



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Official Languages

LANG • NUMBER 011 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, April 22, 2010

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Chair

Mr. Steven Blaney

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• (0900)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):
Good morning, everybody.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), we are studying the Department of Canadian Heritage's road map for Canada's linguistic duality for 2008 to 2013.

We have the pleasure to have this morning as witnesses the members of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada: Madam Marie-France Kenny, and the director general, Suzanne Bossé. You're always welcome to our committee.

We also have the Quebec Community Groups Network. He thought it would be his last time, but he's here again this morning—the president, Robert Donnelly, as well as the director general, Sylvia Martin-Laforge.

[Translation]

Without further ado,

[English]

Mr. Donnelly, would you please start this day with us?

Mr. Robert Donnelly (President, Quebec Community Groups Network): My pleasure.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you once again for taking the time to listen to us, for once again giving us this opportunity to assist the committee in its work. Today, of course, we've been invited to participate in a discussion on the road map for Canada's linguistic duality.

As an introduction, I ask you to recall that at our last appearance we expressed our dismay a little bit about the lack of acknowledgement by the federal government of the English-speaking minority in the Speech from the Throne. In that regard, you may or may not be aware, the QCGN has recently submitted an official complaint to the Commissioner of Official Languages about the omission, because of the impact that kind of thing happening in the throne speech could have on the official language minority community in Quebec.

What do we mean by that? Well, we bring this up to demonstrate that despite 40 years of the Official Languages Act and despite the recognition of our minority community's national standing by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his 2007-2008 report, we still believe that a deep-rooted misunderstanding remains regarding

the English-speaking community of Quebec as an official languages minority community.

Key stakeholders see omissions in federal strategic communications, such as the throne speech, as evidence that there is, at best, continuing political and policy confusion around how the English-speaking community of Quebec must be supported, and at worst, a deliberate move to dismantle the traditions of the official languages policy.

Not only do policy-makers have a hard time imagining that English-speaking Quebecers are members of an official language minority community, but many English Quebecers also have a hard time considering themselves part of a minority. But we are, and many English-speaking communities and institutions are on the endangered list.

The original policy document entitled *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality* and the funding priorities that ensued under the action plan and the current road-map initiatives have been a significant step forward in terms of the government's attempt to inject new momentum into the promotion of a linguistic duality in Canada. The most significant initiative to date in Quebec has been the effort to improve access to health and social services in English, and there's been great success in that domain. In contrast, however, most departments have not been able to successfully take on the design of national policy and programs that are flexible enough to work in Quebec as well as across Canada. That has meant fewer initiatives for the English-speaking community.

From a policy-maker's perspective, the reality of the English-speaking community of Quebec presents a particular challenge. We know that. In fact, it questions the core of collective thinking about Canadian official language minority communities. The tradition that informs the beliefs and the structure of a response to official languages is based on the francophone experience, and the foundation of that experience is a minority language that has been fiercely protected and proudly fostered for four centuries in Canada. But for English Quebec, the protection of the language is not a concern. For the English-speaking minority of Quebec, the fundamental aim is to preserve our institutions and the communities they serve.

We seek integration. We demand that our children have the language skills necessary to participate fully in Quebec society, and we understand that limited and rational asymmetry in program delivery, but not design, is necessary for Quebec to flourish. For the English-speaking official language minority, the mandates, overall policy considerations, and program design of various federal departments continue to make interventions in Quebec problematic. For the most part, services that have a direct impact on our community fall within provincial jurisdiction. Furthermore, restrictions on federal spending powers, highlighted in the Speech from the Throne and now the subject of Bill C-507, and the devolution of federal responsibilities provide significant challenges to those charged with designing and implementing the road map in Quebec. Unlike the federal government, our provincial government does have the responsibility to promote the vitality of our community. Therefore, little, if any, leverage can be obtained without some innovative thinking.

Under the previous action plan and the current road map, many initiatives were not available to the English-speaking community of Quebec. Among the gaps were programs in the areas, for example, of literacy, early childhood development, and immigration.

• (0905)

There are certainly varied reasons for this situation. The community also acknowledges that in some cases our capacity to successfully support implementation was lacking, but our community structures and support networks are still evolving to adapt to the specific challenges and realities of being an English-speaking minority community in Quebec.

The structural challenges in government programming, such as the road map, can be mitigated by innovative thinking and dedicated effort. For example, immigration is the subject of a Canada-Quebec accord to which the current road map is subordinate.

Quebec's immigration policy does not address the demographic pressures faced by the English-speaking community. Renewal is of importance to English-speaking communities across the province and of critical concern to the communities on the island of Montreal. Ground-breaking strategies are being developed to access road-map funding for research to inform the design of future initiatives, such as a study on the ability of English-speaking communities to help attract and retain immigrants in rural Quebec.

We believe that closer collaboration with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, with the community, and with the government of Quebec is beginning to pay off. In small steps, we're beginning to demonstrate that capitalizing on the community's role as an asset could help with immigrant retention in the regions, and retention means thriving communities and perhaps even growing communities.

Finally, I have a word on evaluation. Ever since the launch of the overarching priority-setting initiatives, such as the action plan and the road map, we have come to recognize that there is a systemic flaw in the policy and program design, which cannot be fixed by regular evaluation processes. Therefore, unless the evaluation process includes what we call a gap analysis, nothing will change. Only an evidence-based approach will ultimately allow departments to fill in the gaps.

Issues cannot be fixed at the evaluation stage—which often comes at the end—and therefore policy and interventions for the English-speaking community of Quebec must be considered from the outset.

The English-speaking community of Quebec cannot continue to rely only on a half-century of research and capacity building, as provided to Canada's francophone minority. Evidence-based policy by definition relies on evidence. To ensure our vitality, the English-speaking minority needs more resources directed towards research.

To conclude, although we feel largely absent from the road map, we of course still believe it possible that English-speaking Quebec can be given equal national consideration and equitable resources in developing its successor, the planning of which we understand is already under way.

Thank you for listening to some of our concerns, and we look forward to trying to answer some of your questions.

• (0910)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. President.

We'll now turn to the—

[*Translation*]

The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada.

Ms. Kenny, the floor is yours.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny (President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada): Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee, I would first like to thank you for having invited us to appear this morning as part of your study on the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. We are coming to the roadmap's halfway point and we absolutely need to take this time to look back on what has been done and especially the approach that was taken, in order to make the adjustments needed between now and 2013. In preparing our presentation, and in order to make thoughtful comments and assist you in your study, we consulted with the 40 member organizations of the Leaders Forum, which is working on implementing the community strategic plan. That plan arose from the 2007 Francophone and Acadian Community Summit.

The government launched its Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality in June 2008, however, it did not set the new course as we had been hoping for in terms of strengthening the social, economic and cultural vitality of our communities. Nevertheless, the roadmap was a significant initiative. Investments totalling \$1.1 billion were announced, representing an increase of \$400 million over the Official Languages Action Plan. The roadmap helped sustain most of the initiatives started under the action plan. A greater number of departments and development sectors were targeted by the roadmap. Culture and youth were identified as priority sectors. Investments made in education, health and justice were increased. If the strength of the roadmap was to emphasize services to the public, its weakness came from leaving behind the groups that create and deliver those services. There was no increase in the support given to communities and organizations that create and instil a sense of community living in French.

In a context where the government, in the Speech from the Throne, has spelled out its commitment to further work with local organizations, one of the priorities should be to strengthen the capacity of local organizations to carry out their community missions and offer services to the public, if the roadmap is to become an out-and-out success. That is a priority for both us and the government.

That isn't the only success factor. I would now like to address the main issue that we would like to talk to you about today, i.e. the governance of the roadmap. The greatest challenges are ones of clarity and transparency. To date, it is especially difficult to know what has been invested where, when and by whom. There is still no public document containing a breakdown of roadmap investments by department, year and initiative. Our primary and almost sole source of information is the Official Languages Secretariat website, which presents only the announcements that have already been made. Furthermore, the recurrent funding of the various departments in terms of official languages is not announced and not part of the available data. The situation is not made any easier by the fact that few departments specifically mention the roadmap or official languages in their financial planning. More often than not, you have to try and read between the lines. Added to that is the fact that funding is announced once a year, which makes it particularly difficult to do any short, medium or long-term planning. There is also a lack of clarity with regard to expected results, performance indicators and the linkages among departments or between departments and communities.

We have tried to find out more about how the roadmap is presented in departmental reports on plans and priorities. The only department we currently have information on is Canadian Heritage. The department presents various measures related to the implementation of the roadmap, the renewal of federal and provincial agreements, cooperation agreements with the communities and ongoing initiatives to improve the grants and contributions approval and allocation procedures. Those activities have their own performance measurement frameworks, which include results and indicators. Among other things, the department measures the satisfaction of OLMCs with program access and services provided by the community organizations, as well as the confidence of OLMC members with regard to the promotion of our community.

How did they define those indicators? How will they consult with the communities on the achievement of those results?

● (0915)

Moreover, will they be assessing the impact, the work done by communities, or the impact of government funding? I do want to underscore that there have been improvements in terms of linkages. For example, if you look at the Horizontal Results-based Management and Accountability Framework, which was developed last year for the Roadmap, you will find that the governance structure now includes a dialogue component with the official language minority communities. We are proud to have contributed to that governance structure and are looking forward to the first day of dialogue with the communities. The event will be held in May and attended by representatives of 15 departments and 40 francophone organizations.

It needs to be said, however, that such a day of dialogue was held at least once a year under the Official Languages Action Plan, with senior executives of federal institutions in attendance. This day of dialogue, which was called for by the FCFA, is the first opportunity to hold discussions between the institutions targeted by the Roadmap and the communities.

Consultations also vary considerably from one sector to another, from one department to another. That is something that has been mentioned on a number of occasions by Commissioner Fraser and his predecessor, Dyane Adam. Part VII of the Official Languages Act and its obligation to ensure that positive measures are taken suggest that communities participate in all stages of the development, implementation and evaluation of the policies and programs that are of concern to them.

We, like the government, want the investments made under the Roadmap to produce significant results for Canadians who want to live and grow in French. We believe that the challenges we have pointed out with regard to governance can be overcome through better coordination. As we have indicated in our document entitled *La mise en oeuvre de la Loi sur les langues officielles: une nouvelle approche - une nouvelle vision* [the implementation of the Official Languages Act: a new approach, a new vision], the success of a comprehensive approach depends on the coordination of a central institution that has an authority over the entire federal machinery of government.

Such coordination would ensure that the federal institutions under the Roadmap take their responsibilities into account in their budget planning, report on plans and priorities and performance reports. That would lead to a better overall profile of all Roadmap investments, guarantee better linkages with provincial and territorial governments as well as with communities, and call on targeted institutions to consult with organizations and report on the coordinated efforts.

Essentially, there needs to be an active, horizontal governance structure to directly engage the key departments and agencies, and ensure strong and transparent leadership. I have often said that we wanted to be part of the solution. That is still the case. That is why, after having reviewed the implementation of the Roadmap to date, we would like to make concrete recommendations for the next steps.

First, in order to facilitate planning both for the communities and the departments, we recommend there be a template indicating how investments are being made under the Roadmap. We will come back to that. Furthermore, we know that your committee made a recommendation last fall calling on the Department of Canadian Heritage to make further use of multi-year agreements. We thank you for that and believe that the recommendation could extend to all institutions targeted by the Roadmap.

As for cooperation mechanisms with the communities, I said earlier that the Roadmap and the community strategic plan share a number of common elements. It would make sense to increase the linkages between the two. That is why we gave a detailed presentation of the community strategic plan to the members of the Interdepartmental Policy Committee in November, and that is the reason why we will be discussing implementation of the plan with the 15 departments attending the day of dialogue in May.

I hope that there will be more opportunities for discussion among the institutions targeted by the Roadmap, other departments and the communities in the future.

• (0920)

The Chair: One moment please, Ms. Kenny.

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): I have a point of order: the translation is not working.

The Chair: Perhaps we can check with our interpreters, but it seems that there is no English coming through at the moment.

It's back.

Could you please go back a paragraph?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I apologize. I am probably speaking too quickly for the interpreter. In fact, I was told about that at the beginning.

In the future, I hope there will be more opportunities for dialogue between the institutions contained in the Roadmap, the other departments and the communities. More specifically, in accordance with what is prescribed by section VII, we are asking that the government quickly implement, in cooperation with the communities, a transparent consultation structure founded on performance targets and indicators, that the government consult with communities in the development of evaluation mechanisms, including collecting information and validating this information by the communities; that the government work with communities to assess whether the changes have actually taken place on the ground regarding the ability of Canadians to live and work within the dynamic communities in the official language of their choice; and, lastly, to make public the way the budget was broken down, so that we can see where investments under the Roadmap were made, by year and by department.

Five years ago, on the request of the government, the FCFA coordinated the development of the communities' perspective on what accomplishments had been made halfway through the Official Plan on Official Languages. Now that the Roadmap is near its halfway point, I cannot insist enough on the importance of receiving the perspective of communities as a tool to benchmark, evaluate and, ultimately, achieve results. We are also aware that this perspective at

the halfway point will sow the seeds of a government initiative which will come after the Roadmap.

We have ideas to share and, especially, we have a plan which is based on a common and motivating vision which we developed three years ago: a vision of life in French, in a dynamic community involving many organizations which offer a whole range of services and activities. This vision will require strong leadership on the part of both government and communities.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kenny.

We will now begin our first round with Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you, Mr. Donnelly.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kenny, thank you very much.

My first question is for Ms. Glover, the Parliamentary Secretary for official languages.

Previously, with these kinds of consultations, the kind that will take place in May, we invited members of the opposition parties to send a representative. In fact, Mr. Godin participated in some of these consultations, during which members of the community met with representatives from different departments; often ministers were present as well.

Will the government invite representatives from the opposition parties to the dialogue which will take place in mid-May?

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger, I would like to point out that, during the first part of our meeting, we hear witnesses. Please also be aware that, in the second part of our meeting, we will be in camera. You can use your time any way you wish, but normally, now, it is between you and the witnesses.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you for confirming that I can indeed ask the questions I wish of the witnesses, and that I can use my time as I see fit. However, I will ask the same question, and I will wait for an answer because I understand that you will have to discuss this matter with the minister and the government. That being said, if it was possible to receive an answer before that dialogue takes place, that would be greatly appreciated.

Further, in May, we will hear from—but we are still waiting for confirmation—Minister Moore, and possibly Minister Day, the President of the Treasury Board, to speak to the Roadmap. I share your opinion: since we are at the halfway point, it is important to point out any weaknesses the Roadmap might have.

My second question is for you, and for Mr. Donnelly, as well as to the officials with you. If you have any questions which you would like the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, and the President of the Treasury Board, to answer, please send them to us. I have no objection to sharing them with all the members of the committee, because the country could benefit from a greater degree of transparency as far as the Roadmap is concerned. We also tried to have more transparency regarding the action plan. So this is an invitation. I will use the content of your presentations from this morning to prepare for the two meetings we will have in May with the ministers.

[English]

In particular, I'm intrigued by your view, Mr. Donnelly, of the systemic flaw that can't be fixed at the end when you have an evaluation. There was a fairly detailed evaluation midway on the action plan. I hope there was a final evaluation on the action plan before the *feuille de route* was put in place. Was there not an occasion to influence the *feuille de route* in terms of the systemic flaw, or was the systemic flaw a continuation of the action plan?

It could be. So I'm just trying to determine if the systemic flaw that you perceived was already present and why we are not attacking it. If we haven't been, then indeed the mid-range, or *mi-parcours*, would be useful *afin de corriger le tir*, pardon.

• (0925)

Mr. Robert Donnelly: We talked about the gaps. I'll ask Sylvia to answer more specifically. Finding out what the gaps are lets us plan ahead.

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge (Director General, Quebec Community Groups Network): The road map and its successor were the fruit of many consultations. At least, the action plan took enormous consultation in the beginning of 2000-2001.

We acknowledge in the English-speaking community that we were not quite ready for all of the initiatives being considered by the seven or eight departments at the time. The only place we were really ready was in health. There was a crying need for access to health services and a lot of work was done around health. The other sectors are quite lacking in structure, so the action plan had a huge impact in health but the other sectors were not great.

It's not about who and what. We weren't quite ready...our capacity. That's why we say in this speech "our evolving capacity". Since 2000, the capacity of the community has grown and we've learned from good practices in health how better to work with the province in certain sectors.

In evaluation, Treasury Board policy evaluates the design and the delivery of a program at mid-term or at the end, where you make adjustments to the actual program. We were absent in many. Unless you do some special kind of analysis to say the English-speaking community was not there then, and then ask are they ready now, or is there a quid pro quo because we can't do that there.... Our point is that with all of the work that has been done, both with the action plan and the many millions of dollars, we will never be able to have a benefit in many sectors because it's already set. Many of the programs that were taken on by the road map were programs that had already been initiated with the action plan. So you can see that we're just moving along with older thinking—

• (0930)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Can you give me a specific example?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger. We'll get back to it in the next round.

Monsieur Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Can you give Mr. Bélanger and ourselves specific examples, please?

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The specific example that we brought up in this presentation today is around immigration. In Quebec, we don't want to talk about immigration. We think we need to talk about diversity, because Quebec's structure in that jurisdiction is particular and supports a very important aspect in Quebec. But if you look at it from a broader perspective, there are things that a strong English-speaking community can bring. Over the past three years, we've been working very hard with provincial and federal representatives to start to think about this.

It's not about immigration, really, because we have deep diversity in Quebec. But we still have young blacks who are vulnerable, under-represented, not working, and not available to work. That is not about recent immigration; it's about past immigration. Our whole structure around that group of cultural communities is different from immigration. We're making some headway, but we need research to continue making headway so that in a way that department can consider renewal in the community in a respectful, productive way for Quebec that doesn't fly in the face of a jurisdictional issue.

[Translation]

This requires a certain degree of finesse, a certain amount of passion and an interest for the English-speaking community.

[English]

That's my best example.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Good morning, Mr. Donnelly and Ms. Martin-Laforge.

Ms. Kenny, Ms. Bossé, I would like to know what the situation is at the interdepartmental level. This is a very important element. Certainly, we have the Roadmap, but the entire machinery of government must be able to help communities.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé (Director General, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada): That is an excellent question. I could not tell you where things are at. However, it is clear that certain benchmarks have not been established, and we don't really know who is in charge of setting, directing or coordinating them right now.

For example, there is the recognition of credentials. Human Resources and Social Development Canada is currently working on this issue to ensure that new Canadians are well integrated, that they find work and remain in the country. Citizenship and Immigration Canada is also working on the recognition of foreign credentials.

However, these two organizations are not working together. Each department seems to be operating in its own silo. Therefore, we cannot say that the machinery of government is working in an efficient and streamlined manner. In the course of our representations, be it with the Secretariat for Official Languages, the OLSPB, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, or Citizenship and Immigration Canada, we kept on wondering how all of these organizations would coordinate their efforts. As it currently stands, interdepartmental cooperation is not really happening.

The Chair: You still have some time left, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: From that point of view, I presume that this is a relevant element.

What would it take to nudge the government along so that we can find a solution? This file has been ongoing since the beginning of the 1990s. A lot of work has been put into it and there have been discussions on this subject since 1970, that is, since the time when organizations, including anglophone organizations in Quebec, francophone organizations in the rest of Canada, and Acadian organizations, were created.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Indeed, we have just asked the representatives from the Official Languages Secretariat to discuss the issue of coordination in May, because it is a very serious challenge. I think that now is the time to sit down and talk about it, in the interest of both departments and communities. In fact, it is a common challenge. At the very least, with our Leaders' Forum and our Strategic Community Plan, we have already studied this issue and we have already developed work structures.

• (0935)

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Yes.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: If I may, I will repeat something that was said in November when we talked about official languages in our document that was made public, and it was said once again this morning. The issue of governance in official languages is a serious problem. There is no single person in charge of everything that happens in the departments and crown corporations. They are responsible for their own initiatives. People do not think automatically to consult their neighbours, the other departments, to find out what is happening in one area or another. If we could resolve this governance issue, that would already be a big help.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Godin.

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

Welcome to all of you.

Minister Moore talks about consultation. Can you let us know what consultation has taken place between the two organizations in question or others that you know of? Has there really been

consultation? Is there really a dialogue going on with the minority communities, and have there been any results?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Of course, there were consultations with Bernard Lord in order to develop the Roadmap. As well,...

Mr. Yvon Godin: That was done behind closed doors.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes, I was not there and I cannot tell you about that. I was not invited to that closed-door meeting. There were people from the FCFA, but I was not there personally. However, that did not prevent me from making comments. That consultation did take place.

We had come up with our own Roadmap, so to speak, which was the Community Strategic Plan, as part of the Sommet des communautés francophones et acadiennes. That document was also provided as input.

As for whether there has been consultation, the action plan called for a lot, which is no longer the case in the Roadmap. Because we asked for it, this initial day of dialogue will take place.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

My question, however, is whether there has been consultation. I know that you have said that Bernard Lord was consulted. But that happened behind closed doors. People wanted to talk about the court challenges program, and he didn't want to talk about it.

[English]

I think you remember when that took place. It was all in camera. You couldn't talk about the court challenge. That's not consultation.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I would say that the approach is not consistent. Some departments and crown corporations consult us, whereas others do not. Some do so at our request, when we take the initiative.

[English]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'd like to hear you on that, Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Robert Donnelly: Mr. Lord's consultation was before, though, at the start of the road map. What we're saying here today is that in the consultation, or the mid-term evaluation, we keep coming back to this thing of the gaps that are still there and have to be identified. It's not at the end of the process, so there is going to be a chance. Sylvia will talk about other types of things. But when you're talking about consultations, you mean about the implementation of the road map over the last two and a half years—is that what you mean?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes.

Mr. Robert Donnelly: Okay, it's not something that's coming up or not something that happened before.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes, here's a road map, and we're two years into it. Was there any dialogue with you to see if they were on the right road, or asking your opinion? Was there anything that came from the government to participate with you people?

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The major part of consultation we were getting over the past, I would say, six months—and certainly our colleagues in our sister organization would say it too—is that many departments are talking about their three- to four-year plans going forward, in our case, rather than a lot about the road map as it stands. We are not hearing very much about the road map right now. I can name departments—for example, DEC, Economic Development in Quebec—they have not asked us about the road map. There's a few million dollars, over \$10 million or around \$10 million at DEC in Quebec. That's a lot of money for us. So there's not a lot of consultation on the mechanism of the road map. However, DEC recently came to see us—which was really innovative over the past few years—about the future, which for us is important, because we remain convinced that the road map, the action plan, and the *feuille de route* do not really represent what we need. But the consultation on the road map has been, I would concur, severely lacking in its focus. I guess it's a problem of focus on results, on what is being spent, on giving us information. So there's a lack of focus.

● (0940)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Lack of focus.

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: A lack of focus.

[Translation]

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: As was already mentioned, the approach is not consistent. For example, our organizations working in health have been consulted. However, there has been no dialogue concerning immigration, despite the fact that we work with the steering committee. The department has provided us with targets that it has set on its own, which are intermediate performance targets. We have not been consulted about either the targets or the indicators.

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

We will now go to our Parliamentary Secretary, Ms. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to give a warm welcome to our witnesses, whom we have met with a number of times already.

I am somewhat taken aback by what I am hearing regarding consultation. I personally am certainly available. We have had a number of consultations with you in the FCFA.

[English]

We meet regularly in my office, so to not be acknowledged for the time that's put into it is a bit surprising.

I'm particularly surprised by QCGN this morning. The apologies that you made to me this morning for missing your consultation meeting with me last week I truly felt were sincere. Yet you didn't mention that this morning when Monsieur Godin asked if there were consultations. There have been consultations. In fact, I have to say the department meets regularly, at least once a year anyway, with the organizations. I wanted to meet, and QCGN actually turned me down and said they would only meet with the minister. And last week the minister and I waited for half an hour for a consultation that no one showed up to. So I'm a little surprised, when we talk about consultations, that those consultations aren't acknowledged.

Furthermore, when we talk about our commitment to official languages, this is a *feuille de route* with \$1.1 billion. That is *sans*

précédent, it's an historic amount of money, and that is a firm commitment to both the English-speaking minority community in Quebec and of course the French-speaking minority communities across the rest of the country.

In any event, I do have some questions.

[Translation]

To begin with, I want to provide some information to the FCFA, since I understand that it is hard for them to find information on the Web sites. The Web site of the Official Languages Secretariat has everything that you are looking for on the other Web sites. Perhaps there could be a link for the Health Canada Web site, for example. That said, everything is on the Secretariat Web site. They are required to provide that information. I wanted to share that in order to help you.

On the immigration issue, I am very pleased to hear that comment, since it was the government that suggested that our committee examine immigration. Things are changing a lot in that area, and there are consequences for both minority communities. I can tell you that we have doubled the amount of money available since the time of the action plan. So I am eager to see the results of our immigration study. I believe that this will help us remain engaged with our minority communities.

I would like to know how your two groups—you are umbrella groups, in a way—exchange information. How do you organize consultations and exchanges? Do the FCFA and QCGN hold meetings together?

● (0945)

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Both organizations together?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Yes. How to you talk? Or is that something you do?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes, absolutely. We do talk.

Ms. Glover, you are indeed very accessible. When we were talking about consultations earlier, we were talking about departmental mechanisms to work with sectoral organizations. We were not talking about consultations with you or with other members. People on the committee, especially this one, have always been accessible, and I would not want you to interpret our comments on consultations as suggesting otherwise.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I share everything we talk about with the departments. That is my main job. In case you didn't know, that is my job. I share everything we discuss in our consultations with the departments.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Exactly.

That said, the departments and crown corporations have an obligation to consult us on program development, and that does not happen systematically. So that is what we were referring to. It was not about your accessibility, which we know is not a problem. We are not questioning that.

Regarding the Official Languages Secretariat site, there has indeed been an investment made. You are correct in saying that the information is available there. It was pointed out earlier as well. But there is no information on what is upcoming. So it is difficult for us to know what to expect and plan ahead. We do not know what will go where.

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

Yes, Mr. Donnelly. A quick comment, please.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Donnelly: On the second question, of whether we talk, of course we talk on a regular basis, especially when hot issues arise. One that comes to mind is the cancelling of the court challenges program and the implementation of the LRSP. There was huge consultation on what the communities were going to do about that and many other issues.

To come back to your first point, about a missed meeting, I'll also echo what she says. I don't think that's what Mr. Godin meant about consultation. That's not the understanding I have of his question.

Do we consult with politicians? Of course we do, all the time. We set up meetings. But when we come to Ottawa to meet representatives from Immigration Canada, we come with reality hats on, knowing that they will talk to us all we want, but when you look at the reality of the jurisdictions, what can we expect from them? They're very careful about what they say.

We continue to meet with people. We asked to meet the minister, because we still think the issue in the throne speech was important. We would have talked of other things as well, but they declined and asked us to meet with you, which we accepted. Due to a medical emergency last week we unfortunately had to cancel our visit to Ottawa. I was simply not available.

In speaking to you earlier this morning you told me that with your agenda it takes from three to six months to get another appointment. We hope to have another appointment in months three, four, or five, as we requested in our letter earlier this week. So we have talked, but the formal consultations will be on May 18 and 20.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Donnelly. I hope you were able to be served in the language of your choice when you went to the hospital.

We'll now begin the second round with Mr. D'Amours.

[*Translation*]

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

I think that we, for our part, understood what you meant by "consultation": it is not individual meetings with members of Parliament. If you really want to reach your objectives and have your needs addressed, you need to be able to discuss issues. Those discussions cannot be held one on one; rather, everyone needs to get together to look at the situation and see what needs to be changed.

Before talking about the Roadmap directly, I just want to make a short comment. The chairman has raised the issue with some of you about a letter from Statistics Canada that was sent out. Before the committee meeting started, he indicated that this was a terrible thing. I would like to read you a few excerpts. I think that it is important for

me to mention this when we are talking about respect for our official languages and the government's efforts to have the communities respected.

I will just read these excerpts and then move on to something else. I apologize to the interpreters, since I know that it will be very difficult for them.

À partir des dernières années, répondants à l'enquête requis à répondre à L'enquête sur les établissements de soins pour bénéficiaires internes utilisant un système électronique au Internet. Nous vous prière d'annoncer que cette est maintenant possible.

Access à la nouveau système de questionnaire électronique est facile et vite. De la ligne d'adresse au votre Internet.

Veillez noter bien qu'il y aura des rappels afin de compléter le sondage pourraient être envoyés s'il vous plat.

Veillez inclure votre identifier l'enquête q'il est trouver juste en haute de votre nom d'établissements dans l'adresse.

As you can appreciate, not many people can understand that. It is a bit difficult for the interpreters to try to render it—I apologize to those who are listening to the interpretation; don't worry, we did not understand any more than you did.

Let us now talk about the Roadmap. You raised some interesting points earlier about interdepartmental relations. It is also interesting to look at certain documents that were prepared for us for comparison purposes. One item is called the Primary Health Care Transition Fund. It comes with a nice note that says: "This component of the Action Plan terminated in 2006-2007. We unfortunately do not have any specific figures to determine whether this funding was reallocated to other components under Health Canada's responsibility".

It is so broad and complicated—moreover, the information is not provided—that I can understand that it becomes very difficult to know what the various sources of funding and resources are within the different departments. That is something that we have already talked about in the committee. If I remember correctly, the Minister of Heritage said that this was an important issue. One has to wonder just how important it is, since it is difficult, if not impossible, to find.

So if you could give us more explanations about this... After all, it is not just Canadian Heritage that has responsibility for official languages and what the government calls the Roadmap; all the departments are supposed to play a role. Do you feel it is reasonable for the information to be so vague and for it to be so difficult to see the connection between the various departments and the Roadmap? You can—

• (0950)

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: In our presentation, we stated clearly that we wanted all the information to be quickly and easily available. We have talked about the Horizontal Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework. We referred to the reports on plans and priorities in the performance reports. We have tried to identify, in each department's report on plans and priorities, the plan, the priority, the targets and the indicators for the next three years.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That doesn't exist right now?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I am not saying that it does not exist, but it is impossible to find.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: So for you, it is not possible—

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Except for Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: —to organize things, since you cannot find this.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That is understandable, since you have to try to look ahead, and especially if you have to say that it is too bad that you did not know because you would have applied or done something.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: It becomes difficult for us to manage issues and to look ahead and plan, when we do not know what is coming down the pipe, where, how, or from whom. Right now, things are not clearly identified as being part of the Roadmap, except by Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: So it's very limited.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That is, the Roadmap does not necessarily set out a vision. It's on a day-to-day basis, depending on people's good will and the information that is disclosed.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: It depends on the levels of knowledge and understanding of government departments and corporations. There again, it all comes back to governance. Who does the Roadmap belong to? It belongs to the government as a whole, but to whom?

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

Ms. Kenny, a brief answer, please.

[English]

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: If there is one significant difference between the old HR management accountability framework that was under the action plan and the new HR MAF—or however we want to categorize it—it's that the coordination aspect is visibly, demonstrably absent. You can't find it, you can't see it, and they don't talk about it.

• (0955)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: So you were able to do so before?

[English]

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: There was a concern that there was a need to demonstrate interdepartmental evaluations to tell the citizens of Canada, not just the official language minority communities, how the money was spent and what the indicators were. There was coordination and you could see it.

I don't want to talk about the moneys or anything like that; that's not the point. It's that technically HR MAF is not doing the job.

The Chair: Thank you.

Merci, Monsieur D'Amours.

Madame Guay.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Thank you very much.

Welcome to all four of you. Once again, it's a pleasure to meet with you.

The Roadmap is important. I see that under the former Treasury Board Secretariat action plan, the amount granted was \$72.64 million over five years, whereas under the Roadmap, it was reduced to \$17.52 million over five years. That definitely makes a considerable difference.

You said earlier that there is a lack of consultation and dialogue between the various departments. You also stated that the Roadmap is not complete because there has been no consultation concerning targets. So there are really substantial gaps. Will you be studying this? Have you scheduled meetings with ministers or deputy ministers? That is important.

You can answer me a bit later, but I would like to add something. You are welcome to meet with us any day, anytime, as often as you want. These meetings between us are formal, but they are not government meetings. You need to meet with government officials who can really do something within their department. Even if you met with Ms. Glover, myself or my colleague Jean-Claude D'Amours, that won't change anything. You need to meet with ministers, deputy ministers and senior officials who will respond immediately and be able to give you answers.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I will say that it is somewhat difficult. As soon as an issue concerns the FCFA or francophone and Acadian communities, we are generally referred to the Department of Canadian Heritage. But the official languages issue is not the sole responsibility of this department, but rather of the government as a whole.

Ms. Monique Guay: Exactly.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: We don't understand. Mr. Moore would have to meet with us practically every two weeks to hear all these matters, but of course he does not have that kind of availability.

So access is sometimes difficult. It is easy to meet with officials from some departments, and there are others who say that it is not possible; they do not even try to set a later date. Naturally, we try to schedule meetings when I am in town. So the officials do not say that they would be available instead on another day; they simply say that they are not available.

So I can tell you that accessibility is a particular challenge. We often meet with senior officials, and that works up to a point. There are challenges, but not with all departments.

Ms. Monique Guay: Could you tell us which departments you are referring to? We could perhaps exert pressure on them to ensure that they meet with you.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: There are several. We could certainly submit a list to you.

Ms. Monique Guay: You referred to the health department earlier

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: We are being consulted on health. We are working with Heritage Canada as far as culture is concerned. We are also consulted on health care and immigration. Of course, regarding immigration, we have a committee which is jointly managed by the community and by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This department established performance indicators for a 15-year period. When the performance indicators for the Roadmap were established, an interim target was also set, for which we were consulted, but our suggestions were not taken into account. However, this was the department's own committee.

Ms. Monique Guay: Fine.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: These things sometimes happen.

Ms. Monique Guay: It's an aberration.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: It's an aberration because people don't talk to each other. But that can easily be rectified. Indeed, we hope that during the day of dialogue, which will bring together 15 departments and 40 community organizations... I know that the same type of meeting is being planned with our anglophone counterparts.

• (1000)

Ms. Monique Guay: When?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: As far as we know, it will be in May.

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: For us, as well, it's in May. The meetings are two days apart.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: We hope that we will be able to better coordinate our work.

Ms. Monique Guay: Perfect.

Mr. Robert Donnelly: For our part, it's even more difficult to coordinate between departments. We have received positive feedback regarding immigration, but we can't talk to them. That privilege belongs to the Government of Quebec. Things are also going well in health. We have had no indication. One of the problems we will talk about is the fact that departments always need a special reason to work with us, in Quebec. We have to think outside the box, that is, to find new ways of doing things. We are convinced that if there was more communication between departments, this would help us find solutions. For now, it's hit-and-miss, one thing at a time. Everyone is passing the buck, no one wants to move too quickly. We are normally referred to Heritage Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Guay.

Ms. Boucher, you have the floor.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good morning, everyone. It's very nice to have you here. I would just like to make an aside. As you know, I used to be the Parliamentary Secretary for Official languages. No meeting is ever a waste of time. We gather all kinds of points of view, which we bring to the attention of our ministers. I think these meetings are important. They are important because we are elected representatives, we are part of the government, regardless of which party we belong to. Sure, we have different points of view, but we are here to help you, not to stand in your way.

What I find somewhat unfortunate, and this is something we all experience to some extent, is the lack of communication between departments, something you have just mentioned. Please know that, when you speak to us, we give that information directly to the

responsible minister. When we hear things we don't like, that is also passed on. We are quite frank. I know Ms. Glover, who is quite frank, as well. We don't beat around the bush. We don't know if they are always listening, but at least the message is getting across. You can be sure of that. When we implement measures, sometimes they don't succeed, but sometimes they do. We certainly hope we can help you.

We often hear about what goes wrong, but since the Roadmap was brought in, has anything gone well?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Absolutely, some things have gone well. I repeat, Ms. Glover is very accessible, and we know that she will intervene, if necessary, in certain cases. We appreciate her work.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, that was not—

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: When we talk about consultation, we are referring to existing mechanisms, to the obligation of departments to consult with us, which often does not happen.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: There's a problem with communication.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: The problem is not access to Ms. Glover, or her support.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: By the way, I was not referring to you.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I want to make sure that—

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I know that.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Ms. Glover is there. She is our ally. We know this and appreciate it.

What was your last question?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I wanted to know whether there had been any progress under the Roadmap.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes, there has been progress. For instance, in the health care sector.

I could talk about all the good things. However, since we don't have a lot of time, we would like to talk about how we can work together to improve things. As we said, we want to be part of the solution. I did not come here to complain.

I would like to point out another problem. The Roadmap focuses a lot on strengthening government infrastructure in the interest of providing service. But people did not realize, or they did not consider the fact, that we are the ones who provide these services, since we are on the front lines. Yet our current infrastructure, that is, the organizations that actually provide the services, has not been strengthened.

Under the Roadmap, projects have been undertaken and money invested. However, when the Roadmap ends and we move on to something else, we will still need to provide those services. But we will not be able to continue providing these services unless our funding is increased. For me, this is very important. Investment in infrastructure has been increased, in the Centre of Excellence and elsewhere. We should not forget to make other investments, as well.

Can I tell you about all the progress which has been made? As I said, there has been lots of progress and consultation in the areas of culture and health. We consulted with the members of our organizations, and they told us that funding had been given to Franco Médias 2010 and to the legal sector. There have been consultations and there have been projects. So there has been progress.

I don't want to omit to say that there has been progress, and that investment has had a significant impact, even though it wasn't as much as we had hoped for. The government had established priorities even before the Roadmap came out. Our Roadmap was the Strategic Community Plan, which we have just finished. In some areas, we followed the lead of the Roadmap. In others, we felt that it was better not to take into account the Roadmap's priorities.

Has there been progress elsewhere? Absolutely. I don't want to lie to you. On the contrary there has been a lot of progress.

• (1005)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: All right.

The Chair: Mr. Donnelly, you have the floor.

Mr. Robert Donnelly: The reason we were asked to come here today is because there are outstanding issues. We did not come to tell you that everything was perfect.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, of course not. But I'd still like to know.

Mr. Robert Donnelly: That doesn't mean there hasn't been any progress. We've agreed on that.

The amounts invested in arts and culture under Canadian Heritage under the new Roadmap are totally new since they were not part of the action plan. That's a positive change. However, two and a half years after the start of the Roadmap, we're still fighting for access to those funds for our communities in Quebec. It is true that it's only two and a half years after the start of the program, not five years, but we're still fighting. The money is available, but we have to come up with the appropriate plans. We're working very hard and it's not an easy task.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: You represent an anglophone community in Quebec?

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Boucher. If there's any time left, you can come back with more questions.

We'll go on to Mr. Godin.

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

Maybe we could ask Ms. Glover to appear as a witness before the committee at its next meeting.

You're not here to shower praise on anyone, but rather to let us know what is not working with this Roadmap. That's what we want to hear about. It's up to the government to take note of what is being said. We have very little time.

We have a table here that indicates that there were cuts at the Treasury Board Secretariat. Available funds went from \$72 million down to \$17 million. For the public service, the monies available went from \$72 million down to \$17 million. This must certainly affect someone somewhere. Under the heading "Investing in

Innovation", we can see that the funding has gone down from \$15.7 million to nothing at all. The funds available for the Centre of Excellence have gone up, from \$13 million to \$17 million. On the other hand, under the heading "Rebuilding Capacity (Public Service Commission)", we know that the funding has gone down from \$43 million to nothing at all. As for consultations, we're talking about consultations with the departments, with the appropriate minister. There is not a single person who represents everybody in government.

I'm sorry, but with all due respect, I think that it's not up to the parliamentary secretary to try and solve on her own the problems your communities are facing, be they English or French-speaking communities. Community members have the right to meet with the minister to tell him or her what is wrong. That's what we call consultation. Moreover, the minister is responsible for contacting you and consulting you. You shouldn't have to beg to have a meeting with him and simply be told that he will be able to see you in six months which is clearly a sign of a lack of respect. I'm convinced that some people in Canada meet ministers far more often than that. They don't have to wait six months. Under the heading "Reducing waiting lists for language training", funds went from \$13 million to zero.

What do you think of all this?

• (1010)

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Mr. Godin, allow me to point out that there was a reduction in infrastructure capacity development. In fact, no money has been available since the very start to develop community infrastructure. We are the ones who have to provide a service to the community. I think it's unfortunate that the innovations fund was cancelled under the action plan, since it allowed us to build official language capacity especially in the regions, and the provinces.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In the health sector, there's nothing to be that proud of. I simply want to tell you about what we went through. The organization *Égalité santé en français*, in New Brunswick, has two distinct entities, an English health authority and a French health authority. I'll give you a few numbers. Cardiac laboratories, French authority, none; English authority, three. Heart surgery centres, French authority, none; English authority, one. Neurosurgery centres, French authority, none; English authority, two. Child psychiatry units, French authority, none; English authority, one. Traumatology centres, French authority, none; English authority, two. PET scan, French authority, none; English authority, one. Burn centres, French authority, none; English authority, two. Tertiary neonatal units, French authority, none; English authority, three. Unbelievable! We can really wonder what's happened to equality in services.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I can't offer you any answer. On the other hand, I can tell you that there has been progress in the health sector in some regions, that we have been consulted and that monies were made available for the projects that had been announced. We mustn't forget that health is funded through transfers to the provinces and the accountability should be found at that level.

Mr. Yvon Godin: According to the Official Languages Act, the government is responsible for distributing funds to the provinces. That is the case for Quebec as well, be it in the sector of health or other fields. We have to make sure that we support the regions where minorities live.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: It might then be a good idea to review the language clause regarding transfer payments to provinces and territories, a clause that still remains from our point of view extremely vague. It might be worth reviewing this clause.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Well, we'll need to have another consultation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

[*English*]

Before we enter the third round, I would like to ask Mr. Donnelly a question.

In your presentation, Mr. Donnelly, you mentioned that especially for Quebec, for the most part, services that have a direct impact on our communities fall within provincial jurisdiction. You mentioned that the devolution of federal responsibilities provides significant challenges to those charged with designing and implementing the road map in Quebec.

Do you feel that as a committee we could help to ensure that the responsibilities devolved to Quebec are undertaken and that services are provided to the English-speaking community?

Mr. Robert Donnelly: It's absolutely become a priority for us, especially over the last two years. When the talks begin on a devolution of powers, they have to keep in mind that when it involves Quebec, we are there, we have rights, we have communities, and we have to be taken into account. It's always, oh, yes, they're there, but it's already been done.

The Chair: In which field is it? Is it in health? Is there any particular domain, or is it all of them?

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I know. It's employment.

The Chair: It's employment.

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Yes.

The Chair: You mentioned health and immigration in your presentation, but employment would be a key issue.

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think employment would be a key issue.

The Chair: Yes, I think you mentioned employment in your first testimony when you came.

[*Translation*]

Very well. Thank you very much.

Madam Zarac, you have the floor.

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

I don't want to spend too much time on the issue but, like most of my colleagues, I really enjoyed the meetings I had with some of you. Consultation is very useful, but we're not talking about consultation here. I think that all those around this table will agree with me when I say that public consultation is much broader than what we're dealing with.

I'm surprised to hear you talk so much about governance, because it is one of the five goals of the Roadmap.

Today, we talked a lot about this governance issue.

In the Roadmap, \$33 million are set aside for governance. I would like to mention a few of the numbers I found in this paper. Some \$2.5 million is to be spent to set up an ongoing consultation process, which doesn't seem to have been done. Then, \$13.5 million has been set aside for the Horizontal Accountability and Coordination Framework, though nothing seems to have been done there either. Finally, \$17 million has been earmarked for a Centre of Excellence to promote accountability. I wonder where all of that money has gone?

You mentioned that you had trouble getting the numbers, results, and finding out where the money has gone. I suppose that's going to be part of the questions you'll ask us, as Mr. Bélanger has asked. I personally think that it's extremely important that we find out where that money has gone. You said that you visited the Web site and that you only found publicity. You found no data that would explain how that money has been spent. But governance is one of the priorities of the Roadmap.

Heritage Canada and Official Languages Canada say that they are quite willing to review the Horizontal Management and Accountability Framework. On the other hand, they refuse to meet with you. You've told us that you asked to meet with the minister after the Speech from the Throne. What can you add to this?

• (1015)

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: As for the Speech from the Throne, I'd like to point out that this is a completely different file. As for my group, nobody's ever refused to meet with us. We've always been able to meet with people, but sometimes it can take an awful lot of time.

[*English*]

They might process us a little.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: You were told to come and meet with the committee.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: For committee work, we're here and we're happy to be here. I think what is important is the notion of outreach.

For the English-speaking community, we are in Montreal. The issue is on our access and our potential to come to Ottawa regularly.

[*Translation*]

This is all to do with fact that we are in Montreal. When we have to travel, it is expensive. And when we plan to travel, we have to make sure that it is done in the most efficient and productive way possible.

[English]

So it is more helpful if departments and ministers invite us in for consultation. It's the notion of outreach, and not just once a year. Things happen throughout the year. You have to have an outreach strategy. For English-speaking communities of Quebec, if you think there is maybe a problem, then maybe the impact of the Official Languages Act is not working as well in Quebec as somewhere else.

For the moment, in terms of our evolution, you would think there would be a bigger initiative around outreach. I can tell you there is no perceived significant outreach strategy to the English-speaking community of Quebec—like how we are different, how we can speak to you. I'll give you an example of the dialogue days. In Quebec we're not structured as well because of history, because of structure money. We don't have certain structures, so for us to go to that day it's a little more complicated to bring people in. We have to figure it out. To bring 33 people to that dialogue day the other day, my structure is not capable of doing the same thing. I can't just bring 32 of my members in, because for it to be really good for the department and beneficial for all of us, I have to figure out, if there are 40 people to come, who should be there. Where are my strong sectors? Where are my weak sectors?

I must have spent a week talking to people, bringing them in, making them understand what official languages are—I called it my Love Boat connection. That is very time-consuming. When we talk about asymmetry or we talk about a different perception in Quebec, we have to consider that. For us, the outreach strategy for Quebec has to be considered differently.

• (1020)

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you.

Ms. Zarac, you have the floor.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Mr. Chair, may I set the record straight? Heritage Canada never refused to meet with us. We may occasionally be sent to meet with a deputy minister because of the urgency of an issue, but we cannot say that we have trouble getting access to Heritage Canada.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Mr. Chair, if I may...

I am sorry to have used the term refuse. You mentioned the minister had told you to meet with the committee when you asked to meet with the minister himself. That is what I seem to have understood.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: That was not us. Maybe our colleagues but not us.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will go on with Mr. Gagné.

Mr. Bernard Gagné (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank our witnesses for coming today.

We really have a wonderful linguistic duality in Canada. Ms. Kenny, you have an English name and you speak French very well.

And Ms. Martin-Laforge, you speak English very well. This was simply a comment.

Ms. Kenny, when you mention the information that you can and cannot find on the Web site, are you talking about financial data dealing with the programs or the programs themselves?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I was talking about the programs...

Mr. Bernard Gagné: You were referring to the programs?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Exactly, the programs and financial information, for example what is going to be invested, when, and where the information dealing with official languages could be found. Are these amounts going to be invested in these projects under the Roadmap? We have to try and read between the lines!

Mr. Bernard Gagné: And if I understand correctly that is the same thing for all departments.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes, every single department. And that is the problem. Maybe this information is somewhere, but there are no clear indications as to where it can be found, whether is under the Roadmap or under official languages...

Mr. Bernard Gagné: I am just trying to understand.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: divided by year, by project...

Mr. Bernard Gagné: There are funds linked to various programs and you say that you cannot know in advance how much money will be available for this program or another. So for you it is difficult to plan or...

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: It is difficult to make plans, that is the problem.

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Very well.

I am the type of person who loves to dialogue for all sorts of reasons. Dialogue is very important, anyway, and this morning the dialogue we have had seems to be very positive even though we may not agree on everything. That being said, when you mentioned a transparent consultation structure, what would this be in an ideal world?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: As to consultation, it must mean, first, that we will indeed be consulted, and second, we would like to be told how our opinion was taken into account. It is easy, I could consult someone until the cows come home, and still come up with my own...

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Yes, but let's be precise.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: That is what I mean.

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Let's choose any program.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: This is what we want, for you to consult us and then take into account what we told you when you design a program. In fact, you do not have to do everything we suggest. But tell us how you took into account what we suggested.

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Yes, but if we took into account everything that people ask us to do...

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: That is exactly what I am saying.

Mr. Bernard Gagné: —it would probably cost hundreds of thousands of dollars more per year. You know what I mean.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Absolutely.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: If the money is already on the table... Following a question by Ms. Boucher on some programs or on the Roadmap, you congratulated us. I think the Roadmap was an essential aspect, that you had specifically requested. We listened to you, and it was implemented. Now, what can we do to improve it?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Exactly, and we have to do that together.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I totally agree, and I don't think it would be a problem. I think that Ms. Glover and the minister share my opinion.

I imagine that you often refer to the Roadmap on the Web site. This question is for both parties: have you referred to it lately? I haven't checked, but I'm told that it has been improved. Have you noticed a difference lately? Have there been any improvements to the design of the Web site? If so, do you think that this improvement is worthwhile and useful?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: We carried out consultations in preparing for today's presentation, and we have no other information than that which we have just given you. There may have been an improvement, but that's not what we're looking for. That's why we're here this morning. When we speak of transparency, I'm not saying that the government does not want to be transparent. That's not what we're saying. We're just saying, put all of the information on the Web site. Work with us. Let's work together so that we can more efficiently use the money you give us. That's all, that's our message.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: May I ask one last question?

• (1025)

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Do you have a problem with the departments constantly referring you to Heritage Canada, claiming that this department is responsible for bilingualism? You seem to already have an answer.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I do have a problem with it. Official languages is everybody's business, all departments, all crown corporations, not just Heritage Canada.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: My question is whether you find it normal that the departments automatically refer you to Heritage Canada?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Not at all.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Perhaps they don't fully understand that official languages are also important for their department.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: The Official Languages Act has been in place for 41 years now and it's been the business of all of government since the very beginning. If people still don't understand that official languages is everybody's business in government, perhaps it is time that some governance entity remind them of this.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I'll be 48 years old tomorrow and I still haven't understood everything there is to know in life.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: As long as there isn't a government entity that will say, here is how the Canadian government works with regard to official languages, the problem will persist. It all comes down to governance—

Mr. Bernard Généreux: That answers my questions, thank you.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: —and communication.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: —and communication.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

Before turning the floor over to Mr. Nadeau, I would like to raise a housekeeping issue. At our last meeting, I wanted to have our steering committee report approved, but I neglected to do so. There's nothing really new in it, but it has to be approved by the members of the committee. If you agree, could we adopt the steering committee report which has just been circulated. You can consult it, each party was present. Do I have your unanimous consent to have the steering committee report approved?

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]).

The Chair: Very well, thank you very much. Among other things, this will allow Isabelle, our clerk, to summon witnesses.

One more thing. We need to approve the \$39,700 budget for our study on immigration as a community development tool. This will allow Isabelle to proceed. Do I have the unanimous consent of the members?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much, you are wonderful, it's done.

Now, before coming back to Mr. Nadeau, I would like to advise you that you are going to receive an invitation. Next Thursday, we will be hosting three Finnish journalists, who have managed to get through the ash cloud—

Mr. Richard Nadeau: —and Canada's immigration system.

The Chair: That's right. They're coming to speak to us about linguistic duality in Finland. The Finnish ambassador will also be there. This meeting will take place at the Château Laurier between 11:30 and 1:30 next Thursday.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Will Saku Koivu be there?

The Chair: If he speaks one of the two official languages, we can certainly invite him.

Let's move on, thank you very much.

Mr. Nadeau, you have the floor.

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

First, I would like to point out that it was Stéphane Dion, when the Liberal Party formed the government, who established the first action plan. This was an initiative aimed at promoting linguistic duality. The first plan contained objectives.

As concerns the second plan, or Dion II or the current Roadmap, whatever you want to call it—as you can see, I am not being partisan—some additions have been made in financial terms, but in other aspects, the plan has taken a beating. The organizations here with us today have been less affected by the question of public funding. That being said, I would still like to point out, as my colleagues did earlier, that consequently the government machinery is not as well equipped to serve the public in the language of its choice. This is all a question of the funds granted to Treasury Board and the Canada School of Public Service that are declining drastically.

Last week we heard from the Commissioner of Official Languages, and I was shocked to learn that he was obliged to dip into his budget envelope to promote official languages to senior government officials. It's absolutely shameful that Canada should still be at that point. If Canadian government officials do not realize that they are obliged to accept the fact that their employees work in French because it is the minority language in their environment, imagine what kind of impression that makes on communities, that don't even have the support of senior officials because they don't understand that the federal government must provide services in the language of the minority. This is a major shortcoming in the Roadmap and it's absurd, at the very least, not to say shameful. It's very important that people understand that.

As concerns consultations, I remember back in the fall of 1987 when the Secretary of State at the time, Lucien Bouchard, met for the first time with all organizations who received funding from Secretary of State—now Canadian Heritage—to hear their opinion. That was a first. Jean-Bernard Lafontaine, whom some of you know, was his political attaché. I participated in this meeting on behalf of the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française. It was the first open consultation with all partners around one table. That's what we're talking about. We're not talking about the little chats you have with Richard Nadeau before our meetings, we're not talking about the time you met with me in my office to discuss your issues, although that was an excellent meeting; we are talking about high-level discussions.

To come back to my primary concern, if I understand correctly, interdepartmental dialogue is substandard, whether or not it is Canadian Heritage that always meets with the French-language minority or English Quebecers. That is only 1 department out of the 60 federal government departments and agencies. All departments should participate in the initiative launched by Lucien Bouchard—who was a Progressive Conservative at the time—with all the communities, but we don't see this happening anywhere.

Do you think it would be helpful if this plan put forth the idea that the Privy Council Office of the Prime Minister should be responsible for official languages, rather than a department that is the alter ego of the other ones—everyone minds their own business because they are all alter egos—and that senior officials should learn both French and English if they don't already know them? In such a case, you would need to meet with all the departments so they can hear what your expectations are. Do you think that that would be a good idea, the people from Quebec and the francophone and Acadian people? I'm all ears.

● (1030)

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Of course. That's what we recommended in our document published last November 25. We recommended that very thing—that there be one overall coordinator. That's what's missing. The Minister of Canadian Heritage himself says that he cannot give instructions to the ministers of Immigration or Justice, for example. The ministers cannot tell each other what to do. That's why we recommend that there be one overall coordinator, a form of governance, instead of letting each department decide for itself how it will deal with official languages. This is the law; it must be given the necessary emphasis. As concerns governance, we recommend that this responsibility be given to the Privy Council.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

That completes our third round. We could now go to a fourth round, and normally, we would begin with the government side.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I have a point to clarify. I thought we would have time to look after committee business.

The Chair: We have already settled the majority of the issues, as a matter of fact. However, we can come back to that if needed, following the appearance of our witness.

There are currently three speakers for a fourth and final round.

Questions or comments?

Mr. Généreux.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Ms. Kenny, you state that the responsibility should be given to the Prime Minister, to the Privy Council Office. Currently, Canadian Heritage is responsible for enforcing the act. Now, although it is a department on the same footing as the others, would it be possible for it to give direction to the other departments?

Why do you want the overall coordinator to take precedence over all the other departments? Couldn't one department be chosen to give direction to the other departments?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Mr. Moore told us himself that he did not have the authority to give any kind of orders to other ministers. It's simply not done. For example, if there are five vice-presidents in a company, none of them can give orders to any of the others. The other vice-presidents will not necessarily listen to him.

● (1035)

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: You must also recall that the act stipulates that Canadian Heritage, Justice Canada and Treasury Board are all on the same footing. So we cannot ask any one of these departments to coordinate an agreement or be the supreme authority in that regard.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: So you would be in agreement if we used the funding already allocated to official languages to create a position ensuring that the act is enforced?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: As a matter of fact, that position used to exist.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Yes, such a position did exist, but it was modified under the new structure.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: So you would be in agreement with that, even if we used the same amounts.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

We will now continue with Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will continue in the same vein. Is it true that one of the first decisions made by the Harper government was to eliminate the Official Languages Branch of Intergovernmental Affairs within the Privy Council Office and create the Official Languages Secretariat within the Department of Canadian Heritage?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: I couldn't tell you whether that was this government's first decision.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It was one of the first decisions it made, early in its term of office.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: That decision was indeed made by the government, but I cannot tell you when.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Very early on in its term.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: While we're at it, according to the action plan, the Minister responsible for Official Languages had the right to create an ad hoc cabinet committee and convene meetings. Under the Roadmap, or since 2006, do you know whether an ad hoc cabinet committee on official languages has been created and if so, whether any meetings have been convened?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Under the Horizontal Management Framework, according to the logical model that is put forward, there is a committee of assistant deputy ministers...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I am not referring to deputy ministers, I am referring to ministers.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I could not tell you whether such a committee has been convened or not.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Given that you broach the subject of deputy ministers, there used to be a committee of deputy ministers responsible for official languages. Does it still exist?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: There is a committee of assistant deputy ministers.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is there a committee of deputy ministers?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: No, I don't believe so.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In the action plan, there were two mandatory yearly consultations: one in the fall with the ministers and the communities, and one in the spring with government officials and the communities. If I understand correctly that no longer exists. At the very least, there may be a day of discussion in May. Is that correct?

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: It has been confirmed that there will be such a day in May.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, we have learned today that there are four elements that used to exist and that no longer do: the Official Languages Branch of Intergovernmental Affairs within the Privy Council Office, the ad hoc committee of ministers, the committee of deputy ministers and the mandatory consultations.

That being said, it is not surprising to see that there is a lack of coordination within the federal government concerning its obligations under the Official Languages Act, a quasi-constitutional piece of legislation. It's not surprising.

Do you have any comments, Ms. Sylvia?

[English]

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think the most important thing...

[Translation]

Earlier, I spoke about...

[English]

I spoke of focus. I think there's also a question of clarity of responsibilities. I would say that it is incredibly important to have ministerial direction and leadership in these files. But one of the big

things that the change also had an impact on is the clarity within *patrimoine* around its obligation, a regular obligation that a department has around official languages, around its policy and program vis-à-vis an overarching responsibility for all of the different departments. There are not many departments that have that overarching responsibility. There's nobody that can play the challenge function.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Let me continue in that vein then. In 2005 the Parliament of Canada amended the Official Languages Act by giving an actual responsibility to each department and agency of the crown vis-à-vis part VII of the act. It's been four years, five almost. To your knowledge, has there been any plan from the government to put that into effect? Have there been any regulations implemented to give life to that legal obligation?

● (1040)

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: Some departments have come up with plans relative to part VII of the act. Some haven't. Is there a regulation around part VII? No. We're not asking for any. We want to make sure we're consulted by these departments—by all departments, crowns, institutions—and that plans are put into effect to put in these positive measures.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have a final question, Mr. Chair.

Did you know that in 2006, there were about 50 positions within Treasury Board whose incumbents were responsible for implementing the Official Languages Act, and that now there are only about a dozen? Do you have any comments to make in that regard?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: It was recently explained to us that these positions included, among other things, information technology positions. I suppose we could call them corporate services. These employees were transferred out of official languages and into other services.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Godin, the floor is yours.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So we started with the Privy Council, and we have worked our way down through the minister, deputy minister and assistant deputy minister, and we are pretty sure that the consultations are carried out with the parliamentary secretary. We have come a long way, haven't we? Those are just my comments.

We were going to meet with the FCCF, but we decided to meet with other national organizations. I'd like to hear what they would have said to us.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: As we said, we consulted the 40 member organizations of the Forum des leaders. In the area of culture, the Alliance nationale de l'industrie musicale was consulted regarding the development of the Music Showcases program as part of the Roadmap. It would appear that certain criteria for the Cultural Development Fund take the demands in this sector into account, by focusing on components that used to receive very little money for their projects. Yes, the FCCF was consulted, as I said. Clearly, some of the comments we received from our members, including the FCCF...

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: The book translation fund should be reviewed and improved in order to truly meet the needs of francophone editors.

Ms. Marie-France Kenny: The Cultural Development Fund has already issued three calls for project submissions, and the song and music sectors have received a budget envelope as well. The funding had already been set aside in the fall of 2008. Yes, things are happening, but there are also certain weaknesses. We have been told that the Cultural Development Fund funds too many one-off and non-recurring projects instead of supporting long-term consolidation.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: The contribution amounts are not known.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Robert Donnelly: In Quebec, ELAN, The English Language Arts Network is in charge. As I indicated a few minutes ago, the Roadmap includes envelopes for arts and culture, but it is difficult to get access to them. We saw concrete examples of this last year.

As I concluded my remarks, Ms. Boucher asked me if it was because it was the Quebec anglophone community. The answer is yes and no. This has never been done before. It is new. So when it comes time to provide funding in support of arts and culture in Quebec's minority anglophone communities, we do not quite know how to proceed. I can confirm, once again however, that it is difficult.

As far as the consultative process is concerned, we worked for six months on a big file covering all regions of Quebec, especially those outside Montreal. Those efforts did not pay off however, and we were not told exactly why. It was not clear. So where do you go from there? You start over and make changes. Perhaps it is not that they did not want to tell us this. As with immigration and many other files, supporting the arts and letters in Quebec's minority anglophone communities is so complicated.

• (1045)

[English]

Is it supportive of Canadian English culture? We know for the arts and for the role that it plays in community vitalities,

[Translation]

it is so important. We need money. We are still working, even now. We had money for a research project on artists and communities, but it did not end up getting approval. We persevere nonetheless.

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

The floor is yours.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Chairman, earlier I was trying to find out whether the fact that official languages comes under the purview of the Prime Minister's Privy Council Office might actually force – and that is the right word – force the government to wake up and face facts, and allow the machinery of government – through its departments, agencies and crown corporations – to meet the needs of communities.

Ms. Kenny and Ms. Bossé gave part of an answer. I would now like to hear from Mr. Donnelly and Ms. Martin-Laforge on this issue.

[English]

Mrs. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think the Government of Canada, if it is serious about official languages, has to give itself a challenge function that is different from that of the Commissioner of Official Languages, within government. The Commissioner of Official Languages is there for complaints and has a special role, but within the Government of Canada, where could you find a challenge function to all departments? The only place would be within the Privy Council Office. Without that challenge function, it is very difficult for any department, whether it be PCH or Justice or Treasury Board. You're asking the deputy of a department to challenge that department, which is difficult. With all the good work they do, it's just difficult to get that challenge function to make all the departments work together. In our democracy, the only place we have that as a challenge function is in the Privy Council Office.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Your remarks conclude our time with the witnesses this morning. On behalf of the members of the committee, I would like to thank you for your appearance. I am sure we will have an opportunity to see each other again. We will be doing a study on immigration and we will probably seek your opinion on the issue.

There was some unfinished business. There has been significant movement on this. Ms. Glover, does that suit you?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I just have one question.

We drafted a brief report on what was discussed at the steering committee. Were we intending to present the report to the other members while we are in camera? I thought we were going to give them some information on what we did.

The Chair: Yes, we were. It was adopted earlier. In fact, I intend to schedule another steering committee meeting for Tuesday. We had said that we would have another meeting before presenting our table. In the meantime, the idea was to simply approve the report, without delving into the details, given that the committee had not quite made up its mind as yet.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: So what we just approved is only temporary?

The Chair: Exactly, it is an interim report.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: So work will continue on this.

The Chair: Yes, it will. We will have our meeting on Tuesday. Arrangements are already underway.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Can we suspend for five minutes to say hello to everyone?

The Chair: Yes, we can suspend the meeting.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We cannot hear anything, and everyone is over there.

The Chair: Do you want to proceed?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I can speak to you alone.

The Chair: I shall adjourn the meeting then.

This meeting is adjourned.

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