

I want to point out to you that I'll have a motion to introduce at the end of the meeting; I will be bringing it in a few moments. We'll come back to that.

Good morning, Ms. Kassi and Mr. Labrie.

Ms. Kassi, I've taken some notes. You said in your presentation that a second language is acquired more quickly and readily in an entirely unilingual immersion setting.

Could you elaborate on that subject and tell us how your institution could be a solution to the problem we're trying to solve, at least to a certain degree, so that there are more qualified graduates who are able to function in French and English once they've completed their education?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** This observation is based on a number of findings, first that of the experts in second-language instruction and acquisition research. They unanimously agree that, to learn a second language, you have to be immersed in an environment where the majority speaks that language. That's the first finding.

The second finding concerns the results of all those second-language acquisition methods used by the federal public service to lead federal public servants to acquire a second language. A number take courses at language schools a few hours a week; others receive courses in their offices, and the result is that they've not yet reached a satisfaction level or satisfactory success rate using those methods to enable the majority of those federal public servants to acquire that second language.

The third finding is that most anglophone universities that have understood the importance of developing bilingualism favour immersion programs, those that enable students who have a different first language to soak up the second language in a francophone context or environment, in addition to courses and extra-curricular activities. This enables them to develop this language ability or language skills in their second language.

Based on those three findings, we've observed that it is true that immersion programs do exist. Either they are short-term courses for those students or individuals and do not enable them to develop enough language skills to become bilingual, or those students are immersed in a majority first-language environment, which also undermines the objective or effectiveness of that method. Hence the proposal to offer these learners a framework or environment that is a majority second-language environment so that they can optimize what they are already learning about that second language in courses.

As a solution, we propose the Université du Québec en Outaouais, given that, as I said in my opening remarks, it has a geographic location that does not help it but it could be very strategic. It is a francophone environment, but one in which anglophones who would come to learn French at the UQO would not feel entirely out of their element. Not only would they be in contact with French speakers, they would also be immersed in a francophone environment, while retaining their first language, their mother tongue, which is English.

● (0945)

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

In your view, although the primary and secondary schools are the best places to learn a second language, adults can nevertheless learn one. What could you offer federal public servants to enable them one day to become bilingual?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** To enable our federal public servants one day to become totally bilingual, we suggest, for example, that they enrol in this immersion program that lasts one semester. Instead of

taking courses for an hour a week over two or three years, we could concentrate that learning in 15 weeks. They would enrol in a one-semester course. They could get leave or take the course on a part-time basis, but, in one way or another, they could learn the second language and be immersed in a francophone environment for a semester. I think that could promote faster learning of that language.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** You would encourage them to take the course on your campus, is that correct?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** That's correct, on the UQO site.

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

Mr. Godin, go ahead please.

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

Ms. Kassi, Mr. Labrie, I'm pleased to see you. This is very interesting.

Ms. Kassi, can the francophones who attend your university speak a little English when they leave it?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** Let's say that you have to draw a distinction between programs. All the programs are in French, but there are a few courses in English within those programs.

I'll talk about the programs in language studies that I am most familiar with. In our undergraduate translation and writing programs, for example, we prepare students to become translators and writers. That represents 90 credits, or 30 courses. Ten per cent of those courses are in English, the English writing and English comprehension courses. However, 90% of the courses are in French because the program is in French.

The students we admit are supposed to have both official languages. We require that students take an admission exam that consists of two parts, a text that must be written in French and a text that must be translated from English into French. We check their language skills in French and in English at the outset. This means that a person who does not master English or French cannot be admitted to our translation and writing program. That's the situation regarding the language studies programs.

However, in the other programs, in education, for example, we can't require that students master English because the purpose is to train people who will teach French or mathematics, for example.

To answer your question, I would say that the majority of programs offered at the UQO are French-language programs, even though there are a few courses in English within those programs.

● (0950)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Are there any courses at your university so that these people can go and work in the federal government, for example? Are they able to acquire enough proficiency in English to get federal government jobs?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** Yes, I would say that, in science—



**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Can people who attend your university master English when they leave it?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** The answer always has to be qualified. You have to answer by sector.

In business administration, for example, although the courses are given in French, most of the documentation is in English. As a result, students who want to succeed in business administration have to be proficient in English in order to read the documents.

Consequently, when they graduate, most of them are able to function in English and in French, but I couldn't answer off-hand for the others—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I have to interrupt you because I would like to get at one thing.

You say that an anglophone should learn French in a francophone environment. However, francophones can learn English without being in an anglophone environment. Don't you agree with me?

I'd also like to hear from Mr. Labrie. If anglophones want to be able to have jobs in Ottawa, they have to learn English. They don't have a choice; if they don't learn it, they won't find a job.

The government could adopt policies that would tell the universities and primary schools that people have to be bilingual in order to work for the federal government, that the future is a bilingual country, that there are two official languages in this country and that to have a job in government, you'll have to be able to speak both languages.

I'm an Acadian, and I come from the Saint-Sauveur region in New Brunswick. I can guarantee you that the percentage of English speakers is only 1%. I'm talking about the community, about schools and everything. In spite of that, if I hadn't learned English, I wouldn't have gotten a job. It was easy. I didn't need anglophones around me to learn it because, if I didn't learn it, I wouldn't have gotten a job.

Why will people even in francophone regions learn English except because they want to get a job? I think it's too easy. Pardon me, but it's too easy for anglophones to complete their education and afterwards find a job.

Mr. Labrie, you clearly said that anglophones or francophones who were able to speak French on leaving university found jobs in less than one year because they had both official languages.

However, it's harder for those who haven't learned both languages. Doesn't the government have a role to play in telling our training institutions what our country is?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** I meant that the UQO wants to establish bilingual and even multilingual programs so that, in every program that all students take, they'll be perfectly bilingual at the end.

To answer your question, it's true that the current programs are francophone programs. However, as a result of the geographic situation of the Outaouais, francophones are immersed in an anglophone environment outside the university.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You said that even the books were in English.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** In administration, the documentation is in English. I specified the program concerned and noted that you

shouldn't generalize because it's really sector by sector. In administration, most of the documentation is in English. Consequently, the students read English.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin, and thank you, Ms. Kassi.

We're going to continue with a student from the University of Toronto, the Honourable Michael Chong.

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

I'm going to ask my questions in English.

[*English*]

I want to direct my questions to Monsieur Labrie about the role that Canadian universities can play in the Government of Canada's renewal of the public service.

We're the largest employer in the country. We directly employ, in the public service, 263,000 people. If you include the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Forces, and the crown corporations and agencies, the number is probably closer to 400,000 or 450,000 people.

We are the largest employer. We're the most national employer. We have 1,600 points of service and offices in Canada. We're the most international employer. We operate in 150 countries abroad.

We're the largest single employer in the country and the most diverse in terms of geographic spread and the capabilities and responsibilities of the government. We're also undergoing the single largest renewal of any organization in the history of the country.

Twenty-five per cent of the public service can retire in the next three years, by 2012, and we are presently hiring 10,000 to 12,000 Canadians a year. The average age of the executives in the public service is 50. In other words, in the next 10 to 15 years, that entire executive class in the public service will need to be replaced.

We have significant challenges facing us. This renewal of the public service that is going to take place is the largest in this country's history, and we need to have the country's most qualified graduates, reflecting not only our diversity but our linguistic duality. But I don't believe we're getting the graduates we need from Canadian universities, especially from anglophone universities.

We're not getting them in terms of the diversity requirements that need to be met. The statistics show that the number of visible minorities in the public service has consistently not been up to the levels we need. That is a long-standing problem. Also, we're not getting the bilingual graduates we need to staff the public service. That's also clear in the fact that we have to devote a significant amount of resources to retraining this country's recently graduated students to learn the other language. In most cases, more often than not, it's to learn French.

I think the University of Toronto, as the largest and one of the most pre-eminent universities on this continent, has a leadership role to play in helping us get the public servants we need to meet the challenges of this century. I start that off by way of background.

The trends are not encouraging. When we look at the graduates we're receiving from Canadian high schools and secondary institutions, the trends aren't good. Statistics Canada reports that the percentage of bilingual students from 15 to 19 years old fell from about 25% to 22% over the 10-year period from 1996 to 2006.

I have a number of questions for you. First, have the federal government, the Clerk of the Privy Council, and federal institutions been working with the University of Toronto and with other universities in Canada to develop strategies to help us meet the need for more bilingual public servants?

• (0955)

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** Thank you.

I'm very glad to hear this background information that you gave. Personally, I didn't know about that, and I'm sure our students don't know about it. I don't think students will become bilingual through coercion, but they will through incentives. If they know there are many opportunities for them if they graduate in a field of their own interest and they have the other official language as well, they will be much better positioned to have those 12,000 positions that are coming up in the next few years.

Learning a language starts with primary and secondary education, and it is in those sectors that improvements have to be made first. That is where the federal government and the provinces have a role to play, by making sure that students have the chance to learn the other language and have access to quality programs in the other official language.

I see the role of the universities here in high-quality teacher education programs to train good teachers through the best methods, and also in conducting up-to-date research so that we are informed about the best practices. I think this is the role of the university.

At the university level, offering options or programs to students that give them a chance to add French to commerce or economics or political science is the way to go. I don't think making it mandatory for students would necessarily lead to great success, but if the federal government can support making French more available in universities in some programs and if students know that there is potential for them to access jobs, I think they will surely use those opportunities.

• (1000)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Labrie. Thank you, Mr. Chong.

[*Translation*]

Now we'll start our second round with Ms. Zarac.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question is for Ms. Kassi. I'm continuing in the same vein. Fewer and fewer bilingual students are coming out of educational institutions. There is some concern, and, as my colleague just mentioned, there will be increasing job opportunities. So we have to ensure that we have people who have the skills to occupy the jobs that will be available. Even the Minister of Canadian Heritage said, when he came here, that they had abandoned their target of doubling the number of bilingual students by 2013.

Since you are favoured by your geographic situation, I would like to know whether the federal government has approached you for an initiative or strategy to meet the public service's need for bilingual staff.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** No, there hasn't been any official request of that kind, but the university has for some time been considering the possibility of developing strategies for offering bilingual programs so that, at the end of their programs, Quebec and Canadian students who attend the UQO are bilingual, which is not currently the case, unless the students themselves take courses to improve their language skills in addition to the workload of the program in which they are enrolled.

There's no agreement in that area for the moment. The Université du Québec en Outaouais is very open to the idea, but we don't have the resources because offering bilingual programs requires a bilingual teaching staff and support staff. All that raises financial challenges that the UQO is unable to meet at this time.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** However, if I understand correctly, you'd be prepared to sit down and negotiate.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** We'd be entirely prepared to do that.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** That's good.

You mentioned that you received the following amounts from the federal government: \$9.2 million for the construction of a building—we're talking about infrastructure; \$2 million for research; \$450,000 from 2004 to 2006 for a technology roadmap; and \$100,000 in 2009-2009 for archives. Is there any funding for specific programs?

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** All the funding we receive from the federal government is really earmarked for research. First it was for the building, and that was a one-time item. Once the building was built, we received no more money for that purpose. The only recurring funding is the \$2 million that we receive through the National Research Council of Canada because it's a partner of CRTL. Otherwise, for the other items, those funds are related to research projects. The \$100,000 from Canadian Heritage, for example, is funding that a CRTL member researcher was able to get for a research project on religious archives.

I have to say that little money is allocated to the development of language studies. In addition to program funding, we need funding. A good balance between teaching and research can help develop this bilingualism perspective and achieve the objective we're talking about here, which is to enable Canadian students to be bilingual at the end of their programs.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** All right, thank you.

You also mentioned a lack of fairness between the University of Ottawa and the Université du Québec en Outaouais. Have you previously discussed this program and, if so, with whom? How could we be fairer with your university, in your opinion?

•(1005)

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** That's a really delicate issue. Since education is a provincial jurisdiction, it's very hard for the university to request more money from the federal government. The provincial rules are very clear. Since the UQO is a francophone institution, it's not easy to request funding to develop bilingual programs, in particular. In that sense, the situation of the Université du Québec en Outaouais is like that of a tightrope walker.

Since we were asked to give our views on what the federal government could do, we took the opportunity to outline the very uncomfortable situation in which we find ourselves at this time. In fact, I wouldn't say there is a lack of fairness. The University of Ottawa is entitled to do what it's doing. We're talking here about a provincial jurisdiction, and Ontario is doing what it should. The Province of Quebec is also doing what it should, under its rules.

The fact remains that the federal government is the one that could change the situation since it has more resources than the provinces and wants to develop bilingualism within Canadian society. I think funding could come from the federal government.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Zarac. I want to take this opportunity to thank you as well for chairing the last committee meeting.

Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much for being here.

A Laval University official who appeared before this committee told us that, at that university, which is located in Quebec City, students often chose Chinese or Spanish as their second language rather than English—or French, depending on their mother tongue. Are you seeing this phenomenon at your universities?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** French is the most popular language in continuing education at the University of Toronto. I didn't bring any statistics concerning the other languages. These are small groups. As I mentioned, more than 600 students take French courses every year. We also teach other languages, such as Mandarin.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** I'm going to answer with a more personal story. I did my doctorate at Laval University, and I took some English courses as part of my studies. Given the completely francophone environment, it was very hard for me to apply what I had learned in class. That's a scenario that I'm putting out, and it may be false, but based on my experience, Canadian students prefer to learn Spanish or Chinese because that enables them to speak to foreign students. They want to discover other cultural horizons.

It's been clearly shown that language is one of the vectors of culture. They figure that, since English is one of Canada's official languages, they will have to learn it in one way or another. It's part of their identity; it's not something new. I think the desire to learn new things, to discover a new culture, encourages students to turn to other languages.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** The public service is aging. So there are going to be a lot of changes in the next few years. A lot of new people will be hired in the public service. If those people aren't

bilingual, it will be very difficult to offer services in both languages across the country.

I was wondering what you were suggesting should be done to help those students. Once they have entered the public service, they're given a certain time to learn the second language. That deadline can be postponed by four or five years and then be pushed back again.

Lastly, they never learn the second language and, consequently, services are not offered in both official languages. In some cases, more people have to be hired. Two people have to do the same job so that services are offered in both languages. There's a significant waste. What do you suggest to address that problem?

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** It was said earlier that 10,000 to 12,000 positions were going to be vacated. I think we have to publicize the situation and specify that it will be easier for bilingual candidates to get those positions and promotions once they are hired. I think university students will understand the message quite quickly. Speaking another language than French or English is very positive, as Mr. Rodriguez no doubt knows.

When you ready know two languages, such as Spanish and French, for example, it's easier to learn a third. It's easier to learn the third language than the second. At the University of Toronto, for example, 35% of students speak another language than French or English in the home. Learning French is not insurmountable for them, on the contrary. It's possible and relatively easy.

•(1010)

**Ms. Monique Guay:** The younger they are, the easier it is.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** My colleague just said that we would like to see students become aware of the fact that many positions will be available and that they'll have to be bilingual to occupy them. However, more official strategies must also be planned to assist those students or public servants already on the job in improving their second language. In particular, the federal government will have to be able to fund the universities offering programs or projects whose purpose is to develop second-language acquisition.

Could I ask a question?

**Ms. Monique Guay:** These people are given two years to learn a second language, whether it be English or French, but that deadline should really be respected and not unduly extended to 10 or 15 years, for example. In those cases, nothing can be done because these people are occupying their positions and have vested rights. We're stuck with the problem.

**The Chair:** Ms. Kassi, you may speak briefly. You may also ask your question.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** The question that has come to my mind is this: why did the federal government wait until the average age reached 50 before looking for a way to provide for the succession? I think it should have thought about it from the outset. We know that people who work will be retiring at some point. Why has it waited so long?

It's as though a business had waited until its employees reached the age of 60 before it started thinking about hiring young people. It seems to me it should have asked itself that question and prepared for the succession a number of years ago, rather than wait to be faced with a fait accompli.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kassi. Your question is out there.

On that note, we're going to hand over to Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Labrie, you are the Deputy Dean of the University of Toronto.

You told us about the francophones who go to study at your university, in particular, but there's a cost associated with that. I studied at Laval University. My tuition fees at the time were \$500 a session. Now they are about \$2,500. They're a whole lot higher at your university.

Laval University offers students accommodation for \$272 a month, but it's more expensive at your university. My children studied in Alberta, and I can tell you that it's five times as expensive as in Quebec. They studied at the Faculté Saint-Jean, which was called the Collège Saint-Jean at the time and is now called the Campus Saint-Jean. For students from Quebec who want to go and study at an anglophone university, the fees are absolutely crazy. I have four children, and, having seen the bills coming in every month, I can tell you that those costs constitute a barrier.

Lastly, when a student applies for a scholarship from the Government of Quebec, it grants an amount based on Quebec rates, and not those of Ontario. The parent thus has to pay fees to enable the student to go and study at your university. You said that there were only 600 students, but there might be twice as many if your fees were the same as in Quebec, that is \$2,500 a year. In those conditions, I think more students would be studying at your university. As a parent, I would say to you that cost is a substantial barrier.

• (1015)

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** The University of Toronto has approximately 70,000 students. We feel we have reached the ideal number of students. In the greater Toronto area, approximately 70,000 positions will have to be created at universities in the next few years. So we will necessarily have to establish new universities to meet that demand. However, the University of Toronto doesn't necessarily want to expand. We think it has reached its ideal size. Consequently, we are not seeking to increase the number of students.

As regards tuition fees, there's a distinction in Quebec between Quebec residents and people from outside Canada, for whom tuition fees are higher. At the University of Toronto, that distinction is made solely between Canadian and foreign students. So those who come from Quebec pay the same fees as those from Ontario.

We receive a lot of applications for admission. I mentioned that the university has 8,000 foreign students. In fact, attending the University of Toronto is really a bargain for foreign students. Tuition fees are four times higher at other universities where they could enroll, in the United States, for example.

We have to balance our tuition fees based on this entire context. Revenue from the provincial government has been stable in recent

years, but has not increased. Even if we restrict fee increases as much as possible, we can only catch up with inflation through tuition fees.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Do I have any time left, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** You have about one minute left, Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** My question is for Ms. Kassi.

Earlier you addressed a subject which fundamentally is perhaps a governance issue. The Université du Québec en Outaouais is a public university, not a private university such as the University of Toronto. It is guided by the Government of Quebec, which imposes certain standards, including French, as a basis. You said something that really offers hope. You drew a comparison with the University of Ottawa.

I would like you to tell us a little more in detail what you would like us to do. The status of the Université du Québec en Outaouais is different from that of the University of Ottawa. I'm not talking about the courses, but about governance. Quebec is very harsh in enforcing language laws, including at the university where you currently sit.

Could you give us more details on that subject?

**The Chair:** Do it quite succinctly, Ms. Kassi.

**Ms. Bernadette Kassi:** If I correctly understood your question, I definitely see a distinction. First, these are two different provinces, and the Université du Québec en Outaouais is a constituent part of the Université du Québec. So there is a state factor, and we have to comply with provincial legislation, hence the discomfort I was describing a little earlier.

At the University of Ottawa, for example, even though there is a different system of governance, more private, the institution nevertheless receives provincial funding to assist it in developing programs for minorities, who are francophones.

At our university, we are in a border area with Ontario. That means that we could offer bilingual or multilingual programs to encourage bilingualism among our graduates, but we don't receive any provincial funding because we are a francophone university in a francophone province.

Given the fact that the rules are more "state-controlled" on the provincial side, if we could receive federal funding to assist us in this area, I think we could achieve our common objective, which is to develop bilingualism.

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

Thank you, Ms. Kassi.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Labrie, you said you were surprised to learn that the federal public service will very soon need about 12,000 persons, perhaps more.

In my region, a federal building was constructed some 30 years ago in Bathurst. All the people in the region who are hired there are at retirement age now or are starting to think about it.

Earlier you said we can't make learning a second language mandatory, but, in the administration, if you know in advance that jobs will be available, the government can take the lead and declare that they will be bilingual jobs. When people take a course at university, they have to earn a number of credits; there are requirements. If there were mandatory credits for learning a second language, and the government said it needed bilingual people, that might be an encouragement.

Ms. Kassi said earlier that textbooks for administration studies are in English in Quebec. If someone hasn't learned English and has to read a book in English in order to take a French program, that person won't have the choice. Sometimes something is needed to force people to submit.

You say it shouldn't be mandatory, but, on the other hand, how do you learn if everything is left to the choice of the individual, if you don't do any promotion, if you do nothing, if you say we have virtually no need of bilingualism? I'd like to hear what you have to say about future jobs and I would also like to know what message you are sending us.

Earlier you talked about primary instruction, but could you tell us what we would need to train a bilingual person in Canada? Where do you start, where do you stop, what must be put in place without simply leaving it up to people's choice? When you accept free choice, you get the results we have today. Bilingualism is declining, services are absent, even though we are in a recognized bilingual country and it's the law of the land.

● (1020)

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** I think that the mandatory language learning aspect can be used quite easily in an academic environment, at the primary and secondary levels, although results aren't always guaranteed either, simply because it's mandatory.

At university, study programs are often highly specialized, and require all kinds of knowledge in all kinds of fields, whether it be engineering, health sciences or law. Every discipline has its own approach to the field, but also perhaps to the role of language in that field. It's hard to consider imposing language knowledge when there really isn't any apparent or obvious reason for doing so.

The other approach would be to inform students that, if they earn an MBA and also speak French, that will open a lot more doors for them. I think that would encourage more students to learn it, and to learn it well too, because they'll have a goal in mind. It won't just be mandatory, but they'll say to themselves that, if they succeed, they may get a good job. I think that would be much more effective.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You talked about law studies, for example. Someone can be a lawyer and only speak English, but a francophone lawyer who doesn't speak English won't go far.

I'm sponsoring a bill, and I'm going to speak briefly. I think that Supreme Court justices should be bilingual. If that were an obligation, don't you think that would encourage university law students to learn the second language? If one day they want to become judges in the Supreme Court, they'll have to know both languages.

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** The university trains law students to practise in various contexts, including in the Canadian federal

context. However, some students are from China, for example, and want to return to their country to practise international law. That might be interesting for them, but it's not necessarily relevant and applicable to their professional goal.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** But it would be different for Canadian law.

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** I'm convinced that students who study law and who want to specialize in Canadian law will be interested in language, at least so they can read judgments in the other language.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** To learn the language, there's the primary level and all the rest. From some comments by people from Ontario, the money allocated to French schools is starting to—

**Mr. Normand Labrie:** French-language schools are having a lot of success. Based on the literacy tests, which are now standardized, the schools' performance is very good and the students at French-language schools are very often bilingual almost by necessity, given the majority anglophone situation. When they leave French schools, students are necessarily bilingual and have a good knowledge of the language. The level has vastly improved in the past 10 years or so, as the literacy test results show.

As for French second-language instruction in the English-language schools, immersion and core French are working well. French is mandatory up to grade 9 and optional thereafter. A number of students drop French after grade 9, as soon as it's no longer mandatory, because they have other interests.

● (1025)

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

That brings to an end our business this morning and the hearing of our witnesses.

Mr. Nadeau wants to introduce a motion concerning committee business.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes.

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Labrie and Ms. Kassi, thank you for being here.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps the clerk could read the motion because we've made a few clarification amendments.

**The Chair:** The motion reads as follows:

That relevant evidence given in Committee by Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, the Hon. James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage, and Michelle d'Auray, Chief Human Resources Officer at Treasury Board Secretariat, since February 2009 on other topics, be considered as part of its study on the federal government's support for post-secondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada.

The purpose of the motion is to expand the list of witnesses.

Do you have any questions or comments?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** The purpose of the motion is simply to ensure that the analyst duly takes account, in the report we will be producing once we have heard the evidence, of the remarks by witnesses whom we have heard since February concerning the post-secondary institutions and those made by the Chairman during Mr. Moore's appearance. That's the spirit of the motion.

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

Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's a good motion and we're going to support it. If any comments can contribute to our study, we have to ensure they appear in our report.

I've learned that Glendon College, which is part of York University, has introduced a course for anglophone students to prepare them to work in the public service, which is applicable to our study topic. It would be a good idea to invite college officials here to talk to us about their program.

We'll definitely vote on the motion, but if the committee agrees, I would like us to reserve an hour to meet with Glendon College officials before finalizing our report.

I move:

That the Committee invite York University's Glendon Campus to appear for its study on post-secondary institutions and the promotion of bilingualism in Canada.

**The Chair:** I'm told we have a two-hour slot left on May 26. But first of all, if everyone is in agreement, we will put Mr. Nadeau's motion to a vote.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we should consider Mr. Lemieux's motion, which is to invite an additional witness.

Mr. Godin?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, I don't really have an objection, but I thought we had finished hearing witnesses and were starting the report stage. This will delay everything. We've devoted the entire spring to the issue of the federal government's support for the efforts of the postsecondary institutions. We've considered no other issue. If time slots are available, we should consider inviting people from National Defence to appear. Some questions have not been covered this spring.

I don't know whether Mr. Lemieux agrees, but that institution could send us a list to inform us of the services it offers. There are definitely a host of institutions in Canada that provide services and courses. We can't stop inquiring about all those services. It isn't necessary that these people appear before the committee to tell us what courses they offer. If they send us that information, we can take note of it.

The purpose of the study is to ensure that people learn a second official language at these institutions, and so on. We've devoted a lot of time to the subject. Mr. Chong had been requesting this air time for two or three years, and we gave it to him. He is no doubt happy.

Whatever the case may be, we had previously decided that was enough. Otherwise, are we going to start a new list of witnesses? I don't know whether the institution could provide us with information on its services.

•(1030)

**The Chair:** I've checked with our analyst: it's possible to ask York University, Glendon College and other institutions to send us a brief.

These people wouldn't have to appear, but their brief would enhance our report.

The decision is really up to committee members.

Mr. Rodriguez would like to speak.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes, this will be brief.

**The Chair:** Please, let's try to make brief speeches. We're going to suspend for a few minutes to do the hook-up so we can hear the next witness.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's exactly what I was going to say. I don't want to lack respect for Mr. Owen. His testimony is scheduled for 10:30. We have to adjust the system so that he's on line. He also has to finish at 11:00. We can resume this discussion at another time, taking into account the fact that the study is unfortunately over. We can even discuss it.

**The Chair:** There's one final speaker on my list.

Mr. Lemieux.

[*English*]

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

Perhaps I'll answer some of Monsieur Godin's concerns.

First, as we're doing this study, we learn of new witnesses as we go. That's what's happened here. What's particularly interesting about this witness is that they have a specific program that responds to the very question Mr. Chong raised at the start of this whole study when he asked what the universities were doing to prepare their graduates for the public service.

Here we have a college that actually offers a course that prepares people for the public service. It's an extremely good alignment. That's why I'm proposing it. I'm not suggesting that we bring in lots more witnesses. We have spent a good amount of time, and we're conducting a thorough study, but here is a college that actually has a course that directly addresses what Mr. Chong raised as a concern when we all agreed that this would be a good study.

Second, I don't think there's anything to prevent the analyst from preparing the report on all the witnesses we've heard so far. There's work to be done there, and it's going to take him time to do it. Then, if we have this witness come for one short meeting, we can ask questions and just modify the report at the end. It could be done through an appendix; there are many ways it could be done. But we don't have to hold off the whole report, Mr. Chair, in order to have this extra witness. The preparation of the report can start now.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Petit, you wanted to speak on this subject. Then I'm going to have to suspend, but we can resume the discussion after hearing our witness.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** This study, proposed by Mr. Chong, is very important. We're talking about the future of the public service here. We constantly complain about the fact that there aren't enough francophones or bilingual anglophones. The recommendations of the report that we are going to prepare will perhaps guide the future of the public service. We may be around at that time, but we also may not be. That's of no importance. Approximately 25% of employees will be replaced. This report cannot stay on the shelves because it is factual. It will come out of the shadows once the public service begins to renew.

I support Mr. Lemieux's motion. No one had told us what Mr. Labrie did before today. I would like to know what's being done at Glendon College, particularly since we have the time.

**The Chair:** All right, perfect. Thank you, Mr. Petit.

I'm told our witness is ready. We're going to start right away.

I invite you to stay with us if you want to attend this part of our meeting. You're welcome. Please feel comfortable.

[English]

Now I will turn the microphone over to the west coast. We have the privilege of having the Hon. Stephen Owen, vice-president for external, legal, and community relations of the University of British Columbia.

Hello, Mr. Owen. Can you hear me?

**Hon. Stephen Owen (Vice-President, External, Legal and Community Relations, University of British Columbia):** Good morning. I can hear you very well.

**The Chair:** Okay. I will invite you to proceed with your opening statement. I think you're familiar with this procedure, aren't you?

• (1035)

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Yes, I've been in a few committees.

**The Chair:** Okay. Let's start, then. Thank you.

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Thank you for giving me and our university the opportunity to present to you some of the details of our second language and multiple language training programs. Let me first say, to the original question concerning the extent to which UBC receives funding from the federal government, that we received in the last fiscal year \$215 million, which was mostly in research funds. That comprises approximately 12% of the operating budget of the university. The operating budget is about \$1.8 billion, and the federal government contribution, mostly for research, is about \$215 million.

We have a number of programs that deal with official language minority communities. I suppose it won't surprise people to know that many of the minority communities looking for training in English or French on the west coast, and certainly in Vancouver, are people of an Asian first language. There are a large number of programs provided, both through our downtown campus in the downtown east side, a very poor area of the inner city, as well as through our continuing studies department, of English as a second language. There are some very informal programs assisting people who are new immigrants in the community that have facilitators who are also part of that immigrant community teaching these immigrants as facilitators to learn English.

In our continuing studies program for French as a second language, we also have people not taking formal courses for credit at university but taking them through continuing studies. We have about 1,000 students a year learning French as a second language through those programs. There are also courses put on called "French in the Workplace" to assist people who do not have facility in English or in French but who are working in a bilingual situation, again through continuing studies. There is a French centre, which that department runs, that brings people together informally for French films, French language conversation, French cultural exchanges. All of that is done through the less formal continuing studies department.

Our major way of presenting French language training in a formal degree type of situation is through a department in the Faculty of Arts, the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies. About 5,000 French language students a year go through those programs at the bachelor, master, and Ph.D. levels.

The Faculty of Education also works to develop French certificate programs during the summers, either between degrees or as teachers on their summer breaks take French language training so that they're prepared to teach French as a second language in the schools. We also have an exchange program called "Go Global". It has 13 French universities, including four in Quebec, as exchange universities from which students can come here to learn English or to which they can go to learn French.

Of areas in which we're looking to expand, the most important involves the concept of learning French across the curriculum, so that rather than simply teaching French as a language, we are attempting to increase the number of courses, across the whole range of courses at the university, that can be taught in French. We are very pleased and somewhat surprised at the thousands of students at the University of British Columbia who are bilingual and are able to take courses directly in French. We think we have professors in the hundreds who can teach. We're trying to construct a French curriculum in French, not just to let students learn the French language. This will lead to a bilingual degree, which could be in biology or law or medicine, as we develop that program further.

• (1040)

We're also extremely interested, harking back to the comment I heard made just before I began, in preparing students for bilingual work in the public service. We are very much aware that this is an area of growing demand, and we see the demand growing among students as well. Our expectation is that our French language training will only be increasing over the next few years as that demand comes, and university courses are somewhat demand-driven.

Given that situation, I would like to comment on the general population of UBC. Almost half the student body is of Asian descent of some type. Often we have students coming who have to do preparatory English language training to be able to get into degree-granting courses and programs at the university. In that regard, I might say that the largest Japanese and Mandarin language programs in North America are at the University of British Columbia.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we also have an intensive program in aboriginal languages. These are very restorative, in that many of the rich languages of the Pacific northwest have almost died out. Where there still is a flicker of use and knowledge of the language, we are trying to capture it in a research way and then develop programs for students from those communities to actually learn to speak their native languages.

Those are my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to receive comments or questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Owen. Your comments regarding the demand-driven aspect among your students with respect to the public service are similar to what was discussed just prior to your comments.

We'll move on with three-minute rounds, starting with Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Good morning, Mr. Owen. It's good to see you.

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** It's very nice to see you.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm with my colleague Dominic LeBlanc, who says hi. He's quite surprised you're up that early in B.C.

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Well, it's not my habit to be up this early.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thanks for being there. It's around 7:30 a. m.

I only have three minutes. I want to know whether your university is involved or consulted with regard to the organization of the Olympics.

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Yes, it is. In fact, as part of my portfolio, we have a 2010 Olympic and Paralympic secretariat. We're not working directly with the Vancouver Olympic Committee, but we do a large amount of research into the impact of the Olympic Games. We have maybe 20 professors who are researching social and economic and environmental impacts. We also have one of the large venues for the Olympics on campus.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Does that include official languages? Do you discuss official languages with them?

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Yes. Through our French resources at the university, we're providing translation to the Vancouver Olympic Committee. We are also dealing with other languages, because we will be having, of course, visitors from all over the world.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Is there a link between the university and the francophone community? I met with them last week when we were at the convention in Vancouver. I was wondering whether there is a formal or informal link between the university and

[Translation]

the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique,

[English]

or other organizations?

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** I'm not sure of the degree of formality of the link, but the French centre that I mentioned has been established in order to provide opportunities for interaction between the university community and the francophone community in the Vancouver area.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** As a very quick general question, what's the future of French in B.C.?

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** I think it's very bright. We have to realistically understand that we are not close to large French-speaking communities, but there's a great mobility of British Columbians, and particularly, as mentioned, the opportunities in public service are being appreciated more and more. I think this will continue to increase the demand for French language training at the university.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you. That's all the time I had. It was a pleasure discussing this with you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez. That was very well done.

[Translation]

We'll continue with Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Good morning, Mr. Owen.

Incidentally, say hello to Alain Vigneault from me. He's a former head coach of the Gatineau Olympiques. It would be nice to see the Canucks win the Stanley Cup this year.

Mr. Owen, do you believe the best way for individuals to learn French as a second language is to start at primary and secondary school, or at university?

• (1045)

[English]

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Well, certainly at as early an age as possible. French as a second language.... ESL training in the lower schools here is a very popular program. Our education ministry in British Columbia can hardly keep up with the need for French bilingual training in our elementary and high schools. Certainly in my experience with my own sons, who were in French immersion in their secondary and elementary years, it has been tremendously obvious to me that this is a great advantage, certainly over their father attempting to learn French later on rather than starting in elementary school.

[Translation]

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

At your university, do you have the necessary teaching material to enable interested students to learn French in the best possible conditions?

[English]

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** I think there's always room for improvement, and it is, as I said previously, demand driven, but there is an increasing demand and we are attempting to meet that. One of the very important areas where the demand is growing is to have subjects other than French language subjects taught in French so that people can actually receive a bilingual degree at the end of their studies. That is an area where there's demand and where we are adding courses.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** This will probably be my last question, Mr. Owen, because time is passing.



Are there any programs between your university and francophone universities enabling your students to go and study for a year or at least a major part of the year in an environment where French is the first language?

[English]

**The Chair:** Are you fine with that question, Mr. Owen?

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Yes, that was quite clear. We have exchange agreements with 14 francophone universities for students to be able to take terms or a whole year's study in those universities in French.

[Translation]

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

Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Godin.

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

Good morning, Mr. Owen. It's a pleasure to talk to you.

When the Standing Committee on Official Languages conducted a national tour, we went to British Columbia. We were quite impressed to see the number of people who were learning French or who wanted to learn it, particularly people from foreign countries. These newcomers to Canada said they wanted to learn French and English because they recognized that Canada has two official languages. It's really impressive to see that.

We noted that the biggest problem in British Columbia was the shortage of teachers. I also know that there are agreements with France. When we visited Vancouver and Nanaimo, the French communities talked a lot about the fact that there were agreements with France, with universities and even with schools. Can you tell us a little more about that?

In addition, in your view, what is the federal government's responsibility with regard to the fact that a lot of public servants will soon be retiring? With new technologies, we'll have positions that are at various locations. Let's consider Service Canada, for example. Its employees can be in Vancouver or Quebec City, in New Brunswick or elsewhere, in Alberta.

What should the Government of Canada do to promote the two official languages to our young people so that they learn them?

[English]

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Thank you, Monsieur Godin.

I think the federal government can play a very significant role. The Department of Canadian Heritage does provide some funding for social programs through the University of British Columbia's French centre for informal gatherings of people to watch French movies or to have conversations with others, not necessarily those taking degree programs, but just so that the French community or more the English-speaking community or the immigrant community can have an opportunity in an informal setting to learn about French language and culture.

But as you mentioned, I think it's often very difficult for students from families of modest means to take advantage of the exchange programs. As I mentioned, we have exchange agreements with 14

francophone universities in Canada—in Quebec and New Brunswick—and France. I think travel grants—perhaps through Canadian Heritage—would be very helpful to enable more students to take advantage of those exchanges. I can tell you there is certainly demand among the student body here to have that opportunity.

As well, I mentioned that we have programs in the education department for teachers to upgrade their French to be able to teach French in the schools, whether just as a direct language or through a French immersion program. I think more federal assistance to prepare more teachers to be able to give those classes would be helpful.

• (1050)

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Monsieur Lemieux, for your closing question.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you very much, Chair.

This goes back to a previous meeting, but I would just like to acknowledge that my Liberal colleagues didn't ask if you, in your senior position, spoke French. I'm just surprised they're changing tactics today.

I respect and acknowledge your choice and your right to speak English at this committee, that is, to be in your position and to speak English, and for other witnesses to speak French. I just marvel at the change in tactics today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Mr. Chairman, pardon me. Mr. Chairman

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** What I want to ask Mr. Owen is the following. We're trying to look at universities and what they can do to promote bilingualism—

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, Pierre, pardon me. This is a point of order.

Is it really a point of order?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Of course it's a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Rodriguez, I must inform you that we have to clear this room at 11 o'clock in order to receive the other witnesses. I simply want to inform everyone concerned of that fact.

Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** The member must keep to the subject of the day. We must enforce that. He isn't here to take cheap shots and talk nonsense. His remarks must remain relevant.

**The Chair:** That's not a point of order. Thank you.

Mr. Lemieux.

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I see that he's very sensitive.

What I want to ask Mr. Owen is about the linkages between post-secondary institutions and their efforts to promote bilingualism, particularly for students who would seek employment in the public service. I'd like to know if any of the second language courses the university offers are core or obligatory courses in any of the programs offered, or are they optional courses?

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** They're certainly available as optional courses, but if someone were going to do a degree at the bachelor, master, and Ph.D. levels in the French language, the degree program would take into account their fluency in the language, but would also include courses on French culture, French history, and such. So there are specific degree programs.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Yes, and one of the things we're certainly interested in as a committee is the fact that the public service has many different professional streams into which people can enter, and bilingualism is definitely an asset there.

I think the fundamental question of this study is what are the universities doing, or what can they do, not just to offer second language training, but also to promote and encourage it, so that students willingly choose to develop their second language?

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** I agree with you that universities have in fact an obligation, as Canadian universities, to promote studies in both official languages simply as a responsibility of being a public university.

We are constrained somewhat by two factors. One, the large majority of our operational funding comes from the provincial government, and it does not share, for obvious reasons, the strong interest that the federal government should and does have in bilingual capacity. On the other side, there is the demand for courses, both from the department of French language within the faculty of arts as well as from students themselves, who are very astute at looking at future careers and options and looking at the federal government as a possible future.

I mentioned earlier that we are quite surprised at the thousands of students who actually speak French fluently enough to take courses in any subject in French, and we're trying to build bilingual degrees. So I think that's a good reflection of the fact that students are perhaps way ahead of us in this in terms of the future demand and the great qualification they would add to their CVs if they could speak in both official languages.

•(1055)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Owen. Thank you, Mr. Lemieux.

Mr. Chong is asking for one minute.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Hello, Stephen. It's Michael Chong here.

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** It's very nice to see you, Michael.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** It's nice to see you, too.

I have a minute, so I just want to give you a very brief message, because I think you have a leadership role to play in this. As a former cabinet minister and a privy councillor, you know we employ 263,000 people, and 70,000 of those are eligible for retirement in the next three years. We currently are hiring 10,000 to 12,000 new public servants a year, and over the next 10 years we'll hire over 100,000 public servants.

General Motors in Canada employs about 10,000 people. In other words, we are hiring 10 General Motors in the next decade. This is a huge opportunity for young Canadians, for new Canadians, to join a vibrant workforce.

My message to you is that you and your university administration should communicate to your governing body that there is a huge need in the Government of Canada for bilingual graduates. And we encourage the University of British Columbia, as one of the largest universities, to play a leadership role in ensuring that we meet those requirements.

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

**Hon. Stephen Owen:** Thank you for that advice. I can tell you I'm very pleased to receive that advice and very pleased to pass on that strong message to my colleagues.

**The Chair:** And I would say that you still have the full day to do it. Thank you for starting off this day so early with us, Mr. Owen. We wish you the best, and have a good Olympics. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

We're now going to vote on Mr. Lemieux's motion, the purpose of which is to invite an additional witness.

Are there any further comments?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We haven't finished discussing the matter.

•(1100)

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments on Mr. Lemieux's motion?

We'll have to suspend in about two minutes and then we can discuss other matters.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The university is located in Mr. Lemieux's riding, and he should have moved it at the start. The committee has been studying this matter for two months. He told us at the last minute that the university could give the course. He's not telling us how the system can change; he's just telling us that it can give the course. I congratulate the university. In addition, I invite them to send a brief stating what is available. Our committee isn't a promotional committee; it's a committee that is trying to determine how we can change the system to facilitate the entry of anglophones and francophones into the public service.

For years, Mr. Chong has asked us to conduct this study. We have given him a lot of time because we've been studying this issue for two months. Today, there are equally pressing matters, such as national defence, which does not comply with the Official Languages Act in 60% of instances. We have all kinds of subjects. I find it hard to believe that there are no witnesses we can invite on May 26 or 28.

We are going to meet next week to set the agenda and see what is available. I absolutely don't agree that we should delay that. We have to hear other witnesses between now and when they submit their brief. We've completed our spring business, and we have only examined one issue.

Mr. Chairman, we don't really have the time. In all sincerity, I invite Mr. Lemieux to tell his group to send committee members a brief, which will be well received.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemieux, I'm going to let you have the final word of our meeting this morning.

[*English*]

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

I really don't understand why Mr. Godin is so agitated about this. It's simply a positive suggestion.

Here we have a college that actually has a program that addresses Mr. Chong's final remarks regarding the fact that the public service will be hiring thousands upon thousands of young Canadians in the next ten years. We have a college here that has taken the initiative to put in place a program to form its students for the public service. This is right in the domain that we are studying. Does Mr. Godin want to have a full report or a full study or not? It sounds as though he does not.

This is a positive initiative. That's it.

Chair, you said we have some space on May 26, and the analyst, I noticed, has said that he can start work on the report right now. I do not see this as derailing this committee at all. In fact, I see it as completing a very good study that we have undertaken. Once again, I don't understand the agitation of Mr. Godin. This is supposed to be a helpful suggestion to help us complete our study of this important subject.

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

Since there are still some comments, we'll discuss this motion further at the next meeting.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Thanks to our witnesses.

The meeting is adjourned.

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