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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, November 3, 2009**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**



## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** *Bonjour.* Welcome to the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

We are meeting today pursuant to Standing Order 108 in our study of the official languages program transformation model and training of francophone recruits in the Canadian Forces.

We are very proud to have two witnesses.

[Translation]

Allow me to introduce the Chief of Military Personnel, General Semianiw, who is accompanied by Colonel Meloche, Director of Official Languages.

Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Semianiw, I invite you to make your opening address.

**Major-General W. Semianiw (Chief of Military Personnel, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

Members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity first to thank you for inviting our team here today to discuss the National Defence official languages program transformation model and the progress made since our last appearance before you in December 2007.

[Translation]

First, I would like to thank Mr. Nadeau for the Thetford Mines flag he has given me.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** You're quite welcome.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** I am the Chief of Military Personnel and Official Language Champion for the Canadian Forces. Today with me are Major-General Daniel Gosselin, Commandant Canadian Defence Academy; Colonel Louis Meloche, Director of Official Languages; Colonel Guy Hamel, Commander Canadian Forces Support Training Group (CFSTG) and Base Borden; and Lieutenant-Colonel Steve Whelan, Commandant Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec.

[English]

During the first hour with Colonel Meloche, we will be able to provide you with a good sense of the National Defence official languages program. We will be followed by Major-General Daniel Gosselin and his team, who in turn will discuss recruit training in the

Canadian Forces and in particular the situation at Canadian Forces Base Borden.

First, concerning the transformation model, as you are all well aware, National Defence has developed and implemented a strategic action plan, called the official languages program transformation model. The OLPTM, as we call it, maps out how our personnel are to be led, administered, and supported in their official language of choice. Since the implementation of this five-year plan, which began in April 2007, much progress has been made, such as the review of the linguistic designation of each Canadian Forces unit; an aggressive awareness campaign plan to ensure that all personnel—military, civilian, and dependants—are aware of their linguistic rights; and the preparation and promulgation of key policies.

[Translation]

Colonel Meloche will explain some of our achievements in greater detail.

[English]

In terms of recruit training and CFB Borden, the issue regarding francophone recruits not receiving the services that they should and instruction in French upon their arrival at the base has been redressed. Recruits are now made aware, through their orientation package, of their linguistic responsibilities and rights, including services entitled in the official language of their choice.

Today, a growing number of recruits are receiving instruction in their OL of choice, thanks to additional bilingual structures in national schools and the translation of more textbooks. Lieutenant-Colonel Whelan will give you more details on recruit training in the second hour.

Also in the second hour, you will hear from General Gosselin and from Colonel Hamel on the measures taken to significantly improve Borden's OLA compliance.

As you are well aware, a view of the issue in Borden was one of leadership, that the leadership both in Borden and in Ottawa had to take a direct and firm stand to ensure that the program was fully implemented not only in Borden but across the Canadian Forces.

[Translation]

I must add that I am very proud of the excellent work done by the team in Borden. I was able to witness this first hand during my recent visit on September 4, 2009.

[English]

In terms of commitment, as a Canadian Forces official languages champion, I can say that the changes we have made and continue to make clearly show that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces are firmly committed to full implementation of the act.

[Translation]

This commitment starts with our leaders.

[English]

Following the Chief of Defence Staff's January 2009 guidance, all senior officers must comply with the linguistic requirements of their rank—for example, if all major-generals like myself do not have a CBC linguistic profile by the end of December of this year, they will be expected to take their release from the Canadian Forces next summer.

The overall goal for the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces, be it a three-star, two-star, or one-star general, will be achieved no later than December 2011. I recently sent a letter to each brigadier-general/commodore in the Canadian Forces reminding them of their target, which is a CBC linguistic profile by December 31, 2011, if they wish to remain in the Canadian Forces.

[Translation]

This commitment goes hand in hand with our vision to fully integrate the Canadian linguistic duality to the organizational culture of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

[English]

In conclusion, we have a plan, the OLPTM, and we have made much progress in many areas. But we would argue that progress takes time if we want to ensure it lasts a long time.

[Translation]

We are better today than we were in the past.

[English]

We know what needs to be done to be better. We are addressing the systemic issues that have made compliance with the act challenging, and in true military fashion, we are committed to completing that for our men and women in uniform.

[Translation]

I will be happy to answer your questions after Colonel Meloche has had a few words.

Thank you.

**Colonel J.P.L. Meloche (Director of Official Languages, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, general.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to start by explaining achievements to date with regard to the implementation of the Official Languages Program Transformation Model 2007-2012, which has three aims.

The first aim is to efficiently manage bilingual personnel. The first phase of the project to review the linguistic designation of units and

functions consisted of a complete review of the linguistic designation of all Canadian Forces units, 568 to be exact, which brought on 28 additional bilingual units. This phase has been completed.

The second phase of the project entails the review of military functions and civilian positions. This portion of the project has started and should be completed by the end of 2009.

● (0910)

[English]

This review will indicate how to optimize our resources by staffing linguistically qualified personnel in bilingual functions and by better defining which civilian positions need to be bilingual.

[Translation]

As part of the first aim, we can see that a better understanding of the functional approach is taking place and its gradual integration will allow commanding officers to benefit from all competencies, including linguistic competencies, of CF members in their unit by employing them at the right place at the right time.

[English]

Services that need to be offered in both official languages are ensured by bilingual staff in a single organization.

[Translation]

The second aim is to enhance awareness and education. Official languages visibility was increased by focusing on specific areas of concern, like linguistic rights, and offering clear and accessible information to all civilian employees, military personnel and their dependents.

Articles, pamphlets, presentations, kiosks, posters and brochures are among the major activities that took place in the last year or are currently taking place. I have copies here, if you wish.

The network of coordinators of official languages, that is the personnel designated to advise Commanders of Commands and Group Principals on official languages issues, has been revived and has increased its participation in awareness and education initiatives.

[English]

An online course to OL was designed for the OL coordinator and its content was customized to Defence needs.

[Translation]

The third aim is performance measurement.

[English]

Performance indicators have been developed as well as a performance measurement system, which are currently being piloted. System implementation is planned for March 31, 2011.

[Translation]

There have been other achievements. The endorsement of Canadian Forces senior officers and the support of department executives are, in my opinion, key to the successful implementation of the model thus far.

[English]

The model also includes policy development in support of its aims and activities. Some policies have already been promulgated, such as delivery of training and education in both official languages and second language education and training for Canadian Forces members. Other policies have been drafted, revised, and are currently awaiting legal review before promulgation in the near future.

[Translation]

In conclusion, the model is a witness to our continued progress. Now in its mid-term of five years of implementation, we can foresee the model's aims being achieved, its activities being carried out, and I am confident that the defence workplace will fully integrate linguistic duality in its organizational culture.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Colonel Meloche and General Semianiw.

We'll now begin our first round with Mr. D'Amours.

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

Thank you, General Semianiw and Colonel Meloche, for being here before the committee this morning to discuss the entire matter of the National Defence Official Languages Program Transformation Model. I have a few questions, perhaps some requests for clarification in some cases.

You talked about ranks of senior officers that will have to achieve an objective by very specific dates. Are we talking about training or people in the field? For example, in Afghanistan, does that require senior officers to be able to speak both official languages with soldiers, or is it limited to the top officers of the armed forces?

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

• (0915)

[English]

First, to be clear, to provide some clarification back,

[Translation]

We decided to start with the generals and admirals. But it's very clear, with regard to the generals, like General Natynchuk, who have one, two or three stars, that

[English]

by December of 2011

[Translation]

if they aren't in a training situation, we have to have the cards. Otherwise,

[English]

you're taking your release from the Canadian Forces.

[Translation]

If we're talking about a brigadier-general or major-general who is in Afghanistan after 2011, it's frankly very clear.

[English]

That person will have to, because if not, he wouldn't be in the Canadian Forces any longer. With such a program over time, we had to start somewhere.

Clearly, the intent was to begin with the leadership, to show the Canadian Forces that this is a leadership issue. It didn't start at the bottom with lower ranks; it started at the top. The policy is very clear that, *par exemple come j'ai déjà dit*, for two stars, if you did not have CBC or do not by December 31, you will take your release from the Canadian Forces next summer.

[Translation]

On the flip side of the coin, it's [*Inaudible—Editor*], but, in my view, frankly,

[English]

it's an issue of leadership. The issue is about leadership, but the issue of being able to speak in both languages is an issue of leadership as well. That was the approach that was very much taken by the Chief of the Defence Staff after we discussed this, on reflection, that we expect leaders in the Canadian Forces to be not only comfortable but able to speak in both official languages. *Pourquoi?* Because at the end of the day, you have both francophones and anglophones, and it goes both ways for our francophone officers. Some had to take the test, but they are able and competent to speak in both official languages. It's about leadership, which is why

[Translation]

we started with the leaders, the generals and admirals, then we'll continue with the colonels and navy captains.

[English]

We're probably going to go down to the lieutenant-colonel level *parce que avec le plan*, the official languages model, it is based on need, who needs it based on the leadership view.

[Translation]

So we started in that way, and with the non-commissioned officers,

[English]

with NCOs. We've put a target in place for 2011 for them as well, for chief warrant officers, both in the.... When I speak, it's not only for the army, it's for the entire Canadian Forces: navy, army, and air force.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Thank you for your answer, General Semianiw. I don't know exactly how much time I have left.

**The Chair:** You have one minute left, Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** This is one of the elements. I hope that means that basic services, medical or other services, will always be offered in both official languages as well.

In the case of documents, whether it be training manuals or other documents, I can understand why, in some cases, these are original documents. However, when they are prepared by National Defence, are you going to ensure in future that all documents provided to our soldiers are always translated and offered directly, and that it won't be up to the members to ask for it to be done. Are you going to ensure that members will be able to have access to documents in the language of their choice?

[*English*]

**MGen W. Semianiw:** *Merci, monsieur le président.*

Clearly, are we where we want to be when it comes to translation? No. Are we better than we were last year? Yes, because we have provided additional money to be able to do the translation. But I agree with you, where we want to be is where every soldier has the training manuals in the language of his or her choice. That's where we're going to go and that's where we have to be. We've done a lot of that in Borden and at the recruit school, as you'll hear from the team, but there is still a way to go.

I would say to any member of the committee, you could probably find a textbook that perhaps has not yet been done, but as you'll hear from my team, we know we have a plan to do the translation in Borden.

[*Translation*]

First, we have a plan.

[*English*]

Next, you have to actually take the plan and put it into life. As we all know, vision without action is nothing more than hallucination, so in the end we need to take the plan and put it into action. You'll hear that from the team. I'm very proud of what they've done to do that.

[*Translation*]

It's a challenge

[*English*]

to be able to translate so many documents with still more to be done. More has been done, but we need to do more in the future.

You're right. Where we want to be is where it doesn't matter who you are, the manuals for instruction—for training—are in the language of your choice.

● (0920)

[*Translation*]

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

Now we'll go to Mr. Nadeau.

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

Good morning, Mr. Semianiw.

Mr. Meloche, good morning.

I'm pleased to give you the flag of your native city, general.

This is the second or third time we've met. At the time, the Minister of National Defence, Mr. O'Connor, came to present the Transformation Model to us, and there were a lot of questions. Light was also shed on the fact that a unilingual francophone military

member had less chance of obtaining a senior rank in the armed forces than a unilingual anglophone. And thus an injustice was pointed out at the time.

Since then, I see that efforts have been made. As an example, there is the letter that you sent, which emphasizes that if senior officers do not have their CBC levels by December 31, 2009, they'll have to find another occupation. That's a measure that will have to be put in place, but I recognize the very good intention in that area. It could definitely be a model for the federal public service as a whole with regard to senior public servants. I'm also thinking of deputy ministers, who aren't required to be bilingual in Canada. However, that's another matter, and I'll talk about it on another occasion.

That said, the 2005-2006 report of the Commissioner of Official Languages stated that 41.8% of military members occupying bilingual positions for the purpose of service to the public met the linguistic requirements of their positions; that is to say that only 42% of bilingual positions were held by bilingual persons. Has the situation improved since that time?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** It must be clearly understood that the measurement system used for military members and the one used for public servants are different. We don't command individuals by position, but by unit. So if you calculate that one position equals one profile equals one person and that one plus one equals three and that results in a perfect mark, we don't operate like that.

The way we operate in the Canadian Forces is that the unit has to be able to provide the service. So the commander has to employ his resources appropriately in order to achieve that result. Let me give you an example. We have an orderly room, either at the Valcartier base in Quebec or in Edmonton, Alberta. All arrival and departure procedures must be accessible to military members in both official languages, but the 20 employees and members who are part of that orderly room don't need to be bilingual. We have to have a bilingual core so that we can provide the services. That core can change.

Members are transferred; they go and take courses. In this way, the commander has to be able to manage his bilingual resources—that's a way of speaking—to be able to provide the service. It is therefore very difficult for the Canadian Forces to issue figures. That's why we've developed a performance measurement system to really reflect our unique situation; that is to say that, under the National Defence Act, our people are managed in units, and not individually.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** I'd like to add one word, please.

In the letter concerning the policy on generals and admirals, one other thing is very important. Every year, there are promotion boards. What does that mean? In October and November, people

[*English*]

will sit down and determine who should be promoted for the following year, at every rank level. The process will be open, transparent, and based on a point system.

[*Translation*]

You get points for this and that. One thing is very important for the committee.

[English]

For bilingualism you receive five points, so when your file is in front of me or a member of the committee, you are automatically given five points if you have level CBC. You then multiply that by the number of members you have on a committee. That works out to 25. It makes a big difference already, without the policy, in who is going to be promoted in the future.

[Translation]

It's very important to know that.

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

If I understand correctly, if a service is requested, the colonel responsible will find someone from his unit to provide the service, if the person in place can't do it.

• (0925)

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** That's correct. He employs the resources at his disposal.

With regard to the function designation project, during the year, members of my team toured the military bases. They spoke with the unit commanders so that they could determine local needs in order to come up with a kind of grid. With that, they're able to reassign people within their units or to negotiate with career managers so that bilingual people are transferred to their unit the following summer.

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

Now we'll go to Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks as well to the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

Let's go back to the five points issue because it's interesting. Let's say a person receives two out of five points. In the other areas, he's very good and receives five points in a number of areas. So it's possible for someone who isn't bilingual to be promoted as a result of the scores in the other areas. The person was good in other domains. We're talking about scoring. This isn't a bilingualism policy that provides that the person takes an exam and passes or fails. Bilingualism is part of the scoring like all other factors. As I see it, that individual can still be promoted if his total score is good, even if he hasn't been given any points for bilingualism.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** That's a good question. It's possible, but it's not the reality. Every year, for promotions to the rank of brigadier-general, there are 300 colonels and navy captains in the Canadian Forces.

[English]

Every year, those 300 have the opportunity to be promoted. When you look at the number of promotions, you see it may be 10 a year out of 300. The difference between number one and number ten on the list is maybe about half a point to one point. So those 25 points make a huge difference. If you look at the lists, in most cases this is what makes the difference. If you don't have it, you won't find yourself in the top 10.

[Translation]

That's the reality.

[English]

This becomes a challenge. All the men and women in the Canadian Forces know this is a policy, and it's why many have gone out on their own to do second language training, which I'm sure you're aware of. Within the top 10%, the top group, the difference is only one point, half a point. The 25 points you receive for bilingualism in any board already make the difference.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The current position of the Department of National Defence is that the leaders must be able to demonstrate to others that they are bilingual and that the example must come from above.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** That's true.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It's unfortunate that we don't do the same thing for the Supreme Court of Canada. There's a bill on that subject, but that's another matter.

The lack of manuals has also caused problems. At Borden, for example, there weren't any bilingual manuals. What's the situation regarding manuals?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** When—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** In garages in Quebec, they must be able to get vehicle manuals in French.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** That's correct. Two or three things have happened.

For example, when we acquire a new piece of equipment, we ensure that the contract enables us to obtain the necessary copyright to translate the manuals. Those manuals thus become ours. As for the translation, we've hit a wall. We've achieved the maximum amount that this industry can produce in terms of translated material. At one point, we had to set priorities. That's why efforts are focused on the basic courses. Every branch has developed a plan to make all courses available in both official languages. The current policy, which has just been introduced, provides that all courses must be available. We also started with the basic courses and we were then supposed to progress. Every new courses developed in the Canadian Forces can only be given if it is available in both official languages.

• (0930)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** In the case of some old courses, certain instructors didn't speak French. That was a problem.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Yes.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** What happened to the instructors?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Many of them have been reassigned to schools. There's also the fact that people have to take language training and that takes time. Whatever the case may be, there has been progress.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** How much progress? We've been talking for about two years about the problems concerning the Borden Base.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** I can tell you that all the courses on armed forces combat weapons are available in both official languages. That was not the case two years ago. In aviation, all basic courses for technicians are available in both official languages or what's called the "franco assist". In the navy, a lot of progress has been made on francophone assistance. As regards all other courses, you'll have the opportunity to hear from representatives of the Borden schools and the commander of the recruit school, who are here today.

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

Now we'll go to Ms. Glover.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Good morning and welcome.

[English]

I am honoured to meet all the men and women who are here today representing the Canadian Forces. I know what a hard job you do to protect our interests, and I thank you on behalf of my family and Canadian families.

[Translation]

Now we're going to talk about official languages.

I'd like you to give me an overview of the demographics of your service. Could you tell me the number of unilingual anglophones relative to the number of bilingual individuals? Do you have those figures?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Yes, of course. On the civilian side, there are 29,146 employees. Of that number, 6,865 are francophone and 22,281 are anglophone. So, roughly speaking, 76.5% of civilian staff are anglophone. On the military side, we have 17,766 francophones, 27%, and 47,570 anglophones, 73%. That means that of the total number of Canadian Forces personnel, approximately 27% are francophone and the percentage is approximately 23.5% on the civilian side. I believe that, based on the last census, the Canadian average is 21.8%. So we reflect that average. In fact, we exceed it slightly.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** All right, thank you very much. I'd also like to know how much money the Canadian Forces spend every year on official languages.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** It's hard to do an accounting because every branch spends on that. However, I can tell you that the Canadian Forces spent \$5.8 million on translation. As for supervised language training offered to military members and civilian staff, that involved slightly more than \$22 million last year and \$21 million the previous year. So there has been an increase in funding allocated to language training. It should be added that the navy, air force and army spend money to provide short-term courses.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Is the \$5 million figure included in the \$22 million or is it in addition to that amount?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** It's in addition, madam.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** So it's \$27 million.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Yes.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Thank you very much.

I've read a number of documents on your job and your service. Something really surprised me: you were hired to maintain positive

relations with francophone organizations. At Borden, more particularly, you did certain things to maintain those relations.

Can you tell me what those things were and what francophone agencies or organizations were involved?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** The best thing will be to listen to the Borden people. The Borden commander is here. He will therefore be able to tell you, during the second hour, exactly what was done with the local community during the open houses.

• (0935)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Perfect, thank you very much.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Frankly, it's not just a matter of [English]

being able to speak in a second language,

[Translation]

it's also a matter of culture.

[English]

There's a culture element to it that has to be looked at, respected, and worked with at the same time.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I like what I just heard because the French language is much more than a language; it's also based on a culture. I really like the fact that you said that.

Let's talk a little about official languages coordinators. You spoke about that a little. I'd nevertheless like to know whether you think your coordinators have enough of a profile. Do they also have enough resources to employ their workforce? Are there any other things that could be done to raise their profile?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** The short answer is no. As director of official languages, I would say we would definitely like more. Except that, at some point, it becomes a matter of balance with other things.

The network of official language coordinators was reinvigorated—if I can use that term—two years ago. Consequently, every branch—which we call the army, the air force—and all the assistant deputy ministers have a level 1 coordinator. From that point, a network is constructed within each organization. For example, in the army, all the bases have an official language coordinator. Then that goes down to the unit level. The visibility of official languages therefore starts at the unit level and rises to the strategic levels.

Could we do more? We've already done a lot, and we're already doing as much as we can. We can definitely always try to do more, but we have to establish and have good policies in place. In addition, what we're doing, that is to say writing and introducing policies, is really the foundation. If we don't have good clear policies, we can make all the efforts we want... Because in the armed forces, things only work if it's written down; in that case, it will get done.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** There's one very important thing. Now, today, there are people who focus solely on the navy, the army and the air force. That wasn't the way it was done two years ago; it was just the men from my team, my men.



[English]

The official languages team tried to look into the army, the navy, and the air force to see what was happening.

[Translation]

Now, however, there are men who are responsible and they aren't

[English]

the official languages coordinators. I will tell you who is responsible.

[Translation]

It's the leadership of the Canadian Forces.

This morning, Colonel Meloche spoke with the chief of the air force concerning the program. Those men and women are the ones who are responsible.

[English]

It was not the official languages coordinators.

[Translation]

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

Now we'll begin the second round.

Mr. D'Amours, I believe you're going to share your time with Ms. Zarac.

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

I'm going to do things extremely quickly.

Colonel Meloche, you mentioned earlier that you had gone as far as you could with regard to the translation component, and that things had become difficult. Before you leave us in a while, if you could give me your card, I could send you the contact information of an organization in my riding, CIDIF, that offers translation assistance and resources. It might possibly be able to contribute to economic development in my riding and, at the same time, provide you with the necessary resources to do the translation you need at National Defence.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Thank you very much for that information. I'll take note of it. However, all our translation goes through the Translation Bureau, which has connections.

I meet with the file manager at Public Works and Government Services Canada who is responsible for translation, and I make sure that that officer is able to communicate with the various branches and prioritize the translation.

We also make sure we maximize translations, that is to say that, in many cases, similar information can be sent for courses at various levels. For example, there is a certain similarity between the NCO tank commander course and the officers' tank commander course. In addition, rather than send the content of both courses for translation, the common portion of the courses will be sent only once. The Translation Bureau helps us a great deal: it has software enabling it to ensure that the same document is not translated twice.

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

Now I'll hand over to my colleague Ms. Zarac.

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

Good morning and thank you very much for being here today. I really like what I've heard so far, and I congratulate you because you're right: when you set a model that is to be followed, and example, that's the best way. It takes role models to set an example.

I also like hearing that you're sharing your responsibilities because it can be dangerous to have an official languages coordinator who has sole responsibility. What I'm hearing today is that you've transferred that to various departments. So it involves everyone.

I also congratulate you for taking action. You're not just developing a plan; you're taking concrete action when you say that officers who are not bilingual by December 31, 2011 will be forced to retire.

Have you studied the impact of that action?

● (0940)

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

At the end of the day, there is no impact. The impact is that they will not be in the Canadian Forces and someone else will be promoted who has CBC.

[Translation]

It's very simple. On the other hand, if there are any questions as to whether there are officers

[English]

who this will be a challenge for perhaps, but I'll wait until December 31

[Translation]

when I get the results. Then, it's very clear for the Chief of the Canadian Forces.

[English]

People will be taking their releases.

I come back and say

[Translation]

politics, in a way, is a process,

[English]

but it's not a process; it's about leadership. I keep coming back to this. It's about leaders being able to function effectively in both official languages, French and English, and lead the institution.

[Translation]

That's the challenge, but also the expectation.

[English]

That's where we want to go.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** It's a challenge for you, but ultimately it's a fundamental right because what you're saying today is that Canadian Forces personnel are a great representation of Canadians. I think that, to be fair toward all Canadians, this is a right that belongs to them.

Your plan is a five-year plan that will end in 2012. You still have a lot of work to do on the translation side. Are there any budget constraints in your plan? You've developed a plan, but is there a budget for it or do you have any constraints?

**MGen W. Semianiw:** The answer is frankly

[English]

yes, it is, for two reasons. First, do I have the money I need? Yes. Second, for me it's a high priority.

So the direction I gave to General Gosselin, who works for me, was that this is a priority for me, therefore it's now a priority for him. I know it's a priority for him and his team to ensure that money is put there. But as you heard, the challenge is not money. We understand what we have to do.

[Translation]

We see the needs.

[English]

But the challenge now is ensuring that we get everything translated as quickly as we can in the priority we need. If you had another 100,000 people doing translation, it would probably all be done next week.

[Translation]

But that's not the way it is.

[English]

So with the folks we have who do the translation, as Colonel Meloche said, we prioritize what we need to get done. We have completed a lot and we know where we want to go.

[Translation]

In my mind, that's the way things are.

[English]

Do you have a plan for where you want to go?

I hope this committee will call us back next year to ask how we've done with that plan, given the passion here.

But clearly we've done much, we have a long way to go, and money is not the challenge.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Zarac.

We'll continue with Mr. Nadeau.

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

Gentlemen, I want to talk to you about a letter from a constituent that concerns the navy. In the work you're currently doing, or since the start of the plan, the land forces have been the first work place affected, and I assume the air force and navy will follow.

The person who wrote that letter told me this:

I belong to the Canadian navy and I must deplore an unacceptable situation that has been going on for too long and in which I do not see any will within the organization to solve the problem. On the military ships of the Government of Canada and on Canada's two naval bases, Esquimalt and Halifax, the only authorized language of work is English. Furthermore, the use of French among

francophones is not tolerated, and speaking French therefore results in an administrative reprimand. The only example that has been successful in this kind of situation to date has been that of the army, which, to solve the problem, has formed an exclusively francophone contingent in which the recognized language of work is French and in which everything is done in French, from training to operations.

This is a recent letter, dated October 23 last. It contains a kind of complaint. This person was told to complain to the authorities. It's good that we have the letter as such. I wanted to tell you about it.

In what direction is action being taken in the case of the navy, for example, which I assume is starting to work on the plan that the army has already introduced?

• (0945)

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Thank you for the question.

[English]

It's an unacceptable situation. I'm answering this, not him, because I'm the leader. At the end of the day, that is unacceptable to hear. That's not what I believe or stand for, or what the program stands for.

[Translation]

It's true that we started with the land forces.

[English]

We started with the army and had great improvements. We know we need to work more with the navy.

[Translation]

That's true, Mr. Nadeau.

[English]

I know this is a challenge, but I would love to get a copy of the letter so I can take immediate action with the commander of the navy. That's his issue to deal with, not the coordinators or the individual who runs the base or wing, but the navy. I would be very pleased to take the letter. I will speak to him, if he's available, right after this meeting.

[Translation]

That's unacceptable.

[English]

It is unacceptable to hear that in a letter.

[Translation]

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Perhaps I could add one point. We're talking about making a change in organizational culture. In the navy, in combat units, on the frigates, there was a French-language unit: in Quebec City. With the review of the linguistic designations of units, the navy will be adding two ships that will be bilingual in the next few years, with a view subsequently to making them francophone ships. So we're going to provide equal opportunities for both francophones and anglophones to serve in the navy in the language of their choice. The unit designation project is one of the basic aspects of that.

So in the navy, there won't be just Quebec City that's francophone; within the next few years, two other places will be added: one on the west coast, at Esquimalt, and the other on the east coast, in Halifax.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** What will be added then?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Two ships that are currently English-language units are being converted to bilingual units, and those ships will become French-language units within four years. It takes a certain amount of time to make the transition, build a team and ensure that people are reassigned.

So, in the Canadian navy, instead of having just one francophone unit, there will eventually be three so that people can have equal chances to serve.

[English]

**MGen W. Semianiw:** In conclusion, it's unacceptable—I say this again—to hear what I heard in the letter. It'll address one issue. But to hear that somehow actions would be taken for people speaking French is totally unacceptable.

I'd love to get a copy of the letter and speak to the commander of the navy before 12 o'clock to ensure that something is done. But it's a leadership issue here that needs to be addressed.

[Translation]

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** We have an internal complaints system protecting the individual's identity.

**An hon. member:** That's important.

**Col. J.P.L. Meloche:** It's very important and that's why—

[English]

**MGen W. Semianiw:** On what we're hoping for, we can talk about processes and leadership. You can have all the processes or mechanisms of voice that you want where people complain to. The leadership needs to take action, Monsieur Nadeau. *C'est vrai?*

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

You're up, Mr. Nadeau.

Now we'll go on with Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A sincere welcome to all of you for joining us here this morning. It is great to have you with us.

First, I want to say how happy I am to hear you say that money was no challenge in the translation, because I know how hard you work to provide this opportunity and have things translated. We wouldn't want a shortage just because of money.

It is obvious your intent is to make sure that bilingualism is apparent in all aspects. However, how do you explain the fact that this commitment by senior leadership does not seem to be able to bring about greater tangible results for service personnel?

• (0950)

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Could I ask you to clarify the question? How has it not created greater tangible results?

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** It has then, you're saying?

**MGen W. Semianiw:** It has been to start with, since they have leaders who can speak in both languages. More importantly, if a question is posed, as I do, when I travel...and it's not, to be fair, about 25%-75%, it's about being able to speak as a leader in the language of choice of an individual who is talking to you. So it already has had tangible results.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** That's fine. Thank you. I'm glad to hear that.

On another matter, the investigation made by the ombudsman has stated that bilingual instructors have a much heavier workload than the unilingual instructors.

Do you feel enough has been done to hire more instructors who can train recruits in the official language of their choice?

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Thank you.

I'll leave that for the team behind me to answer, but I think you'll be very happy to hear that they've identified the areas where they need additional instructors. They were identified by the ombudsman when he visited and when he was in front of this committee in May, I believe; however, I'll let the team respond. They have addressed that, but you're right, if there aren't as many as you need, then more would be doing the work. A plan has been made, and you'll hear it in the second hour.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Coming from a classroom myself, and having had French-speaking teachers teaching French immersion, I know they put... That's what they do with the little ones, so it would be even more so when you come to the older students, seeing what they need to learn.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** There's one other issue, if I can raise it with the committee.

I don't have a chance to ask a question, but I'll answer the question I'm going to throw out to you. We are doing a lot for dependants. It's an area I'm very passionate about, and that is that francophone dependants anywhere around the world can get some training, if they need to, to be able to make their situation better when it comes to finding a job. Clearly, wherever you are, it may not be that easy.

So we are doing a lot for dependants, as Colonel Meloche would explain if the question were asked. We've broadened the program. We've broadened it because we've now been able to raise the level of his work to an oversight level. We've got the commanders of the navy, the army, and the air force with a plan of action now for each of these areas that obviously needs to be fully implemented. It's another area we're looking at to ensure they get the support they need.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** And it's very obvious you have a passion for that and you are working in the right direction to provide those things.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** I do. I'm married to a francophone. My family comes from Thetford Mines. I have a chance to travel with my family to see that, so I clearly understand it's a leadership issue. It's about the act, but more importantly it's about leadership. And it's not just about language; it's about culture. That's what we need to do, if we want to get this right.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You still have one minute, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Are you satisfied with the progress being made on follow-up to the issues raised by the ombudsman with the official language matrix that outlines the department's plan?

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Yes. Thank you.

We were working with the ombudsman, and you'll hear from the team in the second hour about what has been done. To ensure you hear that, we've asked them to lay it out for the committee in some other way. But you'll be very pleased with what's being done in Borden and Saint-Jean to address all those areas identified by the ombudsman, be it, one, having sufficient materials in both official languages, having instructors, or, two, having support on the base, so our francophone students get that support when they go to different parts of the base.

They're two separate issues, but you'll hear that from the team. They've addressed both, and I'm very proud of the great work they've done.

**The Chair:** Good.

Thank you, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

[Translation]

Mr. Godin, go ahead please.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** First of all, I must admit that your comments on the direction that National Defence is taking are quite strong. It now remains to be seen what the results will be.

When do you think you'll have the results, since you're asking us to invite you back next year?

• (0955)

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** We already have results for the generals. The first objective was for the lieutenant-generals to obtain the CBC language profile before December 31, 2007. That objective was achieved. The second objective concerned the major-generals, those we commonly called "two-star" generals. They have to have a CBC language profile before December 31, 2009. Then the final group of generals, the "one-star" generals, the brigadier-generals, must have a CBC language profile before December 31, 2011.

We want to come back in a year because we'll be able to tell you how many more courses have been translated, how many more people are receiving training in the language of their choice, how many more policies we've been able to implement. These are concrete things.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** We should put them on the agenda. I therefore officially ask that we set you down on the agenda to come back before the committee. As I've previously said, you've made a lot of statements, but taking action is something else. Your actions will have to be evaluated to see what has happened. The story that Mr. Nadeau told is unfortunate. You say senior officers have to get the CBC linguistic profile. Perhaps they should start by learning their ABCs. I may be the toughest guy on that subject.

I'm going to give you an example. Air Canada told us that it's making its workers learn French. Rather than say, "I don't speak French," they'll say, "*Je ne parle pas français*". On the weekend, I took the plane and that's exactly what happened. A person told me

she didn't speak French and I was never able to tell her which sandwich I wanted of the six that were offered. I pointed out the name of the sandwich and I told her I wanted it. However, she repeated to me that she didn't speak French. I told her I wanted that sandwich. She told me: "*Je ne parle pas français*". I swear I said it three times: "*Je veux celui-ci*". She answered me that she didn't speak French. So Minister Stockwell Day said: "He wants that sandwich." Ah! He turned to me and told me he thought she didn't speak French and that she didn't understand him either. I'm telling you this little story because we're being told all kinds of things. I'm taking you seriously. You represent the Department of National Defence, which represents us in Canada and abroad. You are our ambassadors. You go to countries to fight so that the people of those countries will have the right to democracy, whereas, in Canada, there are two official languages acts that aren't complied with.

Let's go back to Mr. Nadeau's story. Imagine that person gets on a ship for a period of six months. The only thing the commander will have learned to say is, "*Je ne parle pas français*." His stay on that boat won't be very pleasant, even if that comes from you. Since we've been talking about it, he should know that's not the way to talk to a military member. I'm pleased you said you were trying to solve the problem. Imagine the position a person finds himself in. I'm not a man who is easily influenced, but I guarantee you that, when I was sitting in my airplane seat, I was fed up with showing her the damned sandwich. Imagine the guy who works for the commander.

[English]

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Hopefully the sandwich was good.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It was pretty good, especially if you're hungry.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** I would say there are two pieces here. The one piece is the issue that—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Two pieces of sandwich?

**MGen W. Semianiw:** No. It depends if you want to be the meat in the sandwich or not, which I don't want to be.

In the end, Monsieur Nadeau raised the issue. I would submit to you this is a question that's posed to me in everything we do: mental health, ailing, the injured. You will always find these cases, even with the perfect system.

[Translation]

You see these kinds of cases even in a perfect system.

[English]

But the key is, what do you do with this? That's what speaks to action. What will be done in that case? And hopefully Monsieur Nadeau will give me the letter or at least provide a little bit more fidelity and granularity on the details, because that's the key. The leadership has to now take that, even in a perfect system.

We could be here perhaps—hopefully not—in five years, where individual cases will come up. They will, but the issue is not the case. It's what you do to resolve it, to get it sorted out. That's what we need to do.

So I think there are two issues you will see. You see the department, the Canadian Forces, with a plan that's moving ahead aggressively, and secondly, you see the leadership taking ownership of the plan.

•(1000)

[*Translation*]

That's the most important thing in my opinion.

[*English*]

It actually takes ownership of the plan and takes action to ensure that the plan is put into place.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Godin. You've given us an appetite for the next hour.

I'd like to thank you, General Semianiw and Colonel Meloche. You'll be with us for the next hour. I encourage you to continue your efforts, among other things, as regards leadership in the implementation of the Canadian Forces Official Languages Program Transformation Model.

We will now suspend our proceedings for a few minutes.

**MGen W. Semianiw:** Thank you.

•(1000)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1005)

**The Chair:** We'll now resume the proceedings of our 38th meeting. Colonel J.P.L. Meloche, who is Director of Official Languages, is still with us. We also welcome Colonel J.J.R. G. Hamel, who is Commander of Canadian Forces Base Borden, as well as Lieutenant-Colonel S.J.R. Whelan, Commander of Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School. It is also our pleasure to welcome once again to the committee Major-General J.P.Y. D. Gosselin, Commander of the Canadian Defence Academy.

General, I believe you want to make an opening speech. Go ahead please.

**Major-General J.P.Y.D. Gosselin (Commander, Canadian Defence Academy, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Honourable committee members, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to update you on the progress being made to improve the status of official languages within the Canada Defence Academy, specifically pertaining to the provision of French and English language instruction and services for Canadian Forces recruits.

[*English*]

I command the Canadian Defence Academy, which includes the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Saint-Jean, the royal military colleges located in Saint-Jean and in Kingston, the Canadian Forces Support Training Group and Base Borden, which includes a number of military schools, as well as the Canadian Forces College in Toronto.

I have with me today Colonel Guy Hamel, commander of the Support Training Group and Base Borden, and Lieutenant-Colonel Steve Whelan, commandant of the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School.

I have also provided the committee with a copy of a PowerPoint presentation that provides some information that we may refer to during the discussion, if you wish.

Since the implementation of the official languages program transformation model in 2007, the Canadian Defence Academy and all of its units have worked diligently on strategies to meet the objectives of the program.

At the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Saint-Jean, we offer all services, instruction, documentation, and working tools in both official languages, and the school benefits as well from its co-location with the Canadian Forces Language School, which I also command.

[*Translation*]

Similarly, the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean was recently the subject of a review from the official languages coordinator which revealed that the college is in a good position to offer instruction and instructional material to students in both official languages; offer the opportunity for students to practise both official languages outside the classroom; ensure an environment conducive to the effective use of both official languages; and communicate with the public and with staff in the language of their choice.

The Royal Military College of Canada, located in Kingston, Ontario, has continuously focused on developing an officer corps available to communicate with all members of the Canadian Forces and the Canadian population in general in the official language of their choice. Specifically, all academic programs are offered in both official languages. Bilingualism is one of the four pillars of the college, and as such all officer cadets expecting to graduate and be commissioned as an officer in the Canadian Forces must take second-language training during their four years at the college. This is in addition to constant exposure to activities conducted in both official languages. Officer cadets are also permitted to take their courses in their second language when their language proficiency allows it.

[*English*]

In 2007 the DND and Canadian Forces ombudsman visited Base Borden and identified areas of non-compliance. Many measures have since been put forward to address those concerns.

The base commander at Borden has ensured all signage, written notices, and standardized public announcements are in both official languages. He has appointed an official languages champion to increase visibility on official languages issues. He has made official languages obligations an integral part of senior officer personnel development reviews and personnel evaluation reports. He has hired, and will continue to hire, bilingual staff to serve students and staff in their official language of choice. He has hosted three official languages-themed open houses. He has conducted an extensive public relations campaign to increase on base and off base official languages awareness. And he has implemented annual briefings to all unit coordinators for updates on official languages matters, complemented by unit visits and audits.

Significant progress has been made by all of the Canadian Defence Academy's units, and efforts continue to be made to further improve the status of official languages to effectively answer to the obligations and responsibilities as set out by the Official Languages Act and the official languages program transformation model.

Despite the number of initiatives and significant additional resources invested, it will take years of sustained effort and focused leadership to bring the official languages issue throughout the CDA formation at a fully satisfactory level. I am, we are, fully committed to seeing this to the end and to build upon the recent progress of the last few years.

Along with Colonel Hamel and Lieutenant-Colonel Whelan, I look forward to answering your questions today and to tell you more about our achievements of the last few years.

*Merci bien.*

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, General Gosselin.

We'll begin our first round with Mr. D'Amours.

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

Thanks to the four of you for being here today. You talked about second-language instruction during the four years of study at the college. Could you give us a little more of an explanation. Are there any incentives for francophones and anglophones to take courses in the other language to improve their second-language proficiency? Is the instruction given in person or over the Internet? It's easy to learn a word in the other language; you only need to check what it means in a dictionary. However, the challenge is greater when you have to have a conversation. You don't have a conversation with the Internet or with a dictionary; you have to practise.

What instructional means are you using to ensure that military members acquire the necessary experience and skills in their second language?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Thank you for the question.

In fact, the bilingualism program at the military college is basic and is one of the four pillars of the program, the other three pillars being the academic program, the sports program—physical fitness, and the military program.

In fact, when they finish, students have to have the BBB bilingualism rating. They have four years to do that. All cadets are assessed on arrival and are immediately divided up and assigned to the appropriate groups, based on their bilingualism level. The courses are given in small classes of 8, 10 or 12 students, depending on their levels. Students take an hour of courses a day over four years, or until they reach the BBB level.

If they want to continue, they have incentives that give them higher marks, a level of established standards comparable to that of more advanced language courses given in other universities. And a number of students will continue their language studies, either in French or in English, over their four years.

The results are excellent. Naturally, cadets are at an age where they can learn more easily, more quickly. There are also a number of other things in the program that encourage them to become bilingual. For example, there are French weeks, English weeks, programs, instructions; everything is done in both languages. Military instructions will be given in both languages on parade, for example.

Consequently, when students reach their second year, they're already aware of all the commands given in French and English on parade, for example. These are all little things, but they are nevertheless things that sharpen the hearing so that, at the end of their years of study, students manage to achieve a very good level of bilingualism. What we hope is that, with the years, they will maintain it.

The day they want to achieve a higher level, CBC, that will of course be easier. And we're seeing it; the results are there.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Do you ever break out of the framework at certain times? Because you know that, in our respective professions, we always repeat the same words when we have conversations. The words, the terms are always the same.

Do you try to move outside that military framework so that the conversation turns on terminology that is not military terminology? At some point, the cadets or soldiers have to go outside that framework. They aren't always in isolation, I imagine. Do you offer those recruits the resources so they are able to get outside the box?

• (1015)

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** In fact, the courses are typical language courses like you would find anywhere else, here, in the city, or elsewhere. These are small groups. Accredited civilian instructors give the language courses. It's the typical language course format.

There's no greater focus—perhaps a little, not really—on the military aspect in these language courses, since most of these people are starting their language courses. We talk about basic things: grammar, structure, syntax, vocabulary, etc. It's really the entire range so that they can become bilingual.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. D'Amours.

We'll continue on with Mr. Nadeau.

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

Good morning, gentlemen.

One aspect comes to mind: the curriculum issue. We've heard a little about this, we've done some research; we also discussed the matter at one point with the analysis sector here. I'm talking about the way the courses are constructed. Unless I'm mistaken, for a long time—too long—the English course was developed from basic elements to exercises, etc., which formed the body of the curriculum. In so doing, they didn't necessarily have the time to translate it into French.

Is the course curriculum still done like that: in English first and then in French if you have the time, regardless of whether it's for the army, the air force or the navy?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** I'm going to ask Colonel Hamel to give you an answer. He's closer to the instructors and school commanders.

**Colonel J.J.R.G. Hamel (Commander, Canadian Forces Base Borden, Department of National Defence):** Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

I would just like to point out, with regard to Borden, that there are approximately 26 units, 13 of which provide training. I should mention one point, among other things. When we say “by the leadership”, that means that we set a command policy, but that we also have to conduct follow-up and ensure that we are moving forward, that we are headed toward improvement.

To answer your question, I would say yes. Why? Because it's a matter of culture. I see that second-language learning is a matter that comes under the heading of culture.

The leadership is there to promote this to senior officers and also to non-commissioned officers—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Hamel, I only have five minutes. The question is simple; answer with a yes or no.

**Col J.J.R.G. Hamel:** All right.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Do you design the courses first in English, then translate them into French if you have the time?

**Col J.J.R.G. Hamel:** No. The courses are designed in both languages, even in the case of a trial.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** From the information I have here, at the Borden school, 38% of basic courses are not available in French, and 47% of advanced or specialty courses aren't either. If the courses are designed in both languages. How do you explain those figures? I don't understand.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** In fact, the courses are designed by the instructor. If the instructor is anglophone, he develops the course in English. If I asked Colonel Whelan to tell us what the situation is at the Collège militaire Saint-Jean, where the vast majority of instructors are francophone, he would tell me that the courses are developed in French.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** So it's false to say that you develop the courses simultaneously in French and in English.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** The figures prove it.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** The individual who develops the course uses the language in which he is comfortable, in accordance with the course development plan. If the course has to be translated, it will be, depending on the instructor's capability, whether it be into English or into French.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** So you're telling me that the Canadian Forces, where we have to train people in a manner respectful of the country's official languages, that is English and French, you don't have the ability or the necessary funding from the federal government, which promotes French and English, to develop the courses offered at the bases in Borden, Saint-Jean or elsewhere in both official languages?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** No, that's not correct. We develop the courses in both languages. They are developed in one language and then translated. The same thing—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** And then what? They're translated?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Yes, the same thing—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** They're translated by the instructor?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Not necessarily. It varies. A course may be translated by another instructor who gives the course in French or in English. For example, when I sat down to write my presentation today, I wrote it in one language and then I translated it.

●(1020)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Gosselin, I want to help you. I think it would be a good idea to tell the Minister of National Defence, whatever his name, his province of origin, etc., that we're talking about training schools and that it is imperative that the courses be designed by professionals, as is the case at school boards. Your schools are also training sites for young people. These are young officers, men and women. That task must not be assigned to instructors. From what I've understood, they translate the courses if they have the time, and that's done willy-nilly. The figures speak for themselves. I've emphasized the following figures: in the air force, 600 courses are given in English and 16 in French. That's not right. At least tell me the truth, that they aren't translated, that very little effort is made, and that you need assistance in order to make those efforts.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** I'm going to let Colonel Meloche talk about the situation prevailing in the air force, since that area isn't my responsibility. However, I would like to clarify certain points concerning course development.

I believe you said that the instructors should not develop courses. But they're the specialists. The qualified, competent instructor who knows a piece of equipment or his subject, develops a course just as any university professor would do. If he is responsible for developing his course, he will do so and his course will immediately be translated into French or into English. It may occur that the instructor is perfectly bilingual and decides to develop the course in both languages, as I did in the case of my presentation. The fact remains that, in most cases, if the instructor is not sufficiently proficient in the second language, he has what he has done translated. That doesn't necessarily mean that the person who developed the course is the one who is going to give the course. It may be that the course has been developed three or four years earlier and that, as a result of changes that have occurred, the person uses the program in French or in English, for example, at Saint-Jean, and gives the course. That's how we operate.

**The Chair:** Thank you, general. We can come back to this question.

Mr. Gravelle.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Thank you. I would like to know whether unilingual anglophones and francophones recruited by the Canadian Forces, as well as their dependents, are given an equal opportunity to learn the other language.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** The answer is yes.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** The same opportunities are offered to them?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Yes, because we operate based on needs, based on a functional approach. For example, a francophone from Saint-Georges de Beauce who enrolls as an infantryman will receive his recruit instruction in Saint-Jean, then will be posted to an infantry battalion at Valcartier. As an infantryman of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment at the Citadelle, for example, his language of work is French. Does that individual need English? The answer is no. Later in his career, if he chooses to become an instructor at one of our national schools, at the Gagetown Infantry School, for example, he may need to use the other language. At that point in his career planning, he may choose to go and take a language course.

As regards the second part of your question on families, we have family resource centres. Each centre offers the dependents of military members second-language training at various levels. The chief of military personnel, General Semianiw, issued a directive last spring according to which the officers responsible for the Canada Forces Personnel Support Agency must standardize language training so that it is accessible to everyone, regardless of location. When people who are originally from Quebec are posted, for example, to Edmonton, Alberta, their spouses and families can take English courses.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** All right, thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gravelle, you have some time left.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** I have finished.

**The Chair:** Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Gosselin, you have managed recruits and schools. There was a break in Quebec; Mr. Whelan must know that. The Royal Military College Saint-Jean was closed for 10 years. As a result, an entire generation of francophone officers will not enter the senior ranks at the same time as anglophones. The college has resumed its activities and we're seeing progress.

We've learned from various newspapers that recruitment in proportion to population is good in Quebec. A lot of recruits are coming from Quebec and going to schools directed by Mr. Gosselin or by people who work with him.

At the time, francophone officers were trained at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and could spread their knowledge of their occupation, know-how and leadership at other bases in Canada in their own language. However, there was a 10-year interruption.

How are you making up for that lost time? We're talking about material, but ultimately you need students and officers, as well as leadership, which is currently lacking. I don't mean you don't have any. The college in Saint-Jean was one of the biggest francophone officer training schools. However, they were simply shut down for 10 years.

Mr. Gosselin, do you currently have enough staff to make up for those 10 lost years?

• (1025)

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In fact, we don't have any shortage. You're obviously talking about military colleges.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** I'm talking about Saint-Jean.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** When the two military colleges of Royal Roads and Saint-Jean were closed, there was an increase in the number of recruits at the Royal Military College in Kingston. The programs at Kingston are given in both official languages. The percentages of enrolled anglophone and francophone officers did not change as a result of the college's closing. I have the figures and I could give them to the committee. I believe the percentage was even higher than the Canadian proportion. We have no trouble recruiting officers for the basic training program at the military colleges.

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

**The Chair:** You have a minute and a half left, Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** With regard to recruitment, those who want to become officers are naturally attracted to the Collège militaire Saint-Jean. They want to go there. In terms of studies, the college is equivalent to a CEGEP. They can continue their studies there, etc.

Mr. Gosselin, you mainly recruit at a lower level, based on what you've explained. I'd like you to repeat what you said about material so that we can be sure we clearly understood. Do you have enough teaching material to permit proper instruction in both official languages? I'm mainly talking about material for francophones because that's the question that interests me personally.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Thank you for your question. First, I want to point out that I'm not responsible for the recruitment group; another general handles that. All recruits joining the Canadian Forces, officers and non-commissioned officers, have to go to the recruit school in Saint-Jean for their military training. Then they have to be selected to attend a military college—that's the case of approximately one in four recruits. The military colleges in Saint-Jean and Kingston are under my command.

With regard to the matter of teaching material and so on, I'm going to let Colonel Whelan answer because he commands the recruit school. All Canadian Forces recruits go through Saint-Jean, not to military college, but to the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School.

• (1030)

**Lieutenant-Colonel S.J.R. Whelan (Commander, Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, general.

[English]

What I can say is that I consider the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School a model, one of the leading-edge models for schools in the Canadian Forces as it pertains to the material, the instruction.

[Translation]

As regards the choice of language of instruction, the documentation at the school, I have the people I need who speak the necessary language of instruction. The instruction is offered in both official languages, and all the documentation, 100%, is available in both official languages at Saint-Jean.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that answer.

Thank you, Mr. Petit.

We're going to begin our second round with Ms. Zarac.



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

Good morning, gentlemen.

We've just learned, from listening to the previous witnesses, that it's important to follow a model, to have encouragement. One of the responsibilities of the official languages champion is to constantly hire bilingual staff. From what I've just heard, it does not appear to be an obligation to have bilingual instructors.

Why not encourage instructors to be bilingual and follow the example of the witnesses we've just heard?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** In fact, we have a lot of bilingual staff at our schools, especially in the schools I command, but not all are 100% bilingual. That's not possible. Not everyone is bilingual, especially when—

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** You say it's not possible. Do you firmly believe it's impossible to get bilingual instructors?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** No. In fact, we have bilingual instructors, we have them everywhere, but—

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** It isn't 100% of them.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** They don't constitute 100% of the school's teaching staff.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** That couldn't be an objective?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Yes. In fact, we're working toward improvement to a certain degree, but it wouldn't necessarily be an advantage in certain cases, however. Let's take the example of a basic mechanics course and a lower level course. If the course is given in English, for example, by a master corporal who has the technical expertise, there would be no benefit to us in ensuring that all instructors are bilingual, particularly when we are short of them and we need some elsewhere. Ideally, yes, but in practice, it isn't done. In practice, we have the number we need to teach in both official languages.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** I'm trying to understand. I'm starting off from the principle that, if we're able to have bilingual generals and officers, why not instructors? You don't think that would be advantageous. I think that it could; you could shift the instructors. It's important for them to be bilingual because these courses, as in the example you gave, are not just offered to anglophones.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** You're right. Ideally, I would like all the schools to be completely bilingual, but in practice—

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** It's a wish, but a wish can become an objective. Couldn't that be one of your objectives? Is that what you are considering for the future?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** I'm going to hand over to Colonel Meloche because that question is related more to the official languages policy.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** Yes. I think you have to put things into perspective. Saying that it would be desirable for all instructors at the national schools to be bilingual is one thing, but saying it's achievable in spite of the way in which people are posted, the operational tempo, etc., is another.

In addition, some courses are given exclusively in French and others exclusively in English. So putting bilingual people in duties in which they will teach only one course in English or in French means

that a given bilingual person may not have a bilingual position elsewhere where that person could be in a better position to serve the institution.

To go back to the point raised by General Semianiw, that's why the commanders are accountable. When functions are designated, we do the rounds. The commanders have to ensure they have the necessary staff, with the necessary language capability, to deliver the goods. Here, for example, you have two commanders: Colonel Hamel and Lieutenant-Colonel Whelan. They have to ensure they have a core of instructors, with the required language skills, to deliver the goods they're asked to deliver.

• (1035)

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** I understand your point of view because a cost is always linked to that, but, to be as efficient as possible, can you easily respond to requests in a manner that is respectful of the official languages?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** I'm going to let the school commanders answer.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** We currently don't have any difficulty. We're trying to increase the number of instructors. We've found other methods to assist us. In some cases, for example, we specifically lacked bilingual francophone instructors. So we took one of the courses in which we had a bilingual instructor and we gave the contract to another college, a technical college, so that the instructor could give the course in French. So we used various methods to mitigate the problem we had.

We're always trying to increase the bilingual workforce. A number of efforts have been made in the past two years. I was talking with Colonel Whelan. His workforce has increased: 60% of his instructors are now bilingual. He offers a lot of flexibility with regard, for example, to leave, operational deployments, depending on courses in French or in English. Sometimes two groups of francophone recruits arrive. Sometimes there are four recruit courses. Ideally, we want more, so that we can have more flexibility.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Do I have any time left?

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Your time is up, Ms. Zarac.

We'll continue on with Mr. Nadeau.

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

In the fall of 2006, the ombudsman, Mr. Côté, filed a rather damning report in which he pointed out numerous problems for francophones seeking services in their language at Borden. Even the base chiefs acknowledged that it was difficult to provide services in French. I'm going to name you a few: I won't read you the entire report:

[...] a refusal to offer English second-language courses to francophone recruits; an incitement to change trades when documents in French are not available; lack of second-language skills among instructors who interact with unilingual francophone recruits; the risk of ostracism if francophone recruits dared to ask for services in French.

Many of the francophone recruits do not feel welcome, which aggravates the sense of isolation they feel being far away from their families in a unilingual anglophone region.

I'll conclude by citing a remark by Mr. Côté:

The onus should not be on [unilingual] recruits to understand a language with which they are unfamiliar, but on the institution to ensure that recruits are fully able to communicate in the official language they understand.

That was three years ago.

You're telling me that Borden is paradise on earth for these people. Understand that this is a very significant comment. I didn't write it. When it came out in the media, you can understand why it was the subject of a meeting here. We met with Mr. Côté, and so on.

I want to know what the situation is today for a unilingual recruit—or one who has very little knowledge of English—who comes from Acadia, from Quebec or elsewhere and who goes to Borden and wants to be a soldier in the Canadian armed forces. Do they still suffer this ostracism?

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Thank you for that question and thank you for the opportunity to address the points that were raised by the ombudsman at the time.

When I spoke to this committee nearly two years ago, we were just starting. I had just taken command of the academy four months earlier. It was one of my two essential priorities. In the more than two years that I have been commanding the academy, I have visited Borden more than 12 times, nearly every other month. Every time, I request a report on progress in relation to the strategic plan that was developed at the time and that we are continuing to implement.

I'm going to ask the colonel to take a minute or two to explain to you what has happened.

We've made a lot of progress to ensure that people understand their language rights as soon as they arrive at their course, to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to receive complaints concerning bilingualism, to give priority to courses so that francophones don't wait a lot of time to gain access to their courses.

Between plates 13 and 26 which I've submitted to you, there is a series of our achievements in the past two years, of which we are truly proud. We conducted surveys to determine how people perceived the efforts made. The results compared to the first poll originally conducted by the ombudsman are impressive. We're satisfied, but we want more; we want to achieve even more. I've taken what we did at Borden, the transformation plan, and I've transposed it to Saint-Jean. Elements of the plan were even taken by the director of official languages to determine which elements should be transposed within the Canadian Forces. We learned a number of lessons at Borden. It isn't perfect, but compared to the situation in the fall of 2006, we've made a lot of progress.

● (1040)

**Col J.J.R.G. Hamel:** Mr. Chairman, I want to add that progress takes time. One of the things we achieved in August 2007 was a strategic plan for official languages at Borden that is for a number of years. We identified shortcomings, but we're making exemplary progress. I'm going to cite a few examples for you.

When new members of the forces, recruits, for example, who have just finished their training at Saint-Jean or permanent civilian or military members arrive at CFB Borden, they are informed for their official languages rights and responsibilities. That's also kept in their file, and they have to sign the form.

Earlier we were talking about plans and material. We said that the courses we offer at Borden are not all bilingual, in the chosen language of the students who go there. But it's a plan. Our strategic plan provides that, as of September 1, 2012, all courses given at Borden will be offered in the chosen language of the members of the Canadian Forces taking them. To achieve that, we have to translate the plans of certain courses that are currently being offered.

The question was previously asked as to whether the new course plans are translated immediately? When we conduct a trial of a new course plan, it's translated. We don't wait to conduct a trial with students before translating it; we do it immediately. As for the other courses we are currently offering, before they are improved or changed, they are handed over to the Translation Bureau, and that takes time.

With that, I'd like to mention that our translation plan at Borden has more than doubled. We have invested up to \$1.6 million in translation. This is done at a number of levels: the new course plans and the old ones. All that is being done to meet our deadline of September 1, 2012.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We can supplement that later.

We'll continue on with Ms. Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Good morning, gentlemen.

I am delighted to hear what you're telling us today. I am pleasantly surprised to see all the efforts you are making. I would also like, for one rare time, to hail Mr. Nadeau, of the Bloc Québécois, who is asking the federal government to invest in National Defence. That's always a pleasure to hear.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Translation!

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I said that because it was too easy.

I have three questions, the first one of which is for Mr. Meloche. How long have you been working to solve the official languages problems?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** I've been working on it since July 2007.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** A lot of things have been done since then.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** The Transformation Model has been in effect since April 2007. Since July 2007, with a renewed team, we've put a lot of effort into drafting and introducing the policies underlying our work. The review of the linguistic designation of Canadian Forces units is another tool through which we can determine the units' language of work.

There has also been a major awareness campaign so that people know their rights. It's all well and good to talk about leadership, but we're adopting what we call a two-envelope military strategy. Leadership is important—that's obvious—but, with a dynamic awareness campaign, people are able to know their rights. If they know them, they'll exercise them and they'll demand them. So we're moving forward.

The third model aim was the performance measurement system. We have established indicators and we're putting the pilot project in place.

•(1045)

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** So you've come a long way.

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** We started with the model and we've built on it. The model was the general strategic orientation, but, from there, action had to be taken, concrete measures.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** The other question is for Mr. Whelan or Mr. Gosselin. Among your recruits, are there still, in 2009, any members of your units, people who resist learning either of Canada's official languages? If so, how do you make them understand that bilingualism is very important? These are Canada's two official languages, and you should be able to speak your own language, but also to switch to the other language.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Thank you for your question. I'm going to talk specifically about my experience with young officers who come to the military college. Young people across the country who come to us know that, at the military college, if they are officers in the Canadian Forces, they'll have to become bilingual if they want to advance in the organization. General Semianiw talked earlier about generals, about the pressure that is exercised to ensure that generals, the main leaders, are bilingual. However, there are also bilingualism levels at all ranks. For example, Colonel Whelan, an anglophone who has good French ratings himself, would not be commanding the Saint-Jean school if he wasn't bilingual. Someone who starts, a captain or a major who wants to advance, who has already taken language courses, who is at the military college and who already has good language ratings will score points with the merit boards and have the opportunity to occupy command positions. To do that, we have to have certain bilingualism ratings. So people learn that quite quickly.

My impression is that that's done quickly at military college, from the first year, because the accent is placed so much on bilingualism that people know they'll need it in order to become officers in the Canadian Forces. For non-commissioned officers, no, because it takes them a number of years. In addition, infantry men who go away to join the regiment in Valcartier or who go to Edmonton and enter the infantry as privates, don't think about it at all.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** They don't think about it.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** However, when they rise through the ranks to hold a senior non-commissioned officer position at my headquarters, for example, they must be bilingual. Among officers, this is a fact that is absorbed more quickly in the first years, and there's a reason for that.

Does everyone completely accept it? Not necessarily, but I think we're making efforts, particularly from the standpoint of language and culture. For non-commissioned officers, it's more on a needs basis.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I have one final question. Earlier you talked about open houses. I'd like you to explain to me how that works, please. I think that's important.

**Col J.J.R.G. Hamel:** With regard to CFB Borden, we held our three open houses in September and, among the guests, 38 community partners came to provide services. We're talking about schools for francophones, community clubs, health services and employment assistance services. These people come and see us, and base members are invited to go and visit their facilities, to go and meet those groups that provide services to francophone members.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Boucher.

Mr. Gravelle, do you have any additional questions?

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Earlier, in the first hour, we heard that when officers are ready for promotion, they are assigned points for bilingualism. When you recruit officers or non-commissioned officers, are bilingual candidates given preference over those who are unilingual?

**Col J.P.L. Meloche:** I can answer that question, as I was director of recruitment for the Canadian Forces. When we recruit military members, we recruit Canadians; we're not recruiting anglophones or francophones. So we don't have any quotas. From that point, every candidate is assessed; that is to say that we assess their military potential—a score is assigned to that—and their academic potential, if they want to go to a military college, for example. Based on that, we total up the two, prepare a list and make enrolment offers.

•(1050)

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Thank you.

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

This completes our second round. Would other parliamentarians like to ask further questions?

I would like to thank you for appearing before our committee this morning.

**MGen J.P.Y.D. Gosselin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll see each other next Tuesday.

The meeting is adjourned.





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