



House of Commons  
CANADA

## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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LANG • NUMBER 037 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, December 9, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**



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• (0855)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning to everyone and welcome to this 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[English]

This morning, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), we are studying the National Defence official languages program transformation model. We have the pleasure of having two witnesses.

[Translation]

We have with us Rear-Admiral Andrew Smith, who is the Chief of Military Personnel and Champion of Official Languages. Welcome Mr. Smith.

We also welcome back Colonel Louis Meloche, Commander of the Canadian Forces Base Borden.

Thank you for having accepted the committee's invitation. You have been briefed on the procedure, so without further ado, I would ask you to give your opening remarks. We will then move to a discussion with committee members.

**RAdm Andrew Smith (Chief of Military Personnel, Champion of Official Languages, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

Members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, I am Rear-Admiral Andy Smith. As stated, I am the chief of military personnel. I am also the Canadian Forces champion of official languages, and I assure you that it's a responsibility I take extremely seriously.

Today I am accompanied by Colonel Louis Meloche, who wears two hats, the first being commander of the Canadian Forces support training group, and the second being the base commander of Canadian Forces Base Borden.

[Translation]

He used to be Director of Official Languages.

[English]

I very much appreciate the opportunity to report on our progress since our last appearance before you, in November 2009, by providing you with an update on the implementation of National Defence's official languages program transformation model. I will also briefly discuss our annual review on official languages 2009-10

and the 2009-10 annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

[Translation]

Last year, we spoke about the progress achieved since we implemented the transformation model. Rest assured, ladies and gentlemen, that the program is continuing.

Since our appearance last year, we have continued with the active awareness campaign, which is intended to inform all of our military personnel and their dependents, as well as our civilian staff, of their language rights. We have published a policy dealing with parts VII of the Official Languages Act and are about to come out with other policies and directives. We have adapted the official languages performance measurement system, which helps us to monitor and assess our policies and programs, and provides us with a baseline upon which we can measure our progress.

More specifically, we have improved the first component that allows us to monitor the statistical data. We have also done wide-scale testing of the second component, which will allow us to measure dynamic data from bases and wings. The system will be rolled out in full by summer of 2012.

Finally, the department, under the stewardship of the Chief of the Defence Staff and deputy minister, completed a mid-term review of the model in order to update us on all the progress accomplished, clarify some of the model-related activities and provide level 1 executives, or associate deputy ministers, with a greater degree of precision.

The 2009-2010 National Defence Official Languages Annual Review assessed the quality of the active offer of services to the public. Only three National Defence organizations have an explicit obligation to communicate with and serve the public. These are the public affairs offices, search and rescue coordination centres and recruitment centres. In order to foster communications in both official languages, National Defence designated all of its recruitment centres as bilingual, which is over and above the legal requirements.

[English]

With respect to the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, on November 2, 2010, the Commissioner of Official Languages released volume II of his annual report. In it, he made reference to his audit of the Canadian Forces individual training and education system. The CF are firmly committed to implementing the corrective measures identified. In fact, in several cases corrective measures are already being applied, and we have a plan in place for the remaining recommendations.

With respect to engagement,

[Translation]

Allow me to ensure you that National Defence has worked hard on the official languages front. Much work was undertaken or completed last year. Our chiefs are at the heart of our commitment toward the Official Languages Act. It is thanks to them that progress can be achieved, and they are clear and resolute in their commitment, since they have all achieved the bilingualism level set out in the model for high-ranking officers.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, I would like to state that the fact that the official languages are now an integral part of the skills required for promotion to the highest ranks of the Canadian Forces remains without a doubt the strongest message that we have sent out within the organization up until now. For the first time in our history, the vast majority of officers and senior departmental executives have the profile required to lead our staff in both official languages.

• (0900)

[English]

In conclusion,

[Translation]

last year we told you that we were doing better than in the past; but that is even truer this year. We are continuing to achieve significant progress in many sectors. We are keeping up our efforts to resolve the systemic challenges. We are headed in the right direction. Our leadership is sound and motivated. Our plan is up-to-date, and our commitment remains unwavering.

[English]

I will gladly answer your questions once Colonel Meloche has said a few words.

*Merci.*

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Col Meloche, the floor is yours.

**Col Louis Meloche (Commander, Canadian Forces Base Borden, Department of National Defence):** Thank you, admiral.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

After being Director of Official Languages for the past three years, I assumed the command of the Canadian Forces Support Training Group and CFB Borden on May 28, 2010. I would like to start by outlining some of the accomplishments realized in the last year as they relate to both CFB Borden and the Canadian Forces as a whole.

[English]

As commander of CFB Borden, I made official languages one of my top priorities. I have involved the leadership and made one of my school commandants the official language champion for Base Borden.

All new personnel posted to CFB Borden are briefed on their OL rights and obligations. We have a good partnership with the translation bureau and now have more translators on site. I have

changed the name of the base newspaper from *Borden Citizen* to *Citoyen Borden Citizen*. Things are moving in the right direction.

I'll now touch on the Canadian Defence Academy and our training authority. The Canadian Defence Academy continues to provide second official language training. Since the last hearing, the number of registrations has exceeded 3,000. In this area, we should note that the number of candidates for the year-long language training has increased dramatically, from 91 in 2008-09 to 118 in 2009-10, and now we have 237 this year.

The three environments—the navy, army, and air force—are also making a lot of progress.

For example, the navy has produced naval training instruction that includes guidelines for the application of OL policy within the naval training system. Translation support to training establishments is one of the highest priorities for the Chief of Maritime Staff.

I'll give you another example, this time with the air force. We should note that all basic air maintenance courses for all four maintenance technician occupations, which represent 40% of the air force, are now available in both official languages.

The army continues to strive toward 100% of its training being offered in both official languages. All combat arms courseware is already available in this format.

[Translation]

You will recall that our communication strategy first focused on gaining acceptance of the functional approach by DND and Canadian Forces senior leaders and on securing their support. As mentioned earlier by RAdm Smith, we now have their support. In light of this, at the end of 2009, the Directorate of Official Languages shifted its focus to DND and CF managers, while continuing to educate CF members and civilian employees on their linguistic rights and obligations.

[English]

The directorate continues to raise OL awareness through other venues as well. A few examples are its participation in the orientation courses for new civilian employees, a kiosk at NDHQ during National Public Service Week, and a kiosk at the National Defence managers' network symposium. There, the Directorate of Official Languages conducted a workshop to enhance managers' general knowledge of the Official Languages Act and linguistic rights and obligations.

The directorate also created its own bilingual online newsletter, "Let's Talk—Parlons-en", after redesigning its Intranet site. Six well-received issues have been published in 2010.

As for CFB Borden, we organized again this year the very successful OL open house.

Outside of our regular OL mandate, National Defence has continued to provide assistance for special events. One example is the support provided to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver. In this case, I personally travelled to Vancouver to brief the commander and his team on matters related to the active offer and communication with and services to the public.

•(0905)

[Translation]

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, we are advancing on all fronts. Much progress has been accomplished and more is well underway, and it is despite the unprecedented high operational tempo sustained by the CF for the past five years. From my perspective, as Base Commander Borden, I remain very confident that we are headed in the right direction to fully integrate linguistic duality into our organizational culture.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, colonel.

I will open the floor up to members. I have been told that the Liberal Party has given its turn to the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Nadeau will therefore begin.

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

In my Parliament Hill office, I have a picture that shows my godfather, Maurice Nadeau, who was a member of the navy; his brother, Georges Nadeau, my uncle, who was a member of the airforce; and Benoit Nadeau, my father, who was a member of the army. All three fought during the Second World War. As for my uncle Fernand, he took part in the Korean War. All that to say that my mother, who was an excellent seamstress, would make clothes out of my father's military dress. I wore those clothes until the age of twelve and three-quarters.

I have always been interested in things military. That is probably why, at one point, I became an historian. I was literally fascinated by the Second World War. Still today, when I go to the Pointe-Gatineau Branch 58 of the Royal Canadian Legion and give a speech, I have something new to contribute to the combatants, whether they are veterans of the Second World War, Blue Helmets or soldiers who took part in peacekeeping operations. One of the members I met is Larry George. His father took part in the famous battle of Vimy Ridge. This shows how much I appreciate the armed forces.

There was a time when my father often would say that he spent more time battling the anglophones in Canada than the enemy during the war, because anglophones did not respect him. Conservative MP Mr. Hiebert was present when Mr. O'Connor gave a presentation, when he was Minister of National Defence. Given the lack of respect for francophones in the army, I must admit that I wanted to tell these people that I was extremely skeptical. Even if, after so many years, the Department of National Defence has established a program to assist francophone soldiers to feel at home in the Canadian Forces, I remain extremely skeptical.

Mr. Meloche and I have already met, but this is my first meeting with Mr. Smith. I am aware of the work and efforts put in by the Canadian Forces. There is a lot to be done. There have been many delays in this area. The issue of respect for the French fact dates back to the Crimean War. That was a long time ago, predating the First World War.

I would like to quote from an article that appeared in the June 3, 2010 issue of *Le Devoir*. That was not too long ago in the greater

scheme of things. In the article, which deals with one of Graham Fraser's reports, the following is said about the navy:

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, in Ottawa, did not conduct a study on the navy per se but did examine the issue of language of instruction for professional trades in the Canadian Forces. Already at the initial learning stage, English is excessively dominant, particularly in the navy. The report by commissioner Graham Fraser, which was tabled yesterday, mentions the discomfort felt by recruits.

I will submit a copy of the article once I am done. I would also like to quote the following statements by francophone soldiers:

"When I studied in English, my grades were not as good. That almost gave me an inferiority complex," it states. Or : "I pursued my training in my second official language because I had no choice, people in the navy speak English."

The article also states the following:

The officers explained to the investigators that the students had to learn in English because of the conventions of the International Maritime Organization, which standardized the external maritime communications on board ships. It would therefore be safer to learn everything in English.

In his report, Mr. Fraser replied that was completely false, and the article quotes his comments on the subject:

"[...] But we do not believe the same applies when students learn theory and basic notions in these fields." He goes on to state: "[...] Learning in one's mother tongue, enhanced with an English technical vocabulary where necessary, would ensure that francophones are not disadvantaged in their learning."

Learning technical terms in English is one thing, but the real problem is when people cannot study in French. That example concerned the navy.

Can you tell me what you're doing in that regard and how things are progressing? When Mr. Semianiw appeared, I gave a concrete example. I am all ears.

•(0910)

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

I experienced that in the navy for 31 years. External communications are done in the language of work designated by the unit.

With regard to training, I recently calculated that the Canadian Forces, through its Leadership and Recruit School and other advanced training centres, offered approximately 2,000 courses.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Are we still talking about the navy?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** No, that is altogether.

We do still have challenges to meet within the navy, but the basic courses are mainly given in members' first language. That said, not all advanced courses are given in their first language, but we are working hard to ensure that all courses will be.

Col Meloche mentioned that the navy had recently completed work on its naval instruction. Therefore, that is one of the navy's key objectives.

[English]

The navy is focused on doing this. But Mr. Chair,

[Translation]

I would like to reassure you that, onboard ships, French Canadians are free to talk with one another in the language of their choice. This is something I witnessed on numerous occasions. They can do so even if they are not on a ship that is designated as a French-language unit, even if it is a bilingual or anglophone unit.

The navy has some challenges to take up. We know that and we are working on it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Rear Admiral.

Mr. Nadeau, your uncle Maurice probably sailed on a ship that was built in Lévis at the Davie Shipyards.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I have no doubt about that.

**The Chair:** And he was onboard a very safe vessel.

We now move on to Mr. Bélanger.

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

Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for being here.

I have a rather simple question on the Official Languages Program Transformation Model. Is this initiative in effect from 2007 to 2012?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Yes.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Okay, and now we're coming to the end of 2010. Have you conducted a mid-term review?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Yes, we have recently done such a review. One of our challenges is to maintain the pace we had in 2007.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Has a report been done on that review?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Yes, a report was certainly produced.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Are you ready to share it with us?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Go ahead, Col Meloche.

**Col Louis Meloche:** Before my departure from the Official Languages Directorate, we published a document entitled *Mid-term Review of the National Defence Official Languages Program Transformation Model*. We reviewed all activities. We made an update on the situation to better identify the actions that needed to be taken before the model expires in 2012. The document was approved by the Chief of the Defence Staff and deputy minister. Yesterday, we were asked to provide a copy to our parliamentary affairs officials.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Could you provide the committee with a copy of that report.

**Col Louis Meloche:** Yes.

● (0915)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** So you will be sending it to us?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** We will send it to you through—

**Col Louis Meloche:** The clerk might want to speak to that.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Yes.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** What, has the clerk received it?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** We will have our liaison officers send it to you.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I apologize for not knowing the rank hierarchy within National Defence, but I would like to know what the equivalent position of a rear admiral is in the public service.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** In the public service—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Would that be an assistant deputy minister?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** That is correct, it is equivalent to the position of an assistant deputy minister.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Could you tell me if the Official Languages Act is integrated into National Defence objectives?

Each year the department establishes strategic objectives, which are included in its strategic planning. Now, is the Official Languages Act a component of that strategic planning?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** That is a good question. I can tell you that it is included, perhaps not directly, but certainly indirectly.

At National Defence, we are very proud of what we call a learning institution. We also support Canada's multiculturalism. I cannot state for a fact that the Official Languages Act is directly integrated into National Defence objectives. Perhaps Col Meloche could comment on the matter.

**Col Louis Meloche:** We have a strategic direction for official languages. Have we integrated all of the country's laws into the objectives of National Defence? The answer is no. You know very well that there are many.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Excuse me, Mr. Meloche, but I am not referring to every single law, but only to the Official Languages Act.

**Col Louis Meloche:** No, it is not included in the national objectives. The national objectives are the protection of Canada, international cooperation—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Is it included in your strategic planning?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Our model of transformation is our strategic plan as far as official languages are concerned.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It's your strategic plan for official languages, but how will it be integrated in your department?

I must admit that I have the impression that you have been delegated before the committee to tell us what we want to hear. In the past, I was an associate minister, so I am very familiar with the way a department operates. In fact, official languages is a bothersome and annoying issue. So, a department often finds people to send before a committee, and to tell them what it is thought they want to hear.

I would like to know whether this issue is integrated in the department's strategic planning. Is this issue integrated in your personal objectives?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Of course.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Is this issue integrated in the personal objectives of the chief of staff?

**Col Louis Meloche:** As an institution, we are accountable and we must produce an annual report. The Department of Defence's Strategic Plan is not put together in a vacuum. The difference between your time and what happens today, is that today there is a model of transformation which is based on leadership: the Chief of the Defence Staff sends a letter to all of his generals to instruct them that they must meet certain objectives and maintain them, otherwise they should start to think about retirement. In fact, we gave you a copy of this letter dated January 2009.

Therefore, I think that the issue is integrated into our everyday activities.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Could you tell me whether there is a performance bonus for senior officials in the department who are proficient in both official languages?

**Col Louis Meloche:** I don't know whether our civilian personnel receive such a bonus, but there are no performance bonuses any more for senior military officials.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** But they still apply on the civilian side for a deputy minister.

So you don't know whether these people receive performance bonuses when they reach official language objectives?

**Col Louis Meloche:** No, we don't know.

[English]

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** I'm just wondering if I can make one clarification there. I would say that with integration of the official languages piece in Defence, there is a significant network,

[Translation]

a network created through the chiefs of the environment.

• (0920)

[English]

It enables our strategic plan model to be implemented, so there are coordinators of official languages.

[Translation]

It's a very tight network

[English]

that we use to make sure the goals of the model are diffused through the organization.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** In your presentation, Mr. Smith, you did not give us any specific figures. But that's what I'm interested in, since figures are the best way to measure progress.

In your evaluation half-way through this process, do you have any figures?

**Col Louis Meloche:** In the half-way point review, there is a direction for the model of the plan. So we don't have any figures. If you want figures, I would be pleased to provide them to you.

**The Chair:** I would ask you to wait for the next turn to do so.

We will continue with Mr. Godin.

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

Welcome to all of you.

I would like to ask a couple of questions on the closing of the General Jean-V. Allard Commemorative Library, which is located at the Saint-Jean Garrison. The closing was announced for December 15. This library has 85,000 volumes and is used by approximately 3,000 students and employees.

How many of Canada's military sites have libraries?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** I cannot say for sure, sir, but there are libraries throughout the country, there's no doubt about that.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** How many military colleges do we have in Canada?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** We presently have two military colleges: the Royal Military College of Canada located in Kingston, Ontario, and the Royal Military College of Saint-Jean, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Does the Royal Military College in Kingston have a library?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Yes. I would like to point out that the General Jean-V. Allard Library is not located at the military college, it is located at the Saint-Jean Garrison. On the Saint-Jean base. There is a small difference between the two.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Are you closing the library in Kingston?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** No.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Why are you closing the library in Saint-Jean, the francophone library?

[English]

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** The question is a very good one. First of all, I would say that the question starts to speak to part VII of the Official Languages Act

[Translation]

regarding the preservation and the protection of minority community rights. We take this matter to heart and we recently made fairly significant progress in that regard.

I'm slowly coming to your question, sir.

[English]

We have had some very good successes since 2007 in looking after these minority community rights with

[Translation]

the Valcartier Military Family Resource Centre, which worked closely with Service Canada and its Job Bank.

[English]

We've had the joint personnel support units that have opened in the western provinces. Also, where there have been francophone concerns and no services available, we have collected and channeled those demands to make sure we have referral services available. Those are two examples.

With respect to

[*Translation*]

the General Jean-V. Allard Library, I would simply like to point out that it is not being closed; rather, it is being transformed from a library into a learning resources centre.

[*English*]

What I can say is that

[*Translation*]

I have learned that, since December 2, the General Jean-V. Allard Library was the subject of a complaint which was accepted by the Commissioner of Official Languages. To protect the integrity of the investigation, I cannot speak about it.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Excuse me, but I looked into that very matter. You are before the Standing Committee on Official Languages of Parliament. The only place where you can refuse to answer questions is before a court. The Official Languages Commissioner is not a judge, he is an officer of Parliament. We are not a court, and therefore you must answer the questions I put to you, please.

• (0925)

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that the General Jean-V. Allard Library does not fall under my responsibility, but that of the Chief of the Land Staff. This investigation comes as a result of a strategic review which began four years ago.

[*English*]

I don't know what else I can say to you, Monsieur. We're not going to close the library at

[*Translation*]

the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean, nor the one in Kingston.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That's not what I understood. The library is scheduled to close on December 15. Some people who are taking certain courses will still have the right to consult certain books, but others will not have that right any more. Not every student, nor anyone else generally, will have access to those books any more. The library is being closed.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** No.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Fine, then explain to me what is going on, otherwise we will have to, Mr. Chairman, call the Chief of the Land Staff to explain. Our request is very clear, namely that, at today's meeting, we wanted to discuss the college. Why do francophones still have to pay the price?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** No book will be discarded. The books in question will be offered either to libraries—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I did not ask that extra books be added. I am saying that there are 85,000 books in a library, which is scheduled to close on December 15. You are telling me that it will not be closed, but simply reorganized. Can you explain how this reorganization will be a good thing? What is going to be the difference between this library and the one in Kingston?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** I want to make sure that we are all on the same wavelength. There are libraries at the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean and at the one in Kingston. The library in question is located on the base in Saint-Jean, but not at the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It belongs to the Department of National Defence.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Surely.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Well, whether it is located on Saint-Jean Street or on Saint-Joseph Street, I really couldn't care less. All I am saying is that in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, there is a library for francophones which has 85,000 books, and that 3,000 students can use this library. I have received complaints from people who live in that area. Former members of the armed forces have sent me letters. They are telling me that what is happening is not right, that francophones will lose this library, whereas no other library is being closed anywhere else.

Last night I did a bit of research. It is not finished yet, but until now I have found 19 military sites in Canada which have libraries, and none of those is supposed to close. The only college which the government wanted to close, is the one in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and to transfer activities from that place to Kingston. Lastly, the government is boasting that the college in Saint-Jean is still operating, but the library will be closed—

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

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** —which is worth \$175,000.

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

We will continue our first round with the parliamentary secretary, Mr. Rickford.

[*English*]

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming today. I appreciate the important work you and your colleagues do across this country and in fact around the world. It's great that you are here today.

Rear-Admiral Smith,

[*Translation*]

two things come to mind. First, there are anglophones and francophones who would like to take training in their second language in the interest of advancing their military career. They might also want to do so for personal and other reasons. Second, there might be a problem, or a challenge, with regard to training, as Mr. Nadeau said earlier, as far as technical training is concerned in one or the other official language. In my opinion, once again, this basically means one thing, namely that the course material must be available in both official languages. This is essential if members of the Canadian Forces want to reach their language objectives.

Therefore, my first question is simple. Briefly, regarding courses at the Royal Military College in Kingston and the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean, will officer-cadets be able to take training in their second language in order to climb the ranks, and therefore improve their language skills, yes or no?

• (0930)

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** I just want to make sure that I understand the question. Officer cadets at the military college take their studies in their mother tongue, but they have to take training in their second language. This is part of their curriculum.



**Mr. Greg Rickford:** I'm very interested in the subject because I have some personal experience in that regard. I did a master's degree in business administration at Laval University. The course material for business finance came from the Kellogg School of Management and was in English. The subject was very sophisticated and complicated. In fact, the professor was a francophone who had studied in the United States. I studied the English text, of course. The courses were always given in French and the exam, which was a nightmare, was in French. So I always had to give a translation. It was a fairly complicated exercise. In fact, at one exam, I failed simply because I was unable to translate all of the information I had studied in preparation for the exam. At the final exam, I got a much better mark because I worked with the professor.

The problem was always that the information in that field was not available in French. So my question is simple. As you said, it is essential that the course material be available in both official languages if the Canadian Forces wish to meet their language objectives. However, Mr. Smith, with all due respect, according to the commissioner, all of the teaching institutions have problems with translation. Therefore, are these teaching institutions going to improve their planning practices and the way they establish priorities as far as translating all of the course materials is concerned, and are you going to start negotiating with the Translation Bureau to see whether the practice of simultaneously drafting internal documents in both official languages is feasible?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Thank you for your questions.

Mr. Chair, I mentioned earlier that nearly 2,000 courses are being offered on leadership and on technical matters in the Canadian Forces. It is true that these courses are not all available in both languages, but we are working very hard to make them available. We made substantial progress in this respect, especially since 2008, and we have been working in close collaboration with the Translation Bureau to meet our needs.

[English]

With that, I'll ask Colonel Meloche to expand on that issue.

[Translation]

**Col Louis Meloche:** We regularly meet with people from the Translation Bureau. For example, as the Commander of Borden and of the Canadian Forces Support Training Group, I met the people in charge of the program last Friday in my office. We use as many translators as the industry can provide. For instance, in Borden, 4 translators work for the schools, but there are also 36 other translators from the Translation Bureau who work exclusively on translating outlines of courses and other such instructional material used at Borden. These translators are not physically present in Borden. However, nowadays, in this virtual era, a translator does not have to be physically present because documents are transmitted by entirely electronic means.

With regard to the department as a whole, 162 employees of the Translation Bureau are busy translating manuals for courses as well as ordinary documents. We meet with them regularly and we refer to their notes to make sure that there is no redundancy. Frequently, documents have already been translated by a school, while similar courses are offered somewhere else.

Regarding the second part of the question on drafting documents for courses, some are drafted in French, others in English, depending on the instructor drafting them. The translations are made from English to French and from French to English.

● (0935)

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

Let us begin our second round table with Ms. Zarac.

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

I would like to continue with the issue of training. Among the 2,000 courses you are talking about, you mentioned those that deal with airplane maintenance. You said that these courses are fully bilingual and that 40% of the personnel takes them. Is the material that is offered within the framework of these courses fully bilingual?

**Col Louis Meloche:** Absolutely. When the course is available in both languages, the materials for the courses and the exams are available in both languages.

One thing should be clear. Often there are technical courses for which technical books are not available in French. This is why, in our plans for acquiring equipment, we acquire the copyrights for translating the manuals or we obtain the manual in both official languages.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** All right. You said that you were offering 2,000 courses. Among them, how many would you say are currently being offered in both languages? What would be the percentage?

**Col Louis Meloche:** It can vary depending on the topic.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Among the 2,000 courses, how many bilingual ones are there?

**Col Louis Meloche:** About 30% or 35% are bilingual.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** This means that a big percentage of the training that is offered is not offered in the student's language of choice.

**Col Louis Meloche:** With regard to course materials, there are also many courses—

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** You say that 2,000 courses are being offered and that among them only 35% are offered in both languages.

**Col Louis Meloche:** They are offered in both languages. However courses are often offered in English with what we call "francophone assistance". The course is offered in English, but we help francophone students by providing them with bilingual instructors.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** All right. However, the material is in only one language.

**Col Louis Meloche:** The material is in only one language, but the exams are always available in both languages.

We must also consider the fact that we have some catching up to do. In our transformation model, we gave the first priority to basic courses.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** I see that you do have many translators. When do you think that you will be able to offer all the courses in both languages?

**Col Louis Meloche:** The transformation model aims at providing all the courses that are given to the Canadian Forces in both official languages. However, we cannot obtain this result overnight.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** By what date will you be ready? What is your timeline?

**Col Louis Meloche:** 2015.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** 2015?

**Col Louis Meloche:** For example, in Borden, in September 2012, all the basic courses will be available in both official languages. In September 2015 all the courses offered at Borden will be available in both official languages.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Thank you.

I would like to discuss your bilingual meetings. I looked at the little brochure that you gave us with the address of a Web site. Is there a place where people can submit a complaint if they are not satisfied, if the suggestions are not followed?

**Col Louis Meloche:** There are two places where people can go to complain. In fact, with the Department of National Defence, there are three such places: people can address their superior in the chain of command, they can launch a complaint with Official Languages Commissioner, and we also have an internal mechanism for dealing with complaints that protects the identity of the person. Consequently, the answer to your question is yes.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Have you received any complaints about meetings that are not conducted in both languages within bilingual units?

**Col Louis Meloche:** Over the past year, I think that we might have had one.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Only one?

**Col Louis Meloche:** Yes.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Therefore, it is realistic. I am looking at your instruction handout. Under number 3, you say "remember that the presence of some unilingual participants does not prevent a bilingual meeting". Do you make sure that these unilingual persons can clearly understand what is being said at the meeting?

• (0940)

**Col Louis Meloche:** We have many awareness-raising sessions with managers and leaders. It is impossible for me to tell whether or not all the meetings in the Department of National Defence are conducted in compliance with the suggestions. I cannot possibly answer this question because I do not know how many meetings are being held. This is why it is important to have a committed leadership. Those who chair the meetings should be aware of their rights but above all they must be aware of their obligations.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Is there an obligation for those who chair meetings to be bilingual? Under number 4 it says "use a bilingual co-chair if necessary". Does this mean that the chair might not be able to speak both languages?

**Col Louis Meloche:** Yes, in some cases the chair is not bilingual. In some units, for example, bilingualism is not compulsory for every rank.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Let me come back to what you said earlier, namely that in the francophone unit you encourage the soldiers to address each other in their own language. It is very nice for them to speak to each other and it is very natural for them to use their own language, but if they have to deal with a supervisor, do they still have this possibility if they are in a francophone unit?

**Col Louis Meloche:** All our units have a language designation to determine their working language. For example in a francophone unit, the working language is French. If an anglophone is transferred to a francophone unit, if he has the required linguistic profile, this anglophone's working language in a francophone unit will be French.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you very much, Ms. Zarac.

Without further ado, let us continue with Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I heard what you said about the courses. When you say "bilingual courses", Mr. Meloche, do you mean courses that are in French and that can also be offered in English?

**Col Louis Meloche:** Precisely.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** You understand that when I went to the University of Ottawa, I was told:

[*English*]

"this bilingual course will be given in English",

[*Translation*]

I dropped that course. They had asked who spoke French in the classroom and two-thirds of the students raised their hand. Then they asked who did not speak French and that was the remaining third of the class. Thus the minority was satisfied in this case.

Thus, it is good to learn that these courses are offered in both French and in English. I wanted to be quite sure of this because I had been very disappointed with the U of Zero, excuse me, the U of Ottawa.

**A voice:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I am sorry, I upset somebody. After all I obtained three bachelor's degrees from there, but in French.

**Col Louis Meloche:** There are some people here whose alma mater is the University of Ottawa.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes, yes that is it. Nevertheless, I did obtain three bachelor's degrees from this university, let me repeat, in French.

There is another element, Mr. Meloche. You say that about 38% of the courses, if I understand correctly, are offered in French.

**Col Louis Meloche:** Yes.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** After a bit of personal research I believe that I have found out that the air force is the sector that needs the most work, because only 7% of the courses are being offered in French. This means that from 30 to 40 courses out of 500 are available in French, but the 460 to 470 other courses are not available in French. Is this true? Where do we stand with regard to aviation?

**Col Louis Meloche:** In the aviation sector, there is indeed work to be done, but you must understand that there is a great deal of technical material. Translating technical material is very time-consuming. However, if we compare the situation of three years ago with the situation today, with the momentum and the number of translators that we have, we are headed in the right direction.

Another element, with regard to aviation, is that the technical aspect slows things down somewhat. A technical translation, there is no denying it, takes almost twice as long as an ordinary translation. That is how things are. For instance, if we take the courses offered by the army, all the courses on combat weapons, courses for infantry, for armoured cars, artillery, all those courses, the entire range from the rank of private to the officers' ranks, are available in both official languages.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Let me continue, Mr. Meloche.

I know that this is a different subject matter, but we hear a great deal about helicopters for the Canadian army. We hear that 43 helicopters will be delivered within the coming five or seven years. Had we made headway at this rate during the Second World War, probably we would have never finished it, if we had to wait between five and seven years before obtaining fighter planes. Hence, I hope that it is not the same pattern when it comes to translating courses.

With regard to the closure of the General-Jean-V.-Allard Memorial Library, I want you to know that I too, wrote a letter of complaint to the Official Languages Commissioner. This library serves some 3,000 employees and students after all. This letter states:

Many people consider that the closure of the library in Saint-Jean is something that goes against all the efforts that are being made to give the francophone military personnel a cultural environment which, we must admit, is [already] the poor relative of the Department of National Defence.

Therefore, this closure is not a good idea. Let me continue:

Many members of the civil and military personnel have expressed their dissatisfaction to us [...]

Right now, I am sharing with you the letter that I wrote the commissioner. I am not making any of this up.

French teachers who teach French as a first language and as a second language in the language school of the Saint-Jean Garrison are upset. I also am upset to hear this. I know that Saint-Jean, in the Vallée-du-Richelieu, used to be a bastion of the patriots. If there is a nationalist environment in Quebec, that is the place, and I find it unacceptable that you should close the library or that you should cut off or even reduce access to the library, and I want you to know that.

Earlier, you answered some questions regarding this subject, but please do take this aspect into consideration.

Let me finish with the official languages commissioner's report for 2008-2009, which has some very good news on page 30. Mr. Natynchuk had written to general officers of the Canadian Forces—I will not name all the titles because you know them better than I do—and the commissioner said:

More specifically, he reminded general officers that they should not expect to be promoted if they are unable to reach the CBC level in their second language by the date specified in National Defence's Official Languages Program.

If I am not mistaken, the cut-off date was December 2010, and I hope that this still holds.

● (0945)

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** It still holds, but it applies to the rank of major-general and ranks above that, namely the ranks that wear two stars and more, as of December 31, 2010.

**The Chair:** It is written: "[...] for generals of the first, the second or the third echelon, will be attained at the latest in December 2011." Is this accurate?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Yes, December 2011. However, in the case of those who wear two or more stars, it already applies. In the case of those who wear one star, the brigadiers-general and the commodores, it begins on December 31—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** In two weeks.

**The Chair:** Do you know how many people will be subject to this directive in December 2010 and in December 2011?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I am being polite, Mr. Chair, but you're not using a part of my allocated time, are you?

**The Chair:** In fact, your time is up, Mr. Nadeau. I will reserve your question.

Now let us go on to another committee member, please.

**Col Louis Meloche:** I could give you some figures, however these are progressive cut-off dates, to use your term. For example, to be more accurate, it was December 2009 for the majors-general, and for the brigadiers-general, it will be in December 2011. Thus, from the first of January 2012 onward, all the generals of the Canadian Forces will have to have obtained and will have to maintain the CBC profile. That is the directive from the Chief of the Defence Staff.

Just to give you an idea, I would like to emphasize that currently we are attaining the objectives that we should be attaining. However, with regard to the brigadiers-general that belong to the next targeted group, 60% of them had the CBC profile in 2008-2009. More recently, on October 31 of this year, we have attained 77%. This shows that a 17% increase has already been achieved. Their deadline is December 2011. Thus, we are still on track and making good progress.

**The Chair:** You are confirming this morning that the December 2010 goal has been reached. So superior officers are complying with the requirements.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** That was December 2009, for those with two stars and up.

**The Chair:** So, it is already in force.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Exactly.

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

We'll continue with Mr. Généreux.

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

Good day, gentlemen.

The St. Jean military base was reopened by the Conservatives a few years ago. Would this military base be considered to facilitate the recruitment of francophone members to the forces? Has it always been a facilitator for recruiting Canadian Forces staff?

I do not know if you understand my question. Currently there are approximately 3,000 people on the base.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** I'd simply like to draw a distinction between the St. Jean military base, where you have the St. Jean Canadian Forces Language School and the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School, and the St. Jean Royal Military College, which is elsewhere.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I would like to clarify a point raised by Mr. Godin on the library. You were referring to a bookstore and from time to time a library. Were you referring to the same thing?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** The library in question is the General-Jean-V.-Allard Commemorative Library, located on the base. After a period of strategic review there was a decision to transform it into a pedagogical resource centre. This period...

● (0950)

[English]

was really based on a usage survey. At the end of the day, one of the goals was to make sure that

[Translation]

the 85,000 books in question

[English]

were more readily accessible to the public. It was based on the usage study. I have not seen the study, but I'm led to understand that it was to make sure that the books were more accessible to the people who use them. So if they weren't being used at the base in Saint-Jean, what could be done to make sure these volumes were in a better place,

[Translation]

either in a municipal library, or at the St. Jean Royal Military College.

[English]

where they could be used and accessed more regularly?

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Chairman, would it be possible for the committee to obtain a rationale and explanation for the closure, without inviting another army witness?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** As the library falls within the army's purview, the Chief of the Land Staff will be able to give you a clearer answer to that question.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Why would the commissioner have given you an overall F grade in his analysis?

**Col Louis Meloche:** What are you referring to?

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I'm referring to the official languages commissioner.

**Col Louis Meloche:** We did not get an F. In fact, speaking of reports, we collaborated closely with the official languages commissioner's team for his report on individual instruction and education. If you read the commissioner's opening remarks, I think it is clear that there is close cooperation between the commissioner and ourselves. We work together to find solutions and solve systemic problems, as the rear-admiral said.

In his report, the commissioner even points to progress and encourages us to continue. Clearly the commissioner will check to

make sure that we are doing what we promised to do. With respect to the audit on individual instruction, we have an action plan. It is rigorously followed by the official languages director. So, we are progressing.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Smith, earlier on, you referred to pride. As far as I'm concerned this is a very important word. I would like you to tell us a little bit about being proud of a truly bilingual Canadian Forces, of everything you do and everything you are implementing so that this pride is felt among all the ranks.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** First of all, the Canadian Forces are a Canadian institution. Therefore, we have obligations pursuant to the Official Languages Act and our institution must be bilingual. Our leader's commitment shows that we take this matter to heart.

As I briefly mentioned to the chair before we began, when I enrolled, I did not speak a word of French. They taught me French and today, I'm bilingual.

Perhaps it wasn't so easy 30 years ago, but over the last 5 to 10 years, bilingualism and official languages have become an increasing part of the culture of the forces, especially thanks to the transformation model we implemented. Increasingly, people are taking this to heart. It is a matter of pride.

I'd like to point out that although I have a B.A. and two masters in engineering, I make greater use of my French skills than I do of those learned through these post-secondary studies. It is a matter of pride for me and for the senior ranks within the Canadian Forces.

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

Before we move to Mr. Godin, I'd like to ask a question of Col Meloche.

The commissioner noted that there was a shortage of instructors who are able to teach in French. I think you have already addressed this issue. Where do things stand today?

● (0955)

**Col Louis Meloche:** Things are going well. I mentioned some figures in my presentation. The number of individuals taking full-time language training has increased. To repeat the figures I mentioned, I would point out that we went from 91 to 237 people in this category from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011. That would be people taking full-time instruction, but you should also count those who are taking part-time training.

Moreover, as of the end of January, online language training will be available. It will be similar to what exists on the civilian market.

**The Chair:** Okay, but who is benefiting from this second language training?

**Col Louis Meloche:** Francophones and anglophones. Clearly in the case of French-language courses, francophones are teaching them.

**The Chair:** Ah, I understand: these are instructors who are getting second-language training.

**Col Louis Meloche:** Instructors and leaders.

**The Chair:** Very well, thank you.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Smith, you are indeed Chief of Military Personnel, correct?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** That is correct.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** So that would be all military personnel, right?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** As Chief of Military Personnel, I have the mandate to implement centralized policies in the area of human resources for Canadian Forces personnel.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That includes the official languages champion.

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** That is part of my duties.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I will read you some newspaper quotes. Again, as you will note, I am still referring to the library. I'm not giving up. They read as follows:

On the ever-sensitive issue of official languages within the armed forces, this decision has angered a number of teachers at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School on the site. This is where thousands of recruits spend their first eight weeks in training. It is also in St. Jean that officers from 60 countries come to take courses. Many of these military men and women take second-language training, either in French or English. They would use library documents for their training and research. [...]

Same message from Léon de Montigny, who retired three weeks ago, after having taught in Garrison Saint-Jean for 23 years. "A sound mind in a sound body, says the army. Well, a sound mind involves culture! For those who have a thirst for knowledge, to learn a language or anything else, what message are they getting from the library closure?" [...]

In a note to the military community, Col Daniel Genest, Commander of 5 Area Support Group says that cutbacks were inevitable. "The various streamlining initiatives involved determining what was essential rather than attempting to do everything with fewer resources"—this is what he wrote on September 29. Capt Philippe Boutin, Public Affairs Officer at Garrison Saint-Jean, says that the library transformed into a pedagogical resource centre for the language school. "All documents regarding languages will remain accessible"—this is what he said, yet he admits that military personnel not taking these types of courses will no longer have access to the services. "We have been thinking about this for four years, it was not an overnight decision. We feel the need no longer exists. We manage taxpayers' money, so we are not going to maintain something that is useless"—that is a quote from Capt Boutin.

Is the library useless?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** I must admit that libraries are always useful resources, wherever they may be.

[English]

What I will say to you is that with regard to the issue of the Allard library, we have every intention to cooperate fully—as we have always done—with the Commissioner of Official Languages to make sure the facts are put on the table with respect to the library, such that they can be considered in an objective and full manner, to make sure they are fully addressed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** So, I'm wondering why I received a letter from the Commissioner of Official Languages stating the following:

We had begun a facilitated complaint resolution process in the hope of obtaining results before the December 15, 2010 deadline, but we did not get the required cooperation from DND. Therefore, we will be proceeding to a formal investigation to rule on the merits of the complaint.

That is the absolute opposite of what you have just said.

• (1000)

[English]

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** As I said earlier, the library forms part of the Chief of the Land Staff's....

[Translation]

The Chief of the Land Staff is responsible for Garrison Saint-Jean.

[English]

I can't speak with respect to the observations of the commissioner directly. What I was told was that as of December 2 the commissioner has accepted the complaint, and we will participate fully in that, as we always do.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The departmental performance report makes no mention of official languages. Can you commit to including official languages in your next report?

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** The next report—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You do produce ministerial reports, right?

[English]

**RAdm Andrew Smith:** Our reports on plans and priorities, *oui*. What I will say is that the reports on plans and priorities are again something that is taken to heart inside the Canadian Forces and the department, which is

[Translation]

managed by the Vice-Chief.

[English]

I will certainly take your comments back and have a discussion with the vice-chief, because I'm not sure exactly where his direction is in that regard.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Col Louis Meloche:** We produce a report on official languages according to the model given to us by Treasury Board Secretariat. You may recall that the third objective under the transformation model consisted in implementing a performance management system. So, 150 performance indicators were established for the various parts of the act. We are testing this in certain areas so as to do a complete roll-out in the summer of 2012. That will be the crux of the report. If we were to include official languages in the Report on Plans and Priorities, it would probably not be as comprehensive as the 150 performance indicators.

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

This completes the first part of our meeting. We will suspend proceedings for a few minutes. We will then resume in camera and deal with committee business.

I would like to thank RAdm Smith. This was his first visit to the committee as Official Languages Champion. I also thank Mr. Meloche for his overview of the updates to the transformation model.

Thank you very much.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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