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Chair

Mr. Steven Blaney

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)): Good morning, and welcome to the 35th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[English]

This morning, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), we are considering the use of Google Translate by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

[Translation]

We are pleased to have with us four witnesses who will contribute to our discussion today.

First, we have the Assistant Commissioner, who is also the Director General of Workplace and Programs Services, as well as Co-champion of Official Languages, Daniel Dubeau. Welcome to the committee.

We also have Nathalie Ferreira, Director of Official Languages, Superintendent Tim Cogan, Acting Director General of National Communication Services at the RCMP, and finally, Inspector Marc Richer, Director of RCMP Media Relations and Issues Management.

You were told how the committee works. You will begin with a brief statement, and then the members of the committee will ask you questions. Without further ado, I will ask you to start us off.

Mr. Dubeau, you have the floor.

Assistant Commissioner Daniel Dubeau (Assistant Commissioner, Director General of Workplace and Programs Services and Co-champion of Official Languages, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank you for inviting the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to respond to your questions today. I would like to begin by saying that, as a national police force, the RCMP strives to remain a role model in implementing and respecting all laws, including the Official Languages Act, which honours our national heritage and unique linguistic identity.

Whatever challenges we may encounter along the way, the RCMP never ceases to dedicate itself to finding and implementing solutions that will improve the quality of services it provides in the two official languages of our country. It is because of its continuous devotion and commitment that our organization invests great effort in making the necessary adjustments to respect its obligations under the Official

Languages Act, just as it would for any other law it is mandated to observe and enforce.

Our cornerstone remains the first-class delivery of police services based on compliance and respect. When our choices, our actions or our decisions are questioned, we try to find a way to rectify the situation as soon as possible and to the best of our ability. We take full responsibility for our choices, even when they contradict our intentions. But more importantly, we remain attentive to the public we serve, and we are ready to readjust the focus because our objective is simple: the well-being of all.

That said, in regard to our official languages obligations, we are fully engaged in doing what is necessary, to the best of our ability and within our scope, to show Canadians that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is fully committed to promoting and conserving English and French, as well as protecting Canadians' linguistic rights, without prejudice, when it comes to communicating with and obtaining services from our organization in the official language of one's choice. It is precisely because the organization believes in the fair treatment of all citizens that it continues to invest effort in improving the level of bilingualism internally and externally.

We are keeping a strong and continuing commitment to have all of our official administrative and operational documents for our employees, as well as our services and external communications with the public, provided in both English and French, where and when prescribed by the law, whether it be on our Web sites, in person, or through our media relations.

[English]

As part of its commitment to respect its obligations, the RCMP has raised the visibility and importance of the Official Languages Act in its programs throughout the organization, by including in its official languages action plan for 2010-2013 different initiatives focused on the implementation and promotion of parts IV, V, VI, and VII of the act. These initiatives are also used to further sensitize RCMP employees with respect to two important points: their official language rights and obligations, and the value added by our Canadian linguistic duality.

[Translation]

As part of its ongoing awareness and education campaign entitled, "Our Heritage, Our Advantage", the RCMP continues to develop and discuss educational and promotional tools force-wide, especially when it pertains to active offer service delivery in the official language of choice of the public.

The RCMP has also increased internal media to this end over the last few years. The purpose is to bring official languages to the forefront. Every opportunity is taken to post and distribute various articles on communications with and services to the public, language of work, equal participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians, linguistic duality, enhancement of official language minority communities, and much more.

Best practices throughout the organization are shared and showcased, special events, internal or external, are announced, and useful tips are given as to the use of English and French in the workplace and beyond.

● (0850)

[*English*]

When it comes to language of work, many measures have been adopted by us throughout the regions to foster and promote a workplace conducive to the use of our two official languages. A prime example that demonstrates our commitment towards increasing the level of bilingualism within our organization is the raising of the linguistic profiles of all of our supervisory positions to a minimum of BBC within New Brunswick to improve the quality of communications with employees.

[*Translation*]

Another good example that highlights our efforts and our commitment is the creation of a new language training program. In addition to the regular English- and French-language training offered throughout the regions, in December 2008, the RCMP began offering an English-language training program to newly engaged francophone members, following their cadet training program at Depot Division, in Regina.

The purpose of this program, which integrates both language training and field coaching, is to offer francophone members additional support throughout their policing career and equal opportunity for advancement.

Our objective remains ensuring a workplace conducive to the use of both official languages, where services, tools and necessary training are all available in English and in French.

[*English*]

With regard to the implementation of part VII of the Official Languages Act, our directorate of official languages, our regional coordinator network, as well as different stakeholders throughout the RCMP, are very involved with anglophone and francophone minorities and take active part in various interdepartmental committees. These committees aim to support the development of these groups, as well as support the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society. Indeed, the RCMP is dedicated to searching for and putting in place positive measures to shoulder the government's commitment to this end. Although the RCMP is not among the designated federal institutions who must submit an official accountability report to Canadian Heritage, it insists on doing so as proof of its commitment towards the implementation of sections 41 and 42 of this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Last but not least, we continue to recruit from all communities that form our Canadian mosaic, including, of course, our official language minority communities.

In our opinion, it is a winning situation for all involved. Not only does this increase and enrich the force's capacity with a wide array of skills, but it also provides employment opportunities and career development to all Canadian citizens who would like to join Canada's police force and make a difference in communities across the country.

[*English*]

In hundreds of communities that we serve day in and day out, proactive and positive measures are taken that underline the government's requirements and commitment. The RCMP continues to encourage its personnel to go beyond their obligations wherever and whenever possible. We recognize the importance and value of our bilingual identity, and not only continue our efforts to preserve it but also promote it as an operational asset. Languages, which open the door to communication, can be the most effective and valuable tool towards the achievement of the greater good.

[*Translation*]

This notion, along with the intent to serve members of the public in the official language of their choice and to respect linguistic duality, is one of our goals. It is an integral part of our strategic framework, and it is considered not only in everyday law enforcement functions, but also in the planning and delivery of major events. The Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games are a prime example.

[*English*]

In short, bilingualism is an official priority of the RCMP. This is why we fully support the objectives of the Official Languages Act in our day-to-day operations. When we consider the extent of our responsibilities and focus on the fact that we have over 700 points of service, many operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we come to realize just how many challenges can be presented by that. Notwithstanding those, we will pursue our efforts towards the achievement of a balance between operational needs and the ongoing necessity of serving the public in the two official languages of Canada. The RCMP will continue to fulfill all of its obligations under the act across the organization.

Should we slip along the way, as was the case with Google Translate, we will take the necessary steps to get back on the right track. We remain dedicated to providing exemplary policing services to Canadians, as well as promoting a work environment conducive to the use of French and English, in accordance with this act and its regulations.

[*Translation*]

Finally, I want to assure you that, like any English-speaking and French-speaking Canadian, our national police force respects and shares the same commitment towards our two official languages and our culture.

That is why the RCMP makes it its duty to equally preserve and promote both, not only as a right and an obligation, but rather as a legacy to our advantage, just as presented in its official languages awareness campaign.

On this final note, I thank you for your time and interest.

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Assistant Commissioner.

We will now begin our first round of questions.

Mr. Murphy, you have the floor.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Many thanks to the witnesses. I have a few general questions.

As far as language of work goes, you said on page 2 of your presentation, that improvements were made in terms of raising the linguistic profiles of all supervisory positions in New Brunswick. I am from Moncton, New Brunswick. The RCMP has been in Moncton since 2000. On Monday night, the city council will decide whether to keep the current services of the RCMP or to opt for something else.

I find it very concerning to read that it is only now, 10 years later—even though the New Brunswick government decided to replace municipal police forces with the RCMP—that you are raising the level of bilingualism within your organization in New Brunswick. I want to know why it took so long, a decade, to do that. That is my first question.

I am aware that today's topic has more to do with the west coast, British Columbia. Only one paragraph at the end of your four-page presentation even mentions Google Translate. The big question here is how much does the RCMP spend annually on translation services in British Columbia. That is the big question, because we all know that using Google for translation may not have been the most well thought-out idea, and I hope the situation will be rectified.

Do the RCMP's practices vary depending on the region? I would assume so. There are issues in New Brunswick, and the situation is even worse in British Columbia. Does the RCMP in British Columbia have an adequate budget for translation? Those are two questions I would like you to answer.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: First, as for British Columbia's annual translation budget, I do not have those details with me today. We can check with the British Columbia detachment to see how much it spends on translation, but I do not have those details on hand today.

As for the other question, I will ask Ms. Ferreira to tell us when the levels were raised.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira (Director of Official Languages, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Actually, there have always been bilingualism levels in the detachments in Moncton and the entire Atlantic region. And some profiles are much higher than “BBC”. This is not something that happened only recently; it has been ongoing for a few years now. We made sure that the bare minimum was “BBC”, “C” being the requirement for oral interaction, which is of course the most important means of communication.

So, in order to ensure a higher level of proficiency, we committed to raising all the requirements for bilingual supervisory positions to a minimum of “C”. Positions with bilingualism levels ranging from “BBB” to “CBC” and even the professional rating of “P” exist throughout the Atlantic region, and not just in recent years, but for quite some time now.

● (0900)

Mr. Brian Murphy: I appreciate the improvement, but why did it take 10 years? What was the bilingualism level in terms of language of work in the Moncton detachment originally? Was it adequate?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: No. I would also like to point out that, beginning in April 2004, the bilingualism level for the entire public service was raised to a minimum profile of “BBB”. So, the RCMP has always met that obligation. We raised our levels to “BBB”. But, I repeat, the bilingualism level and language profiles of supervisory positions and others, for that matter, have always been “BBB” and higher. But, as of 2004, we made certain that everything was in line with the required levels, which were “BBB”. After that, we took steps to exceed the “BBB” requirement and to raise levels to a “C”, especially for oral interaction, the most important form of communication. We did not do that in response to a government requirement or policy, but out of a commitment to respect official languages. We want to strengthen our commitment.

Mr. Brian Murphy: It concerns me that you do not know the translation budget for the RCMP detachment in British Columbia.

Today, we are exploring why the RCMP used “Google Translate”. I would think you anticipated what we would be asking. We want to know about the translation services used by the RCMP detachment in British Columbia. You do not have those figures on hand?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: No, sir, I do not have those figures with me today.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Do you have an idea of the amount?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I can tell you that the RCMP has in-house translators in British Columbia, and that it has access to translation services here, in the national capital region. It has other options, as well, such as using the services of employees at Public Works. But I do not know how much the translation budget is exactly.

Mr. Brian Murphy: But you know you have translators in-house, in British Columbia. How many people are there?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I believe there is one.

Ms. Ferreira?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes, there is currently one in-house translator.

Mr. Brian Murphy: One translator for all of British Columbia.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: For the time being, yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

We will continue with Mr. Nadeau.

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

Good morning, everyone.

Are you familiar with what I call the “Justin Bell case”? Does that ring a bell?

I lived in Saskatchewan for seven years and taught there for four. You know Justin Bell. He was one of my students. Justin Bell ended up in handcuffs—I repeat, handcuffs—for asking a member of the RCMP to provide service in French when he was pulled over for speeding in Gravelbourg, an area that is home to more than 5% of Saskatchewan's French-speaking population.

You know the Official Languages Act; I would assume you refer to it on a daily basis, as do we, for that matter. Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, services must be provided in areas where the numbers warrant it. That is in Canada's constitution. I am not talking about the AANB that is the Alcoholics Anonymous New Brunswick chapter, but the AANB that is the British North America Act, which was repatriated in 1982 by our friend Mr. Trudeau. You all know that story.

Regardless, the name Justin Bell should mean something to you, because it was the RCMP that handcuffed that teacher. Today, he is a teacher in Gravelbourg. The incident occurred between 2006 and 2008. It is not ancient history. I am not talking about when Louis Riel was hanged; I am talking about Justin Bell.

Mr. Godin, a member of the NDP who is usually at committee meetings, raised the issue of why the RCMP was using Google for translation, when this is a bilingual country. Perhaps the RCMP still did not know. Its motto, however, is *Maintiens le droit*. It is indeed in French. Mr. Galipeau could tell you all about it because he also has things to say on the matter.

How is it that, in 2009-2010, we saw the RCMP violate the Official Languages Act yet again, essentially slapping all francophones in the face? I see that there are francophone members of the RCMP here today. There are bilingual members, as well. Basically, the RCMP has proudly proclaimed that now, in British Columbia—which, to my mind, is still part of Canada, since I do not think it has been annexed to the state of Washington or Alaska—it is going to use Google's services for its translation needs.

Whose idea was that, and how did it manage to gain ground? Can you please explain that? During a later round of questions, I want you to tell me how you plan to fix it.

• (0905)

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: The decision to use Google Translate was made in the Pacific region, in British Columbia, by the communications team. It was an isolated decision, as the policy centre wasn't consulted at all.

As soon as we heard about this decision, we got involved and set things right. We explained very clearly that we needed to comply with the Official Languages Act and that the decision to use a translation engine was inappropriate. That much was made very clear.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Was the gentleman who made the decision an RCMP employee or a third party?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: He's an RCMP employee, sir.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Is he in charge of communications?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes, he's in charge of communications for British Columbia.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: We're talking about British Columbia, as part of Canada, and not about British Columbia, as part of Alaska, of the State of Washington, of Oregon, and so on. Just so we understand each other.

He did not get the training that would make him understand that he had to provide services in French that were of equal quality to services provided in English. And this man is in charge of communications.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes, sir.

I will yield the floor to Mr. Cogan, who is responsible for communications.

[English]

Superintendent Tim Cogan (Acting Director General, National Communication Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): The decision was a faulty decision. It was an error in judgment. Mr. Shields is very aware of his responsibilities to comply with the Official Languages Act.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Cogan, does your colleague, Mr. Shields, know that, since his position relates to communications, he could find himself in a situation where he has to communicate in French with Franco-Columbians, or has to respond to a request for services in French in British Columbia? Does his job description include this requirement? If not, was he hired without even knowing that he had this obligation?

Supt Tim Cogan: I think that he clearly knows about this requirement. Our policy on communications is very clear with regard to the obligation to comply with the requirements set out in the Official Languages Act. It's clear. Over the last few years, we have held several conversations on the importance of acting in compliance with the law.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Several conversations have been held over the last few years, yet he still did what he did!

Supt Tim Cogan: As I already said, he made a mistake.

[English]

How should I say this? It was a lack of good judgment.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: What is the solution to this problem? Is Mr. Shields still in charge of communications within your organization?

Supt Tim Cogan: Yes.

[English]

And his error was clearly discussed, and he has a clear understanding of his responsibilities.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: What of the issue involving French and English translation? Are you going to use another search engine? I assume that Mr. Shields doesn't speak much French.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes, we are currently implementing a system for translating documents in British Columbia. As I already said, PWGSC translators from the rest of the country will help out. That's very clear. Yesterday, the commanding officer clearly stated that documents will comply with the law; in other words, they will be available in both languages.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Are there any people in your communications organization who are able to speak French?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes.

Tim, could you continue?

Supt Tim Cogan: Are you talking about British Columbia?

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Yes.

Supt Tim Cogan: Actually, our main spokesperson for French communications in British Columbia is Annie Linteau. She is perfectly bilingual. Mr. Shields understands French well, but he's less comfortable with oral communication. He is probably able to communicate.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

We will continue with Mr. Gravelle.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Good morning and thank you for coming.

Having learned this morning about the comments made by your spokesperson, Tim Shields, to The Canadian Press, I must say that it is sad to hear the RCMP proclaiming that the new measures will pose a threat to official languages. Had you done your job from the beginning, we wouldn't be in this mess now. The RCMP making such statements runs counter to the spirit and intent of the Official Languages Act.

Last Monday, the RCMP commissioner, William Elliott, held an information session on the RCMP for the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security and did not mention official languages. My colleague, Yvon Godin, as Mr. Nadeau said, asked the commissioner of official languages to launch an investigation on the issue we're discussing today. I thank him for his efforts. I trust you to do your utmost to rectify the situation quickly.

At first, the problem was limited to the use of Google Translate by the RCMP in British Columbia. However, we're now realizing that the issue goes beyond the translation of news releases. We have noticed that, on the RCMP's website, there is English content on French pages and there are unilingual videos. The agency's Facebook page and Twitter account are unilingual as well. We should also look into the RCMP's website for Alberta because it's not much better. The content in the two languages is not balanced. Commissioner William Elliott sits on the Interdepartmental Committee on Security and Intelligence, which is comprised of deputy ministers.

Do you know whether he has discussed official languages with his counterparts in the past? Have you had to prepare documents on official languages for his committee meetings?

• (0910)

Supt Tim Cogan: Not personally, no.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: What about you, Ms. Ferreira?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: We have prepared a few comments for the commissioner in the past. However, we were never called in to speak about subjects related to official languages compliance.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: With regard to comments and opinions expressed in the media, the RCMP's position is very simple: we must comply 100% with the Official Languages Act.

[English]

The CO has made that commitment: 100% compliance. The commanding officer of that division has made it 100% compliance, and that's where we're going.

Unfortunately, that article does not reflect the opinion of the RCMP.

[Translation]

We don't have any policies. We will comply fully with the Official Languages Act.

[English]

Mr. Claude Gravelle: When did he make this commitment to be 100% bilingual?

Supt Tim Cogan: This latest round of discussions took place yesterday. But this requirement and this policy have been in our books for a long time—years. We've been working towards 100% compliance in all jurisdictions across the country with respect to the materials that appear on our website, and we continue to work towards that goal. We have had challenges in certain jurisdictions, and in this particular case those challenges came to a head yesterday, in very frank discussions.

The CO clearly indicated to his staff that 100% compliance was the only acceptable measure, and that will be the standard henceforth.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Gravelle: If I understood correctly, full compliance with bilingualism requirements has been your policy for a long time, whereas compliance with the act only became the standard yesterday.

Supt Tim Cogan: No. It has been in our books for a long time. Our policies are clear, and they're there to be followed.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Why are they not followed?

[English]

Supt Tim Cogan: That's a good question and it's one we are pursuing.

As I said, we are pursuing it aggressively, and we have the support of the senior management and the commissioner to make sure that is the standard that is met.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Gravelle: How long will it take to get to 100% compliance?

Supt Tim Cogan: Our compliance will be at 100% as of today.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: As of today?

Did the RCMP pay Google for its translations?

● (0915)

Supt Tim Cogan: I have no idea whatsoever about that, sir.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Could you tell us whether you paid Google for its services and, if so, how much it all cost?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: We will ask the people from British Columbia and we'll let you know.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay.

Ms. Ferreira, you are the Director of Official Languages. How does your deputy minister report to the clerk of the Privy Council on official languages? Could we have a copy of his review?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes. Normally, we provide an official languages review to the Treasury Board every two years. This used to be a yearly practice. We were not asked to submit a review for 2009-2010. It's probably in 2010-2011 that we will have to report on all our activities regarding the implementation of the program and the Official Languages Act. That's when we'll talk about our initiatives.

As for providing updates to our managers and our deputy minister, we do it regularly through briefing notes, our review and reports on measures that have been adopted.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay.

What specific instructions have you been given by the clerk of the Privy Council on official languages?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: The instructions are simple: it is always a matter of complying with the law and ensuring that the program and the measures that we implement are compliant. The goal is to promote the agenda, to move it forward and to enhance compliance.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Gravelle.

We now go to Mr. Rickford.

[English]

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my thanks to the witnesses for coming today.

I want to preface my remarks today by saying that we're dealing with a specific issue, and some of the questions are hard questions. For my part, certainly, some of my closest friends are members of the RCMP. Having worked with the RCMP in some of the most isolated and remote communities in Canada, I have nothing but admiration and respect for the outstanding job they do.

It's not going to prevent me from asking some hard questions today. Indeed, you've heard some others.

Lost in translation—this is one of my primary concerns. I have an anecdotal example of my own. When I started out as a nurse in an isolated Cree community, I remember asking an elderly lady, through a translator—she was complaining of cold symptoms and I could tell her nose was running. When I asked how long her nose had been running, she started to laugh, as did the translator, saying, “My nose doesn't have legs. It can't run. And if it did, where would it run to?” So I had a very early appreciation on how things can get lost in translation.

On a little more serious note, with respect to Google Translate, we did a bit of work and we have an interesting newspaper here. The French business paper, *La Tribune*, launched an experiment in July 2009 to run a multilingual version of its website. The experiment was based on Google Translate and generated some comical headlines. This was one French title:

[Translation]

“*Ryanair prêt à faire voyager des passagers debout.*”

[English]

It's pretty straightforward French. It translated to “Ryanair alone to make travel of the passengers upright”.

The second title was:

[Translation]

“*Les atouts du droit continental dans la gestion de la crise.*”

[English]

That was translated as “Assets of the continental right in management of the crisis”.

So the quality is really mediocre. Indeed, I've experimented with translation a time a two. And I think we can all agree how problematic Google Translate can be.

I'm going to focus on B.C, Surrey, because I have an old news release by one Mr. Shields, which I think has been discussed by my colleague, Mr. Nadeau, and....

[Translation]

I visited the website of Surrey, British Columbia. I realized that news releases are not alone in being available only in English. This was also true of general information on gangs, family violence, road safety and other important issues. I feel that this situation is unacceptable, especially since the RCMP was made aware of the problem in July and August 2010.

● (0920)

[English]

We can't have this. I understand some of the practical problems and the need to introduce some immediate news bulletins that we may not be able to translate instantaneously, although I think that's what I'm hearing you'd like to head towards.

Mr. Cogan, based on Mr. Nadeau's questions earlier, I would have taken some comfort in the fact that you had dealt with this issue in Surrey, B.C. Unfortunately, I'm in possession of a news release this morning that continues to trouble me. It appears that there's a new policy as early as Wednesday afternoon, yesterday. Let me read from it.

He's writing about potential victims facing an imminent threat of death, serious harm. He says the Mounties will post a news release immediately, but he notes a slowdown, which he says “comes as a result of the federal Official Languages Act”, and he states once again that E Division doesn't have a full-time translator.

This is a news release from yesterday. I think you may be aware of it.

[Translation]

Do you have anything planned to fix these two problems, which are twofold? First, there's the translation issue in British Columbia. Mr. Shields' comments are still unacceptable, in my opinion.

What specific measures do you intend to adopt in order to comply with the Official Languages Act, in this situation? You have already talked about your objective in a broader sense. Today, I would like to know—and this is perhaps also the case for my colleagues—what specific steps you will take to rectify this situation.

I would also like to know if general information on gangs, family violence, road safety and other important issues will be made available in French as well.

[English]

I can't underscore enough the need to address this issue, frankly, of communications coming from Surrey, B.C., where, as you've identified, some poor judgment may have been exercised. It was enough back in the summer. It occurred again today.

I'll leave the last couple of minutes for you to address that.

Thank you.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I reference the comment that there is a new policy. There is no new policy. The policy is very clear that it will be in both official languages on the Surrey website as well. That has not changed. I think there is obviously a misinterpretation. There is no new policy—especially when it comes to public safety. We have mechanisms in place to ensure simultaneous broadcasting.

[Translation]

It is translated on the spot.

[English]

So that is going to happen.

I reference certain things we're going to do. We've had several discussions. We have had many discussions and now we're going to be pushing it a lot more. We have a translation bureau in Public Works that's available to us. We have an MOU with Public Works—

Mr. Greg Rickford: Is there a question of resources, Mr. Dubeau?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Is there a question of resources? I believe that British Columbia didn't have discussions about how they were going to pay for this. Obviously they are going to have to decide where they're going to find the money, but that will happen, because it's very clear from the commanding officer's perspective of that area that there will be 100% compliance, and the only way you can be compliant is to actually have translators who are available to you to translate. There is no other way around it.

I agree with you. Google Translate is not an appropriate tool. That is nothing against Google Translate. It is not an appropriate tool, and it does not conform to the act.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rickford. Ms. Zarac will begin the second round.

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

Good morning and thank you for being here. Unfortunately, I don't have your new 2010-2013 plan on hand. Could you send it to the committee?

Looking at your 2007-2010 plan, I see that it doesn't mention translation anywhere. The second objective talks a lot about developing tools and information booklets, and about media reports, but I see absolutely nothing about translation. Your measurement tool, your performance indicator, is simply a staff survey. Has the survey been conducted? Has it identified a translation-related problem? Will that be mentioned in your 2010-2013 work plan? Do you address the translation issue in the plan?

• (0925)

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: It's true that, up until now, translation has not been mentioned in the two plans because the problem had not been brought to our attention. In response to everything that has transpired, we are currently adjusting the plan to ensure that the translation issue is addressed and that improvements are made.

As for the tool we were talking about earlier, we are surveying our employees to gauge their satisfaction and to receive feedback on our work tools.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Has the survey already been conducted?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: A survey was conducted recently. The results are in, and we intend to use them to gauge the degree of satisfaction of employees in their workplace, so that we can determine whether they feel at ease using both languages—

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Pardon me for interrupting you. You say that you have never had translation problems. However, the official languages commissioner says that you are one of the most-complained about organizations. Have none of the complaints ever been about translation?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: We have certainly received some translation-related complaints. The word “translation” does not appear in the plan, since we take a different approach to resolving the issue. We aim to improve our staff members' knowledge of their official languages rights and obligations. Translation is addressed in the sense that we look to make employees more aware of their obligation to produce documents in both official languages simultaneously and equally.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Is this expected of your staff, or do you have official translators? Earlier, you said that you had only one translator in British Columbia.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: We also have translators in the regions.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Do you know how many you have altogether?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Unfortunately, I don't have the numbers with me.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Could you provide us with this information?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes, of course.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Do you intend to hire more translators owing to the complaints that have been received?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: That's something that will be up to the regions to decide. We will have to ensure that we're meeting the requirements. We will do whatever is necessary to do so. If that means hiring translators, we will find a way to hire some. Translators from the regions have been helping out to ensure that we don't end up with a similar situation on our hands.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Am I to understand that you remain unconvinced that there is a problem?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: There most certainly is a problem.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: However, if I look at the document that has been provided to us, your need for qualified staff is clear to me.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes. We will do what's necessary to ensure that the problem is fixed.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Great.

Earlier, Mr. Rickford asked what specific steps you will take. I'm not sure I understood exactly what steps you intend to take. Could you be a little more specific?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Do you mean exact steps regarding translation?

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Yes.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: We will meet our obligations. During our meetings, one of the measures that was implemented immediately was to use...

As a show of solidarity, the regions have offered the services of their translators. To date, one of the proposed solutions has been adopted, that is, having British Columbia use translators from other regions for its translations. Another solution that has been adopted is getting help from the Translation Bureau of the Public Works and Government Services Department.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Is this solution currently being used?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes. We are increasingly encouraging the use of Public Works services. As I said, the regions are sharing their translators. Job competitions have also been posted in British Columbia. We will certainly continue investing efforts into becoming compliant.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarac.

We will continue with Ms. Guay.

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

I would regret it if I didn't share a little anecdote about one of my experiences, not in British Columbia, but at home.

Not even five years ago, I was in Saint-Jérôme—I have been an MP for that region for 17 years—and I was sent an RCMP officer to accompany me to the Remembrance Day ceremony. He did not speak a word of French. In a town like Saint-Jérôme, that's a rather rare occurrence, since 99.6% of its population is francophone. The RCMP officer didn't know why he had been sent there. Fortunately, I spoke English. When I asked him where he was from, he simply said

that he was from Ottawa, that he was sent to accompany me and that he had no idea what he was supposed to do.

Imagine the scope of the problem. It shows that, in Quebec, it's quite important to speak some French. He was fortunate to have someone there who could speak to him in his language, as he could not even say “yes” or “no” in French. He was very happy that I could tell him what he needed to do during the ceremony.

Regarding the situation in British Columbia, it's very worrisome. I really didn't get the impression that you have an action plan in place. As far as the translation engine goes, I know that people use it. I often see my children doing their university homework with the help of the Internet and using Google, but they do correct the translation mistakes afterwards. It's faster that way, but they realize that the system is not intelligent and that they cannot use the translations as they are.

The fact that you use this tool is almost disgraceful. There are people who specialize in translation, and their services should continue to be used. If you don't have any professional translators, make cuts elsewhere and hire some because it's important, not only in British Columbia, but everywhere. The Official Languages Act was passed 40 years ago, and we still have serious problems with your agency. This is a serious problem. It's recurring constantly, so it's become redundant. We don't exactly get the impression that the RCMP is willing to truly abide by the provisions of the Official Languages Act.

The Official Languages Commissioner, Mr. Graham Fraser, maintained that Canadians shouldn't have to resort to machine translation. That's fairly harsh condemnation. I believe that you have a lot of work to do in this area, and the blame cannot be placed on a single person.

Because of the magnitude of the reaction, you're telling us that you will do something. However, there have been many reactions. We receive complaints regularly. There are also many people who don't dare speak up.

So, I would like you to give us a real action plan and not just some bits and pieces. We want to see a real action plan, a budget. If you don't have enough money in the budget, you need to tell us, so that we can look into what can be done. You have a budget and you can balance it. For instance, when I know that I need more money in a certain area, I balance my budget accordingly. Official languages, including French, should be among your priorities, which is currently not the case.

I would like to hear what you have to say about this, and I want concrete statements, please.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: The official languages issue has always been a priority for the RCMP. Regarding Google, as soon as we learned that this translation engine was being used, as you said, we immediately reacted to rectify the situation.

We explained to our people that using Google Translate was unacceptable. We will draft our action plan. Yesterday, we began identifying the needs. We tried to call upon translators. That was insufficient. That's why, yesterday, after receiving calls, the commanding officer said that this approach is inadequate and that the next step will consist in ensuring that we have in-house translators.

Ms. Monique Guay: What are you going to do to make your officers aware of the importance of learning both official languages and of providing the service to someone who speaks only one of the two languages?

We know we are talking about French in British Columbia. It is clear.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes, madam.

• (0935)

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: At the Official Languages Branch, we have implemented measures to address the issue, including an awareness campaign. Our network of regional coordinators makes efforts to raise awareness among the officers and all RCMP staff.

Ms. Monique Guay: Are they required to learn the second language?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Guay.

Please make your answer quick.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: No, it is not a general requirement.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Guay.

Mr. Lauzon is next.

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, I am going to say that I agree with Mr. Rickford. I feel that the RCMP is doing a great job and they are true Canadian heroes. But, as Mr. Rickford suggested, this does not mean that I cannot question some things, especially since I feel that we are faced with a rather serious situation.

This is not working very well. It is working very badly. What would it take to rectify the situation within 60 days?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: To rectify the situation, the commander made a comment yesterday. I wasn't there, but my colleague can perhaps tell us about his discussion with the commander.

Supt Tim Cogan: The commanding officer was very clear: we must comply with the Official Languages Act 100%.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Will that cost anything? What resources will be needed to correct the situation quickly?

[English]

Supt Tim Cogan: It will take a prioritization of resources to make this a priority, absolutely.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Has that decision been taken?

Supt Tim Cogan: Absolutely.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Okay.

Can you say to us, the committee, that in 60 days, if you come to see us, we're going to have everything rectified?

Supt Tim Cogan: With respect to our public communications through the website, which is the problem here, yes, we will.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: So if I go on your website in 60 days, it's going to be completely bilingual?

Supt Tim Cogan: It is for the most part. Every divisional site right now is compliant with static information. The area in which we are running into trouble in E Division, in British Columbia, is with the posting of news releases. What we have said to them is, you will not post a news release unless it can be posted in a bilingual fashion simultaneously, and the CO has endorsed that 100%.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Okay.

Just for background information, how many personnel would you have in British Columbia?

[Translation]

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I would say maybe 6,000 employees in total.

[English]

Inspector Marc Richer (Director of RCMP Media Relations and Issues Management, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Counting all employees, it's about 9,600.

Supt Tim Cogan: Yes, I was going to say close to 10,000.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Okay.

There's a certain segment of that population that is bilingual, I'm assuming?

Supt Tim Cogan: Of the membership, there is, yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Lauzon: What is the percentage approximately?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: You want to know the percentage of bilingual people in the Pacific region?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Yes.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Of 95 employees in bilingual positions in the Pacific region, 76, or 80%, fulfill their obligations.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Is that enough?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: We continue to grow..., to put measures in place, like language training, in order to improve their profile.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Your question was on the number of bilingual employees in this region, wasn't it?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Yes, that's it. So it is 76.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: And those are just the bilingual positions. That's the total number of bilingual members.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Members!

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Bilingual members. Are you looking for the number of bilingual members or the total number of employees?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: All the employees providing services in both official languages. That is what I'm asking.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes. In total, in the Pacific region, we have 95 bilingual positions and 95 people hold those positions.

A voice: We want to know how many employees are bilingual, not who hold the bilingual positions.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: In terms of the actual number of bilingual employees, we cannot tell you because there are a lot more than that.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You could have bilingual people in unilingual positions.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Exactly.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Do you feel you're able to serve the public in British Columbia in both official languages?

• (0940)

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Absolutely.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: What is the problem then? Is it the RCMP culture? What is the problem? Mistakes are made like...

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: The problem we are talking about today is the website. There weren't enough translators to translate the small headings. That was the only problem. The decision was made without consultation.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: With all due respect, Mr. Dubeau, you are the champion...

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes, the co-champion, sir. We have a new champion who...

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Do we have a champion in British Columbia?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: The commander is the champion in British Columbia. All the commanders in charge of regional operations are official languages champions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

We will finish the second round with Mr. Gravelle.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There is no mention of official languages in your departmental performance report, which is very disturbing. Could you make the commitment that you will be integrating official languages into your program activities in your next report on plans and priorities, or at least confirm that you will try to get Mr. Elliott to make this commitment?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I can tell you that we'll discuss this with Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Ms. Ferreira, I would like to continue talking about Mr. Lauzon's question.

You said there were 95 positions designated as bilingual? How many are filled?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: The 95.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Ninety-five bilingual positions out of 10,000 is not a lot.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: That's because those positions are in detachments where there are bilingual requirements. We don't have bilingual requirements everywhere in the region. Just to be clear, we

are talking about the Atlantic region. Where we have bilingual requirements, we identify the positions as bilingual.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Ms. Ferreira, your title is Director of Official Languages at the RCMP. Does that cover all of Canada?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Are there problems elsewhere? We know there are problems in Alberta and British Columbia, but are there some in other provinces as well?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: There certainly are challenges. There will always be challenges that we need to overcome, but all the measures... We have a network of coordinators and stakeholders who make every effort to ensure compliance. So there is a network in place to ensure a level of compliance and to check and make sure problems like that are avoided.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Do you know when the problems currently experienced by the RCMP in terms of official languages will be fully solved?

Earlier, we mentioned the website, but there are also problems with Twitter and Facebook.

[English]

Supt Tim Cogan: Those other forms of mass communication through electronic means are a challenge, there's no question about it. We are understanding of our obligation that they meet the Official Languages Act requirements as well. We are working towards that.

If you look on our national site, you will find that our Facebook page is compliant. E Division is the only other division at the moment that is using Facebook as a method of communicating with the public. They are also using Twitter as a way of driving traffic to the website, which, with the exception of our media releases in that division, is compliant.

This is a work in progress. As new technologies for communication come out, we have to re-emphasize the importance of compliance with the Official Languages Act in the context of the use of those technologies. It's an ongoing struggle, but we are focused on it.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Gravelle: If I understood correctly, you have one translator in British Columbia.

• (0945)

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: At the moment, yes.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Full-time or part-time?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Full-time, yes.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: How many translators would you need for the work to get done?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: That question is really for the regions. The region makes the implementation decisions. There are a number of options. We could have in-house translators or we could contact Public Works and Government Services Canada. We can choose from a number of options to make sure we get things published in both official languages.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Since you are using Google to do the translation, it is obvious that one translator is not enough.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: No, we know that's not enough.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: How many do you need?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I know we were about to hire a second translator. I believe there was a competition to find a second translator. We can also use the services of the Translation Bureau at Public Works and Government Services Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gravelle.

That's the end of the second round. Are there any members of the committee who would like to go to a third round?

We are going to start the third round with Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I still have some concerns about the RCMP's comments on bilingualism in general. There still are many issues to be resolved since the RCMP is all for improving its bilingual services across the country.

[English]

I want to get back to New Brunswick. We're here because there was an incident in British Columbia regarding a lax use of translation services for public interface. We're being reassured this won't happen. That's the problem. That's why we're here.

I would like a more fervent response, a more converted response, to the issue of the level of bilingual services provided throughout the country. Let's start with British Columbia.

I'll go back to New Brunswick. Obviously I will; you know I will.

We're here because of the Google thing in British Columbia.... No. I think we're here because we have one translator in an employee force of 10,000. My guess is that UPS or Canadian Tire have more translators probably for that number of employees in majority anglophone parts of the country.

One of the things I learned from our tour of the country on official languages, Mr. Chair, was that there are 50,000 francophones in the greater Vancouver area. That's more than there are in Nova Scotia, probably. So there's a community to be served there.

If you're here—and we beg you to say this—requesting that the brass provide you with more resources to have more translation, we applaud that. We're here to help you in this regard, because I don't know how many other people are champions of the issue of better bilingual services for a national institution like the RCMP throughout the country other than this committee. So we're here for you on that.

I'd like to hear a little more fervour about that. I'd like to hear you say that you need better resources in the area of translation. I don't think it's sufficient to say you're here because of this problem and you're going to correct that because you've issued a release and everything will be fine.

Well, that translator, the one person, must be a bit overworked, because there are occasions for community police forces to get out and interface with the public, which they serve, on an immediate basis.

We all know around this table that getting things translated in Ottawa—and we're here—isn't instantaneous. It takes a little while.

So we're here to help. I want to hear more of a college try on that one.

Back to New Brunswick. I want to remind everyone that the RCMP often responds to complaints and often doesn't respond with an immediate yes. I'll remind you of the case involving Marie-Claire Paulin in New Brunswick. You're not here to take the blame for this because you're not the legal representatives of the RCMP, I realize that. But let's be clear. The RCMP resisted a claim by the Société des Acadiens et des Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick for the provincial law, the Official Languages Act of New Brunswick, to apply to the RCMP in the province of New Brunswick. They fought it all the way up to the Supreme Court of Canada. It took a majority decision, nine to zero, in 2008, after paying \$135,000 in the other party's legal cost, let alone their own, before the RCMP said yes, we'll comply with provincial laws where we serve the public.

My point to you is that I think there's some resistance at the RCMP with respect to providing bilingual services in this country.

The floor is yours to respond to that—with fervour, I hope.

● (0950)

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I'll try to respond with the appropriate fervour.

Obviously the first part of your question is on translators. One translator for B.C., it's very clear to us, is obviously not enough. It's been very clear. The commanding officer yesterday—and I was not on the telephone conference call, but my colleagues were—was very clear that we would be 100% compliant. That is the commanding officer for British Columbia.

At that point, how they do that and how many translators they need on staff is their decision, because what they wanted, they have. They understand what the obligations are, and they will conform to the Official Languages Act.

In reference to your second point, on New Brunswick, that is from a court case that I cannot comment on. But once again, I'm sitting here as the co-champion, as the DG in charge of workplace and program services, of which official languages is a component, telling you that we as an organization will conform to the Official Languages Act. That is our intent.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

Could you tell me how many officers you have in the Pacific region?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: We have three categories, including the regular members of the police force. Do you want to know the number of police officers, employees or public servants, including partners?

The Chair: No. You mentioned 1,000 people before.

Insp Marc Richer: That was around 6,000 police officers.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When did you receive the invitation to appear before the committee today?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: At the beginning of November.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: So the fact that you had to be here this morning did not come to you as a surprise.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: No.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I must admit that I was personally surprised to see that you were not able to provide us with figures when you were asked questions about the communications budget or the delivery of services in French. The goal of the meeting was not to discuss the hanging of Louis Riel, but to discuss services provided in both official languages in one of the 10 Canadian provinces. Perhaps you need to consult a dictionary like the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *Merriam-Webster* to get the definition for the word “champion” so that you can really take on that role.

[English]

This is a very important stetson you have there, that of being a champion for the official languages.

[Translation]

This whole story started with an isolated incident. But, even though that case was in the spotlight, I don't think this is really about a particular case, but it is rather a question of attitude. Earlier, Mr. Rickford quoted a document that was just issued yesterday afternoon. It was saying how cumbersome it was to have to comply with the Official Languages Act.

I am concerned about one thing. I assume you came here this morning in an RCMP vehicle.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: We can see your coat of arms on the car. You also wear it in two places on your jacket. The coat of arms dates back to 1952. The RCMP goes back to 1873. And the Official Languages Act came into force in 1969.

About ten years ago, I wrote to my MP. I told him about all the communication between us and about the fact that your coat of arms, which is very beautiful by the way, did not have your name in both official languages. If you look at it, you will see that it actually just says “Royal Canadian Mounted Police”. It is a nice name. My mom gave it to me as well. But your coat of arms does not say “Gendarmier royale du Canada”. This attitude problem might even be connected to that.

I can understand having the coat of arms only in English in 1952, but I think we should have questioned that in 1969. When Canadians raised the question and a renowned MP, who happened to be my MP, wrote to you about it ten years ago or so, you answered that you were going to look into the issue. If you keep looking into it this way, you are going to end up straining your eyes. The situation has to be rectified because that's where this attitude is coming from. This is about your image. You do a good job, especially when you wear your red serge.

Thank you very much.

• (0955)

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: As a co-champion, I know my role very well. When I see things like that, I am very disappointed. Our expectations at the RCMP are very clear: we must comply with the Official Languages Act and respect Canada's official languages.

[English]

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Do you understand about the arms...?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: About the crest, yes, we do understand, and obviously it's something we have to discuss to see where we are with that.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: How many years of discussion, how many decades of discussion, does it take? It's been 40 years since the law was put in place. It's been 10 years since my MP wrote to you.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Sir, if I may, Nathalie was about to respond to that part of it.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: In fact, this would probably require several steps, as historically this would be something that would have to be approved by the Queen

[Translation]

since this is part of the history of the RCMP, being a British force under British authority.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: You are very kind to let me have the floor. My MP would like to talk to you now.

The Chair: Mr. Nadeau.

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

To continue along the same lines as Mr. Galipeau, I would just like to draw your attention to the motto: “Maintiens le droit”. It is written in French, isn't it? The council in London decided that it should be kept in French. I guess that adding “Gendarmerie royale du Canada”—which, by the way, is shorter than writing “mounted police” in English—would not be such a bad thing. It is a matter of identity.

Mr. Cogan, I would like to point something out. Today, we have been really buttered up. You belong to a type of threesome where you are the fourth wheel not the fifth. As you know, Franco-Ontarians—and I am one of them—have three kinds of slices of bread with a thick layer of jam on. In Hawkesbury, they say: “Ah, que c'est beurré”. In Sudbury, it's “Ça de beurré” and in Haileybury, it's “Elle est beurrée”. RCMP sounds a bit like Hawkesbury, Sudbury, Haileybury. I'd just like to throw that in. I am sure there will be a play at the Théâtre de la Vieille 17 on this.

You said earlier—and that reflects what I am saying: this is a work in progress. It has been 40 years since the act was passed. This is a work in progress! For goodness' sake, it has been a rather long gestation period. I am not sure that we'll get a nice little buffalo out of this, like the one on... In my view, it will be a dragon or a monster instead.

Based on what you are saying, the RCMP respecting the official languages, it's an ongoing struggle. So join the U.S. Coast Guard if you must, but give the RCMP a chance. Use all the necessary tools so that services will actually be in both French and English.

Let's suppose I am being stopped and questioned by an RCMP member—and he has every right to do so—on a highway somewhere in Canada, and that I ask him to talk to me in French. What will happen then? Will he leave me by the side of the road until I freeze or will he go look for someone, somewhere, to provide me with services in French?

When I hear what I am hearing today... There is only one translator for British Columbia, when there are actually a lot of francophones in a minority situation. And not all those francophones are in Vancouver or Victoria. You, Mr. Richer and Mr. Dubeau, are francophones yourselves. Ms. Ferreira and Mr. Cogan also speak French very well. Try this with your colleagues on a Sunday morning, hiding your stuff; try to get services in French. Send people from your staff or third parties. Send Mr. Galipeau if you want; I could also volunteer for this. How will we be received if we ask for services in French?

We are in a situation where people who work in communications—I am thinking specifically of Mr. Shields—say that the French fact scares them to such an extent that, in their opinion, Google Translate will automatically do the trick. Why should we put money in that?

I asked you earlier whether Mr. Shields was still working in the communications department and you said “yes”. We have a serious problem...a communication problem! If the French fact scares him, that means that he is simply not in the right place.

Mr. Dubeau, as a co-champion of official languages and you, Ms. Ferreira, as the director, what does that say to you? Is this a big joke? Were you painted into a corner and were you told to have as much fun as possible because, at the RCMP, it is not important anyway? That's the feeling I'm getting. This morning, we talked about Justin Bell, who was handcuffed because he asked for services in French at the RCMP—services in French! And he was handcuffed.

• (1000)

I feel like him today. I know that, if I went to British Columbia, I would probably end up in handcuffs because I know that, in British

Columbia, no one gives a darn anymore about making sure that the RCMP communicates coherently in French and English with anyone entitled to it...

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: This situation is disgusting.

Thank you.

The Chair: Well, Mr. Nadeau, your five minutes are up.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you very much.

The Chair: There are no other members who indicated whether... We could finish the session by going around the table a fourth time, if that's what the committee members want.

There would be Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: It's okay with me.

Mr. Chair: Okay?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Mr. Nadeau asked a few questions. Can we answer them?

The Chair: Mr. Dubeau, he used his full five minutes to make a comment.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Okay.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): If you'll allow me, Mr. Chair, I am going to share the time allotted to me.

So, take the first minute of this time to answer Mr. Nadeau's questions.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Thank you, sir.

As champion—and in the name of our whole league—I feel that the comments that have been made are unacceptable. Using Google Translate is unacceptable. We know it, and that's why we, as members of the RCMP's senior management, intervened immediately to correct the situation. It was really clear that this was not acceptable, that this was not a decision made in accordance with the act, and we corrected it.

However, a lot of our members are prepared to provide services in both official languages. There are a lot of RCMP members in British Columbia who are providing services—as we speak—in both official languages. I want to make sure that we're clear on that. Not all RCMP members use Google Translate. I say this as official languages champion, as a Franco-Albertan, as someone who worked in Swift Current and who knows Gravelbourg.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Dubeau. First, I apologize for missing part of the meeting. I am certainly going to read the minutes because I get the impression that it has probably been a very interesting one.

However, I want to follow up on the invitation from Mr. Galipeau, my constituent. Ms. Ferreira, you said that the RCMP coat of arms is being discussed on an ongoing basis.

Could you tell me how much time you would like to have before coming back to the committee again with an indication about whether the RCMP can remedy the situation, and when you could do it? How much time would you need to do that?

•(1005)

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: It is very difficult for me to answer because we hadn't planned to discuss that exactly today.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Six months? Two months?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Six months for communications?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: We will check.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: As an MP, I intend to give my constituents answers, even if it may take years. I was asked to get an answer to this question, which is a concern to one of my constituents, even if he didn't vote for me.

I am serious. The issue of the coats of arms is really symbolic, and I think that you're serious, as well. Isn't two months a reasonable time frame to get an indication that it can be done and to find out how much time it would take to do it?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: I think it's reasonable. We will ask the question and get back to you in two months.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So, by the end of January, we'll have a better idea of what to think.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Excellent. There's a second thing. If I've understood it correctly, there are 10,000 employees in the Pacific region, including officers and civilians, and there is one person who does translation. Is that right?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Currently.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Could you describe that person's work day for me?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: There is one translator. She's not the only one who does translation. There is an actual translator, but she isn't the only person who does translation. We also use the Translation Bureau, as mentioned. And we use the services of other translators throughout the region, and in the RCMP.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I'm serious. I want to know. How much work does this translator do? How many words a day, a month, does she translate?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Unfortunately, I cannot answer your question because it all depends on the region's needs and what the region produces.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: What I'm trying to find out is whether you're aware of how much work this represents or if you know how much work there is.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: I can tell you that the workload demands more than one position.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: How many does it need?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: I can't tell you because it is really based on the region's needs. The region has to identify its needs.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: But you know that this requires more than one person.

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: But you don't know how many more?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: No. I can't answer that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: How do you know that it calls for more than one position?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: The number of news releases, for example, the information distributed and published, requires more than one person.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: How many?

Oh, my time is up already?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have 30 seconds. Okay.

How many? Has the number been calculated? Is it known?

Supt Tim Cogan: With the news releases distributed every day in British Columbia by the RCMP, it depends on the day, but it's about 20 per day.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It's about 20 news releases per day.

Supt Tim Cogan: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Gravelle.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Thank you.

Ms. Ferreira, can you tell me how many RCMP translators there are in Canada who translate from English to French?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: I couldn't tell you exactly. The number varies. So, I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Can you get back to us on that?

Ms. Nathalie Ferreira: Of course.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Can you also get back to me on the number of translators there were in Canada, and by province, in 1990, 2000, and then from 2000 to 2010?

Can you do that for us?

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: By province? Yes.

[*English*]

Supt Tim Cogan: Mr. Chair, I'd like to offer a comment.

You're talking about internal RCMP resources.

•(1010)

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Yes.

Supt Tim Cogan: I think it's important to understand that in my capacity as director general of communications, I use multiple services to accomplish the translation requirements of the organization. I use our internal services. I use PWGSC services. I use contractors where they're needed. I use an overnight service that is supplied by Treasury Board of Canada. There are a number of different ways of accomplishing the translation requirements that don't necessarily require an on-staff person to be there.

I would like to respond to Mr. Nadeau's comment earlier when he said we have one translator in B.C. Yes, we have one full-time equivalent person who does provide translation services for a number of business lines within the policing community in B.C. They also have access to PWGSC, Treasury Board services, contractors, our services centrally in headquarters, and the divisional translation services in other provinces. There is a network of available people to do the work.

The question is prioritization. That is the challenge I was referring to with Monsieur Nadeau. It is an ongoing struggle in a certain region of the country to keep them focused on the importance of compliance. That is the struggle I was talking about.

I don't think it's a reflection of the overall mentality of the organization with respect to its obligations under the Official Languages Act. If you look at the websites for the other provinces, you will find them compliant, in all aspects. There is not one that is not compliant.

We have a challenge in one area of the country, and we readily admit that. We are trying to deal with that in as expeditious a manner as possible. As I said, sometimes it's not as clear to some as it should be. Our job is to continue pushing on that.

With your help, and I understand there is an offer to help, we will get there. It is what we want.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: To clarify something you mentioned, I'm interested in the RCMP numbers.

[*Translation*]

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: We will try to get that for you. I am not sure we have the information for 1990, but we'll look. We'll go back as far as we can.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay.

I would also like to have the data for 2000 to 2010, for each year.

A/Commr Daniel Dubeau: Yes.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gravelle.

If I'm not mistaken, Ms. Guay, we will end our meeting with you.

Ms. Monique Guay: It's kind of you to let me conclude the meeting, Mr. Chair.

I will make two comments. The first deals with the fact that Mr. Shields is not here. We asked him to attend because he was the

one responsible for communications. He was also the one responsible for choosing Google as a translation tool. This didn't seem to bother him in the least, despite an absolutely horrible translation. And he still has his job, which concerns us. We would have had a lot of questions to ask him.

The second thing is that I would like you to get back to us with the documentation, if you can't join us again physically. What I want is an action plan and you don't have one. You haven't shown anyone on the committee here this morning that you have a specific, definite and clear action plan that would make anyone say that you really wanted to get things under control. I would like you to give us a written action plan: on such-and-such a date, we did this; on such-and-such a date, we did that; we are hiring people, translators if necessary. You have only one translator for 10,000 people? She's going to burn out, if she hasn't already a bunch of times. It doesn't make sense.

Give us an action plan and show us that you really want to do something. I'm very unhappy today. As I leave this committee meeting, I am not convinced that you are going to do anything new, that the translation will change because you received one complaint and suddenly had a wake-up call. How many complaints will it take?

I would like you to give us a real action plan, that you send it to us here at the committee or come back and see us if necessary so that we can discuss it. This isn't what we did this morning. I find it lacking, and I hope that you really intend to do it. If you really intend to have a plan that will get things done, a plan that pushes ahead 40 years after the Official Languages Act was adopted, I will be the first to be happy and to congratulate you, but I can't do that today. And there you have it.

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

That concludes our meeting. I wanted to tell you this morning that Nicolas and Lucie are still with us and that Mr. David-Andrés Novoa replaced our clerk.

I would like to thank you for being here this morning. Thank you for the quality of the information that you provided to us. You will obviously be able to follow up with my team with regard to the information to be provided.

Thank you and have a good day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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