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Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0850)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): On this Thursday, October 27, 2011, I would like to welcome you to the ninth meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We are meeting pursuant to Standing Order 108 (3)(f) for the purpose of evaluating the Roadmap and improving programs and service delivery.

[English]

In front of us today we have the Quebec Community Groups Network, Madam Martin-Laforge, director general, and Mr. Thompson, director of policy, research and public affairs.

Before we begin with an opening 10-minute statement, I see that Mr. Bélanger would like to say something.

[Translation]

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

With your permission, I would like to table a notice of motion.

The Chair: You have a notice of motion.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes. I will read the motion in French and in English:

That since proficiency in both official languages was clearly indicated as essential in the notice of vacancy (*Canada Gazette*, Vol. 144, No 40) for the position of Auditor General of Canada, the Committee invite Mr. Michael Ferguson, Auditor General nominee, to be heard on his knowledge of both official languages.

[English]

That:

Since proficiency in both official languages was clearly indicated as essential in the notice of vacancy (*Canada Gazette*, Vol. 144, No. 40) for the position of Auditor General of Canada, the committee invite Mr. Michael Ferguson, Auditor General nominee, to be heard on his knowledge of both official languages.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Bélanger, for that notice of motion. The chair will ensure that it gets put onto the agenda for the next meeting.

Without further ado, we'll begin with a 10-minute opening statement from Madam Martin-Laforge.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge (Director General, Quebec Community Groups Network): Good morning, Mr. Chan, Monsieur Bélanger, Monsieur Godin, and members of the committee.

The Quebec Community Groups Network is pleased to have been invited to provide testimony today. We congratulate the committee for assuming a leadership role in shaping the Government of

Canada's official language strategy, following the road map report. We wish to offer our full support, and the support of the community sector serving Canada's English linguistic minority communities, the English-speaking community of Quebec, as you undertake your long-term study.

Listening to Canadians on issues pertaining to linguistic duality and the development of official language minority communities is fundamental. We have noted the increased efforts to consult our community, and we are hopeful that individual English-speaking Quebecers will experience positive results in the short-, medium-, and long-term. The Minister of Canadian Heritage has made himself available to meet with the QCGN twice in as many years and took the time to visit our community this summer and hear from our front-line community sector workers.

There have been demonstrable efforts to understand the specific challenges of our community by many elected officials. Opportunities for the issues and concerns of the English-speaking community of Quebec to be heard and included have also been made available through the continuing efforts of current parliamentarians like Monsieur Bélanger and Monsieur Godin, and previous House members like Monsieur Nadeau and others.

Our community is also deeply grateful for the ongoing support of your Senate colleagues. The Senate Standing Committee on Official Language's report, "The Vitality of Quebec's English-speaking Communities: From Myth to Reality" followed an historic visit to Quebec last fall. The report is a remarkable document, capturing the experience of living in our unique linguistic minority community. The Senate recently requested a government response to the report's recommendations by March 12, 2012.

We would also like to share with you the noticeable increase of effort made by federal departments and institutions in consulting with the English-speaking community of Quebec. From the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Canadian border security agency, it is clear there is a genuine interest within government to learn more about our community and find ways to enhance our vitality.

This welcomed change has been driven by three converging factors: the increased capacity of the English-speaking community to engage with the federal government; the untiring support of the Commissioner of Official Languages; and the thoughtful and practical support provided to QCGN and the community sector by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

We feel there is a genuine interest in our community from Parliament and the Government of Canada. We are also benefiting from an increasingly accurate and sophisticated understanding of the unique nature of our linguistic minority, a community that seeks integration with the majority in which it exists and whose communal focus is not the survival or protection of a language but the preservation and sustainability of our community.

Some on this committee may recall our comments in April 2010 testimony and appreciate that we have come some way in terms of gaining the opportunity to participate in the national discussion regarding Canada's official languages as an equal partner.

Committee members may also recall our frustration towards Canadian government strategies towards official languages that do not take into account our community's reality. For example, programs that depend on federal-provincial cooperation for the provision of services and community support are not developed with the realization that the Government of Quebec does not recognize the existence of an English-speaking minority community.

• (0855)

The effect of this is that services delivered within areas of provincial jurisdiction, like health, education, and employment, are done so at an individual level. This is seductively appealing, since it is easily managed and quantitatively measurable. Were the services provided in English or not? The problem is that it does little to support community vitality, the long-term capacity to provide services within institutions belonging to and governed by the community.

In some cases, the relationship between Ottawa and Quebec cuts off federal programs from our community completely. For example, programs within the current federal strategy, the road map, in areas of immigration, manpower development, and early childhood development are for all intents and purposes not accessible to our community, although some recent progress has been made in a very limited way.

We noted the testimony of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Official Languages Secretariat, during the committee's meeting on October 18. As the head of this secretariat, Monsieur Gauthier and his staff are playing a key role in the ongoing mid-term evaluation of the road map. We have communicated to the department that we remain very concerned that this evaluation, both at the individual department as well as at the horizontal level, will not properly reflect the impact of the road map on our community. The reasons are twofold and are of a logistical and systemic nature. The results, we fear, will provide unreliable data regarding the English-speaking community of Quebec for decision-makers and political leaders.

First, the evaluation process involved consultation with community sector organizations but was somewhat convoluted in its design from the beginning, and finally it was delayed by the election. I think maybe the election was one of the delays, but there are certainly other design delays. The resulting delays moved community consultations into the summer period, when a number of our organizations are either short-staffed or shut down completely in an effort to save money.

I talked about a logistical issue. Then there's a systemic issue.

Second, many of the programs being evaluated have little or no equivalent in Quebec. For example, \$20 million through a recruitment and integration of immigrants program—that's from CIC; \$13.5 million for the child care special project; \$12.5 million placed in the youth programs initiative. There are no equivalents in the road map for the English-speaking community.

While the English-speaking community has received a few thousand dollars from Citizenship and Immigration Canada for research, they remain reluctant to consider designing an ongoing initiative that will respond to the needs of renewal in our regions in Quebec. We have received nothing from the child care project, as I have mentioned, and we don't have a youth community sector group and therefore are unable to take advantage of the youth initiatives program.

These are not abstract problems. Canadians living in the English-speaking community of Quebec do not have access to some programs and services contained in the road map or consideration in the policy and program design of the millions of dollars that support official languages in regular funding streams. This community needs to be reassured that the road map's replacement strategy will contain more targeted efforts by the federal government and its partners in supporting the development and vitality of our community.

Earlier, we mentioned the Senate standing committee's recent report on the vitality of our community. The report contains 16 remarkable recommendations.

• (0900)

For the purposes of today's meeting we would draw your attention to recommendation 3 of the Senate report, which says:

(a) Urges all departments covered by the Roadmap (2008-2013), in consultation with the English-speaking communities, to review communications strategies for increasing awareness of the funding available in all regions of Quebec.

(b) Immediately review, in consultation with the English-speaking communities, the Accountability and Coordination Framework and establish specific criteria and indicators so that all federal institutions are able to take into account the specific needs of those communities.

(c) Require federal institutions involved in developing the next official languages strategy to consider these criteria as a means of identifying allocations to both official-language minority communities and explaining imbalances, if any.

This is really not an argument for more money; it is a call for designers of the next federal official languages strategy to realize that although Canada's English and French linguistic minority communities face a number of similar challenges, their political realities are vastly different and their community structures dissimilar. We've said it before: one size does not fit all.

We are convinced that the federal leadership responsible for official languages understands the English-speaking community of Quebec much better than it did when the road map or its predecessor was being designed. In fact, I think our community understands its needs better.

There seems to be an appetite within government departments and institutions to find positive measures to enhance our vitality. The momentum exists. Let us help each other seize this moment to ensure a healthy and sustainable English linguistic minority.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, madam.

We have 1 hour and 40 minutes for questions and comments.

We will begin with Mr. Godin.

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

[*English*]

I'd like to welcome Madame Martin-Laforge and Mr. Thompson here today. It's a great pleasure to have you at the committee. It is not the first time, and I think the relationship with the committee has been good in the past. We hope we can help your community, the minority in Quebec.

You were talking about the transfer of money. It's like a contract between the federal government and the provincial government on jurisdiction that really is not federal—it's provincial—like health care, education, and so on. I want to hear more from you about what voice the community should have in this regard.

I want to hear about it because we do have the same problem across the country within the francophone community. We complain, for example, that money is being sent in-province for the francophone minority, and francophones feel that the money is not coming in. We raised the question to the Commissioner of Official Languages this week, and the answer was that he's only there to investigate federal, not provincial, institutions. He had no authority at all.

I still believe the Commissioner of Official Languages could have gone to the minister in charge of a certain department and said, "Your department has sent money to a certain province. Are they not accountable for where the money went?" He could still have gone to the federal department to get the accountability, to see if the money went to the right place. The province has been complaining, people have been complaining, did the money go to the province, while in the community they don't feel they've had it.

I understand, Madame Martin-Laforge, that you're saying the same thing too. You're saying you feel that money goes to Quebec, but you don't feel it goes to the community where it was supposed to be sent. I'd like to hear more from you on that.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think the responsibility around accountability for federal money going into provincial jurisdictions could be a shared one. This is done at the political level and at the bureaucratic level.

In Quebec, we have had devolution of certain programs without rigorous consideration of the impact on the English-speaking community. We can go back as far as the manpower programs, the labour development programs. Quebec was the first one to have it devolved. Then there's immigration, with Couture-Cullen.

So I think the responsibility is one thing. The community has a responsibility to make it understood to federal and provincial jurisdictions that there is an impact on them. If we are all concerned about the vitality of this minority community in Quebec, there should be accountability when the money comes in for where it goes and how it is expended. There have been many attempts by minority communities over the past many years to be at the table for consideration of where the money will go in education. There are other areas where money goes in and there's no consideration of what the impact will be.

On the other hand, I have to think that who gives the money starts to set the conditions. I don't want to be too harsh, but if the federal government is considering devolution, impact on the official language minority community should be considered.

● (0905)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes, but I don't think we're saying it's within the capacity of Quebec to decide about their education. It's the same thing in New Brunswick. I don't think you're saying that the federal government should get involved in education and how it's done. But if the money goes to the anglophone community, which is a minority, that community will decide with the government how the money will be spent in that community—not on the program, because the program is totally the responsibility of the province.

It's the same with health care. The federal government sends money to the province and says, "Okay, we're not going to tell you how many doctors you need, but we want the people to know when they go in that the service is free."

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I know a little bit about the education money that goes into a province, having worked elsewhere with that portfolio. On the money that comes in for a minority community in any province, there is a wish on behalf of the community to.... Let's pick a number and say that \$50 million goes to Quebec, for example. How is the accountability for that money done? Does the community see that the full \$50 million goes somewhere, or somewhere else?

The Senate had that in their report. They were worried that the money the federal government was expending in those areas for the minority community was not necessarily being used effectively.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The Commissioner of Official Languages said here on Tuesday that he spoke to some minister in the province who said, "When the money comes in, we decide where it goes." That's not very good news. According to part VII, the government has the responsibility to promote the official language in a province where the minority exists, and the money goes to that group. It's not for the government to say, "Now I'm going to do what I want with it." It's not for roads; it's for education or health care. That's what was said here on Tuesday.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the witnesses for coming today. I am very pleased to be able to ask you a few questions today, especially because in my riding, 40% of the population have ancestors who came from anglophone communities. In fact, there was considerable Irish and Scottish immigration in the 1800s, from 1820 to 1870. Both our communities, the francophone and anglophone communities, are an integral part of the history of our riding and our country. We have experienced a positive history of integration over the course of generations. Today, every family includes a descendant of anglophone communities. This is a beautiful love story within our party and within our beautiful country.

You stated earlier that needs differ amongst francophone minority groups and anglophone minority groups. What are the specific needs of minority anglophone groups, such as the one in my riding, in terms of seniors, women and youth?

• (0910)

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: You mentioned seniors. It is clear that seniors are a priority. Statistics show that the anglophone population is aging faster in Quebec than elsewhere in the country.

There are efforts underway to create a seniors' network in order to determine what can be done in Quebec, from a strategic perspective, for anglophone seniors. Traditionally, anglophone seniors, because of the generation they belong to, are not as bilingual as young people. These seniors are 55 years or older.

We are seeing seniors go back to the regions they come from. They are retiring. They went to Toronto or elsewhere in Canada and now they are coming back to the regions they come from. They are not particularly bilingual. These are Canadians who left for various reasons and who are now coming home, to Quebec, but they do not have a very proficient level of bilingualism. This is creating pressure on health services and other services. It is important that we give them a strong network so that they are able to stay where they have chosen to come back to, whether that be Thetford Mines or Gaspésie.

At the other end of the spectrum are young people. Something that is important for our communities is the renewal of our population. People leave, people come back. We cannot chain our young people to a basement and keep them there, but attachment to community is important. There is a strong community in Thetford Mines. Whether the community is anglophone or francophone is irrelevant but the attachment to community is important. It is important that people see that they can come back to their communities and have access to services in their mother tongue.

There are many other issues, but they often revolve around these two target groups, that is, young people and seniors, and their feeling of belonging to their communities in their regions in Quebec.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I like what you are saying because that is the reality. In my riding, several people left when they were young simply because there were 12, 13 or 14 of them per home. These individuals went to work in other areas of Canada.

I know a man in my riding who came back from Alberta where he had spent 40 years of his life. He came back with his brother to the family farm where he was born. He reintegrated into his community because of a feeling of belonging. One never forgets one's roots. These individuals are truly proud and courageous. Your comments are very much appreciated. They reflect reality.

These people have a strong passion for their history. I think they are doing a lot to make their history known. Are you aware of any initiatives within these communities to showcase their history?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: A large number of our group of 38 member associations are in various regions. I hear stories on a daily basis about what is happening in Rouyn-Noranda, the Gaspé, or the Eastern Townships. These are individual stories that help make up communities that want to live on and

• (0915)

[*English*]

—you know, to live, play, and work in their community. How do you live, play, and work? How do you do everything that makes you a vital contributor to a community?

[*Translation*]

We hear some very interesting stories, stories from the heart. People are trying to find ways in these regions to retain these individuals, but also to give them a feeling of belonging in those regions.

[*English*]

I'm going to be a townshipper, or I'm going to be a person from Shawinigan, but I'm also going to be a Quebecker and a Canadian.

It's that level of attachment.

[*Translation*]

There are several individual projects in these communities that are contributing to this development.

The Chair: Very well, thank you.

Mr. Bélanger, you have the floor.

[*English*]

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

Madame Martin-Laforge and Monsieur Thompson, thank you for being here. Welcome.

Congratulations, by the way, on the Sheila and Victor Goldbloom awards that QCGN organized last weekend. I think we should note as a committee that Joan Ivory, Gemma Raeburn-Baynes, and Aline Visser, three stalwart members of the anglophone community of Quebec, were awarded the prize; well done.

My first question is not for you. Imagine that. My first question is for Mr. Gourde. It's a question I've asked him twice now. It is whether the evaluation of the road map that the department is now conducting will be made public. I hope to have an answer, because knowing whether or not it will be would be significant in determining how we conduct our hearings.

I wonder whether there is an answer.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger, for the question.

The department has told us that it is not able to provide us with the draft evaluation or mid-evaluation of the road map.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you mean that the work that is currently ongoing will not be shared with the public?

The Chair: That's what we've been told. We have made inquiries, and that's what we've been told.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: And is Mr. Gourde able to confirm that?

The Chair: I am able to tell you right now that I have confirmed it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Who told you this, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: It's not available. A number of people have told me that.

I have made my efforts, and the clerk has made his effort to try to obtain that information on the draft evaluation or the mid-evaluation of the road map by the department, and for a number of reasons it's not available.

However, we—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Well, it's not done yet, so I understand that it's not available. But when it's completed, will it be made available?

The Chair: We've been told it's not available. But the—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: And you won't tell us who told you that.

The Chair: But the other questions that you asked of the public servants who appeared in front of the committee will, I expect, be answered in due course.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

In May there was a *journée de dialogue*, which you attended, I believe. There was a report on those days. Were you sent that report?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is it something you're prepared to share with us—unless you've been told not to?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We have shared it with our community, so—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay. I haven't seen it, so I'd love to be able to get a copy of it.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We've shared it with our community. It's available.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That's great. Is it on your website?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I don't think it's on our website, but it was shared with the people who attended, Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes, I understand that, but we were not invited to attend.

The Chair: Madame Martin-Laforge, if you want to provide a copy to the clerk, I'll ensure that it is distributed in both languages to all the members of the committee.

• (0920)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We'll do that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Can you tell us what is included? In one minute, can you tell us the gist of it?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The event was a good opportunity for people to come forward and to hear from different departments what had been done. If I may say so, it was at a very high level. To say that we learned anything new—we who work in this area all the time—would be probably stretching it a bit. It was a confirmation of what the departments were doing. I don't think there was anything...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: We are supposed to be working towards perhaps another road map. The current one involves 15 departments. There are 80 departments and 120 agencies or so. Which ones are not included now that should be included, according to QCGN, in the next version, if there is to be one?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: You know, Monsieur Bélanger, I'm not sure that we would go after many other departments. I think we need to focus on the departments that are doing a good job.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think that Health has been incredibly important to us in this work. HRSDC is contributing in different ways.

If I might go one step further into a department, if I were looking to connect to Monsieur Gourde's comment earlier about trying to find a specific initiative around seniors, I might look to HRSDC, which has a stronger alignment with their strategic directions around seniors.

For the English-speaking community, it's to go deeper into those departments that would have, in their strategic orientation, something that could help us out around seniors, around youth, around immigration, and the rural secretariat, for example.

If I have a couple of minutes, I'd like to say that in our regions we did some review of what immigrants could bring to the regions. While in some regions it's pretty good, and the immigrants and CIC could bring us something, there's another piece that could bring us even more, concerning migrants—people coming from other places in Canada. It would be the renewal of our regions with people coming from elsewhere in Canada.

We are looking more specifically within our priorities at which departments within their core—from their regular funding currently—could give us something.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: How much time do I have left?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

You mentioned that there are a couple of things lacking—literacy, early childhood services.

Could you focus on the early childhood services, please?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We don't know a lot about early childhood services. There's work being done in our school boards around early childhood services, but we need more research around what it means to be a little person in a bilingual context, research around attachment and identity and how that attachment could continue throughout their formative years, how it could contribute to the vitality of the community. We don't have a lot of knowledge.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Have you asked the humanities research council to help you on that front?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Yes...I mean, directly, maybe we haven't, but I think it's a question of having the resources to ask—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Have you asked them?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: No, we haven't asked them—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Would you consider doing it?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Absolutely.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: They too have a responsibility under the Official Languages Act. And it is one of the 120 agencies out there.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: And that scanning is really important for us. Thank you.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: My time is up for now.

• (0925)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Galipeau.

[Translation]

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

[English]

Welcome to this committee today, both of you.

I'm a francophone from Ontario, and many of my interests are the same as those that English-speaking people in Quebec have.

I have followed closely the anxieties you've had to deal with, going as far back as Bill 22. Our anxieties go further than that. I wasn't there when *Règlement 17* was brought forward—

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Was that in 1917?

Mr. Royal Galipeau: No, I think it was 1912.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Was it 1912? I was off by a few years.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: But I certainly remember Bill C-22, and Bill C-63 before that. I think the federal government over the decades has helped minority linguistic groups to improve their services and all that.

I have a concern about what's done with taxpayers' money, i.e., how much of it is focused on services to the communities and how much of it is for public relations and lobbying and those different things. So I'm going to ask you some specific questions having to do with money, if you don't mind.

What's your annual budget?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Well, it varies from one year to the next.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Let's find out about this year.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: This year we have core funding from Canadian Heritage; we have a grant from Canadian Heritage—

Mr. Royal Galipeau: What's your annual budget?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Our projected annual budget for this year is over \$1 million.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: How much of that comes from the taxpayers of Canada?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would say almost 100%—that includes the provincial government and the federal government.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: How much of it is from the taxpayers of Canada and how much of it is from the taxpayers of Quebec?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I wasn't making a distinction, Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I know. How much of it comes from the federal government?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would say the lion's share, about 90%.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: So there's \$1 million. How much of it is spent on services to help English-speaking seniors, youths, and women, and how much of it is spent on representation?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: At the direct services level, our priority at the QCGN in the last couple of years has been seniors. We have worked very hard, with government money from the province, to form a network of seniors. So we are working, not directly, with Jane Martin, who is a senior looking for something for her husband. But we worked with a group like Contactivity, which works directly with seniors who believe there needs to be more work done at the strategic level to have their voices heard.

So we don't work directly with Jane Martin, the woman who wants help for her Alzheimer's husband, but with the organization that helps Jane Doe get increased help for her husband with Alzheimer's.... For example, one of the co-chairs of our seniors' network is Mrs. Sheila Goldbloom, who is on the Conseil des aînés. They are preoccupied with individual services to Canadians, to Quebecers. So we work with those people.

• (0930)

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I thank you.

The current road map is going to expire, so we're now planning a new road map. I hope we will be able to identify where we did well and where we could improve. Let's hope we don't find too many places where we did no good.

In what ways do you think we can do more good in the next road map?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would like to link it to your previous question about individuals. The model for our health network in Quebec is access to health promotion. They have done some incredibly important work with the provincial government around the promotion of access to health, which allows for individuals to get better access. So I would suggest to you that bringing services in, actually helping access, to understanding health services promotion....

Employability is another one. Seniors is an interesting subject, because being a senior is not just about getting older. For our generation, we don't need just health services; we want access to second jobs and access to arts and culture in our own regions.

So it's about the individual, I would agree with you, but the mobilization of those individuals within a community.

[Translation]

Mr. Royal Galipeau: How much time do I have left, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: Your time is up.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, madam.

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

[English]

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Thank you very much, and I agree with my colleagues in welcoming you this morning.

Just to build on Mr. Galipeau's question, when he asked about your budget, how much of a staff do you have with that budget?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: On a good day we have five full-time equivalents.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Okay. There are a couple of comments you made in your remarks that I would like some clarification on. First of all, what is the population of anglophones in a minority situation in Quebec? What's the number?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Statistics Canada gives us close to a million English speakers.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: The majority of them are in Montreal West Island, or are there other significant pockets?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The person who does the stats in the office....

Mr. Stephen Thompson (Director, Policy, Research and Public Affairs, Quebec Community Groups Network): If your question is based on the Government of Canada's usual definition of the official language community, which would be folks in Quebec whose first official language is English, there are about 950,000 of us—roughly equivalent to the number of francophones who live outside of Quebec. About 585,000 live within the Montreal census metropolitan area—Montreal and *les environs*, the suburbs of Montreal. The rest live in what we call the regions. So folks today, if you are not familiar with our community, when we refer to the regions, we're talking about members of our community who live outside of Montreal.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Of the 980,000, how many would you say are bilingual, or do you have that?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: It depends on the age group, sir. For our population under 40, it's over 70%. For our population over 40, it's about 65%, and then it goes down as folks get older.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: One thing you mentioned was that the information you gathered was either inaccurate or wasn't complete—the information on the statistics about the anglophones in a minority situation. Can you tell me why that is?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I'm not sure....

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I think that was a comment you made

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would—

Mr. Guy Lauzon: It wasn't reliable, basically, is what you said?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: There has not been a lot of study of the English-speaking community of Quebec, traditionally. You know, the English-speaking community of Quebec, until relatively recently, in the last 15 to 20 years, didn't even see themselves as a minority. That's an observation; it's neither good nor bad. But coming out of 40 years ago, they didn't see themselves as a minority. Often the English-speaking community is kind of lumped together with the majority in the rest of Canada, as in, you know, "The anglophones think this..." We see it in the newspapers all the time. There is not a lot of specific study on the effects of being an English-speaking minority within Quebec.

• (0935)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Because of time constraints, I just want to pursue this a little further.

If you have a problem, first of all, you have to identify the problem and the severity of the problem. You mentioned in another part of your comments that different communities require different solutions and different services. If the information you've gathered is incomplete or inaccurate, probably your solutions are not going to be very valid.

I'm not trying to tell you how to do your business. But has there been some consideration given to getting the facts and identifying the problem? Maybe the question is how much of this \$1 million goes to ascertaining what the needs are.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: We should be clear on what it is we're talking about. There is an academic community in Canada that studies minority language communities. You can make an academic career out of that, but not out of studying the English-speaking community of Quebec. There is no place where you can go. There is no English-speaking community of Quebec studies program in any university, so there is no academic career to be had.

The research tradition is on the francophone minority in the rest of Canada. That's what we're talking about. What happens is that research simply gets applied to us. It's just copied and pasted and applied to us. Part of our job, as the QCGN and other organizations within the community, such as QUESCREN, the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network at Concordia University, is to try to create an academic interest, a research interest, in studying our community so that we can come up with more accurate information.

We have excellent sources of information about our community in relation to access to health care and access to services. Statistics Canada produced a profile of our community last year, which is extremely accurate. What we are talking about, though, are when assumptions are made about our community based on the experience of the French minority. That's what we're talking about.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

[Translation]

Mr. Aubin, you have the floor.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Mr. Thompson. It is a pleasure to have you here again.

Ms. Martin-Laforge, allow me to say that it is a pleasure to put a face to the name because our first conversation was over the phone. Thank you for coming.

We started considering the roadmap last week or the week before. It is probably by virtue of my profession that I am very interested in methodology. It seems to me that before considering another roadmap, we should attempt to learn the most from the information that already exists. I think there are a certain number of inconsistencies within the evaluation process, one of those being that each department can develop their own evaluation process. I am having trouble imagining how, at higher levels, one will be able to measure these various evaluations and draw any conclusions from them. If my information is correct, you recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage develop an overall evaluation methodology in order to ensure that all departments take the priorities of anglophone communities in Quebec into account. In your opinion, has such a methodology been established? Have you been consulted on the methodology that will be used? Do you have any idea what it will look like?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: In terms of an overall evaluation, this is appropriate only when there are key questions the departments have to respond to before undertaking their own evaluations. The difficulty with anglophone communities is that each initiative has been experienced differently. The same applies to health. In terms of developing an evaluation, there was an understanding of the situation in Quebec and how this procedure was going to take place. In terms of the other evaluations, either the situation was not taken into account or it was never even raised. You would know because you are studying this that the content of a program is used as the basis of an evaluation. If there are any cracks in the process, the evaluation will not take some things into account. Therefore, if the evaluation is about

• (0940)

[English]

child care, for example, well, the English-speaking community wasn't even in that piece of work. So they're not going to consider that there was a gap in the piece.

My concern, and our concern in the English-speaking community, is that where we have been included in the design of the program—properly included—the chances are pretty good that the department will come out with an understanding of where the gaps are.

Health is a good example. HRSDC, with the enabling fund, is another example. There are places where a quid pro quo within an initiative makes it easy. But in places where there's no quid pro quo, or there's nothing, or we haven't been consulted, or we haven't said that we needed something—and it could be that, too—then they have a problem.

[Translation]

It is as easy as saying there is no information on how much money, within the context of a program, is allocated to the minority anglophone community and how much is allocated elsewhere. It is easier to tell for some programs, especially health programs, but it is very difficult for others.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

My next question is for the statistics enthusiast.

I would like to know if the elimination of the long-form census could cause a certain number of problems regarding the perception or the actual description of the anglophone community in Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Thompson: We attended a research conference that was sponsored by the Official Languages Secretariat on September 1, and Jean-Pierre Corbeil was there.

Those in minority languages will know who Jean-Pierre Corbeil is. He's the statistician at Statistics Canada who deals with our communities.

Monsieur Corbeil was asked that question, and he assured us at the conference that the information that would come out of Stats Canada would suit our needs.

So we've been assured by Monsieur Corbeil and Stats Canada that when it comes to the products they are going to be able to produce, he is confident in their integrity. That's what we've been told.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

Mr. Trottier.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Good morning. Thank you for appearing before us today.

I would like to know what the feedback has been on the current roadmap? It is important to have an update on what has been done to date. Then, perhaps we will be able to focus on the next version of this program.

Under the current roadmap, what services and spending have been the most useful for the anglophone community of Quebec?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: A new program put in place under the roadmap has been very positive for the English-speaking community. It is

[English]

the cultural development fund. If we had our hand up to say that it should be increased, that would be a very important one for our community. They've done some interesting things because they've brought arts culture into the regions. It's an important piece of work to democratize out of Montreal the artists and dance and so on.

So the cultural development fund was a new piece, at a modest amount of money, that I think our community would be right behind.

There's also health, for sure. There we can demonstrate even more easily the impact on individuals.

I think we can for arts and culture as well, because you have people in the regions who are clamouring to be able to partake in cultural activities. I think the enabling fund is....

There's also economic development. It is such an important piece in being sure that English-speaking community individuals can go to work, can have work, can stay. If there's no work, you don't stay.

So economic development is really important.

• (0945)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Could you give some more specific examples of economic development and what that means? It sounds very broad. What are some very concrete examples? What would economic development mean for the anglophone community in Quebec?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would say there are at least two big pieces in that. There is employability....

I mentioned earlier that with the devolution of manpower programs—sorry, that's not the right word—seven or eight years ago, we have many young English-speaking people who are not getting access to employment services or counselling; all of the things that the old employment and immigration department used to do were devolved to the province.

I'll tell you that in the Gaspé, folks are starting to work to see if they can't get an employability centre for youth. And that's with the help of another one of our members, Youth Employment Services in Montreal. So the Montreal service provider is helping the regional service provider. That's a great example. And DEC is helping towards that. So employability is important, making sure people get into jobs where they don't have to come to Montreal to get access to counselling and things like that. Keeping people in their regions is really important.

I think the other piece would be around entrepreneurship. So if you can't find a job, you make your own job.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Good.

Well, on the other side of the ledger, are there things in the current road map that the Quebec anglophone community has not found very useful, that you would deem are not the best or wisest use of taxpayer dollars?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: You know, when you don't use it, you can't really talk about it.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Okay. Fair enough.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We have just so much time. So what we spend our time on is seeing what the priorities of the community are, and how we can get better understanding around that. So I'm not sure I can answer that question.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: No. That's fair enough.

I appreciate my colleague's earlier comments about jurisdictional challenges at times, when talking about services in health care, child care, and for seniors. Oftentimes these are services that are delivered by the province, or sometimes by the municipality. Is there a sense sometimes, though, that if funds are delivered to those other

jurisdictions for services for the anglophone community, that they're not actually translated directly into services? Are there gaps in terms of that model because of jurisdictional challenges in Quebec?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Yes, I would say so. Any time anybody downloads, there's the potential for somebody to miss out. I truly believe that by downloading from the feds to the province, and maybe then down to the municipalities, there are vulnerable communities that are forgotten. And I think the English-speaking community has been forgotten.

Even in municipalities in Quebec, it's still a fight for bilingual boroughs and bilingual municipalities to be recognized. I think that any kind of downloading has a really big impact.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Martin-Laforge.

Madame Michaud.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): First of all, I would like to thank our witnesses for coming today.

[*English*]

Of course, I'm a francophone from Quebec, but I will try to practise my English a tiny bit with you.

I do appreciate this presentation. It really helps with my comprehension of your communities. I'm from a military family, so I have been in contact with the English-speaking community in Quebec. But it's still always good to have your point of view.

[*Translation*]

We found out earlier that the mid-term report on the roadmap is not public yet. It is therefore rather difficult to assess how things have gone.

In his 2010-2011 annual report, the Commissioner of Official Languages made the following comment on the development of the roadmap:

[...] the government must ensure that the problems surrounding the creation of the Roadmap 2008-2013—rushed development and last-minute adoption—are avoided at all costs, especially for the good of the communities it affects.

Could you talk to us about the problems you encountered during the creation of the roadmap?

• (0950)

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: As I said earlier, the action plan that preceded the roadmap was not perfect either. Both programs are great initiatives. Regarding the creation of programs and initiatives within the roadmap, I am not criticizing the 800 million dollars spent under the action plan nor the

[English]

\$1.1 billion. There were systemic flaws in the first, and because of the evaluation mechanisms there were systemic flaws in the second. Although we were late again, for lots of different reasons, what we've been trying to say to Canadian Heritage since 2008 is let's be sure we get it right if there is a next one. It's not just about the action plan or road map either; we need to get it right for regular programming as well. If, God forbid, there would not be another priority-setting something, we still need to get it right in terms of the understanding of the needs of the English-speaking community with the design and delivery of regular programming.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I would like to continue in this same vein.

You said that some consultations were held, but maybe not enough, for the creation of programs. Did you participate in consultations to develop indicators that would measure the direct effect of programs? Or, again in this regard, were there shortcomings when it came to determining what it was important to measure in order to understand the effect of these programs on your communities?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: In terms of each of the programs, the people in the health care sector worked together, for example. People from each sector worked with those whose area was of interest to them. Horizontally, we gave advice on the highest indicators. However, for an indicator to remain high, it has to come from the base. It cannot work if nothing changes and the others do not provide answers.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Okay. That pretty well answers my question.

[English]

I have another question.

How much time do I have left?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: You felt that Quebec's English-speaking community seemed somewhat forgotten in the road map, because it talks about larger programs that may not have equivalents in Quebec. When the next official road map is created, what does your community need to become better represented?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: There are some wins in Quebec around the English-speaking community. In the region where Mr. Gourde comes from, Quebec City, the English-speaking population is seen as a positive part of the community. There are economic benefits to having an English-speaking community, and benefits in terms of attracting and retaining immigrants to the regions.

I'm trying to say that there are benefits to Quebec for having an English minority. The discussion must begin when you plan the follow-on to the road map. If you're talking about our community, the discussion must be had with Quebec: what are we going to do together for the English-speaking community of Quebec? If that is not done, we will wind up again with a road map that does not give our community access to programs, for example, in immigration, childhood, manpower, etc.

There must be talks; there must be a bilateral understanding between the federal and provincial governments before support to our community is considered.

• (0955)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mrs. Martin-Laforge and Mr. Thompson, welcome to the committee.

I noted two things that you said. First of all, you said that the use of the language was an example of commitment to the community. This type of commitment is characteristic of a community's development.

You also said that you emphasize economic development. In addition, you said that our minister has demonstrated commitment. There is no doubt, this government is really emphasizing bilingualism and the development of minority communities.

I am an anglophone from British Columbia who makes an effort to speak French. I was very proud of our minister, during the last Olympic Games, which were held in the riding I represent. Both official languages were represented. When the presence of both languages was lacking, the minister took action to ensure that French was spoken during the closing ceremony.

The members of this committee have made the same type of commitment. I think that every committee member likes what you are doing and what the minority communities in their region are doing.

What do we need to do to have a roadmap, without any commitment from the government?

[English]

What would it take to get you to the place where you've done so well that we don't need government involvement anymore, to the point where the community engagement and the economic development make linguistic robustness and strength a theme that transcends our government?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I'm an optimist. I have to say that. I am an optimist, and I would like to see a day where the English-speaking community.... I won't speak for the French,

[Translation]

francophones outside of Quebec.

[English]

I could speak for francophones in Quebec, but let me just speak for the English-speaking here.

I'm an optimist to say that we will be, 15 years down the road, in a place where the threat of an English-speaking minority in Quebec will not be considered the current threat. It will not be considered a threat in 15 years. That will take 15 years of working, finding common areas to work on for our community within the Government of Quebec, where we can demonstrate that if you take something away from somebody else, it doesn't take it away from everybody, that we can work together, that we are a contributing group, that a strong English-speaking community is not a threat to the francophones.

I've lived in Toronto as an anglophone and I didn't feel part of Toronto. I'm back in Quebec. I'm a Quebecker. I'm an anglophone from Quebec. I don't feel part of...

Lots of people don't understand what that feels like, to live in Quebec and be an anglophone, to go to Toronto and not feel part of Toronto and the rest of Canada. I love B.C., but I'm not.... I'm an anglophone Quebecker. I want to stay in Quebec, and I want to live and I don't want to feel like a threat.

I'm not atypical of my community. Even in my generation, I don't think I'm atypical. I think people want to see, in 15 years, that kind of living, without that political threat.

• (1000)

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: I really like the fact that you have a schedule and specific objectives.

You recently held a conference for anglophone seniors in Quebec. Let's go from the general to the specific. What was the purpose of this conference? Did many people attend the conference? How did this event further your cause so that, in 15 years' time, you will get the atmosphere that you were looking for?

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We've had two network events in the last eight months.

The conference brought the service providers together to see how, together, they could work better and find specific themes they could advance to the provincial government, because a lot of the things are under provincial jurisdiction. They wanted to make themselves heard and to change policies and programs so that the English-speaking seniors could get better service from the Province of Quebec.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Mr. Harris.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Thank you, and thank you very much for being here today.

I have one foot in both worlds, both of them in minority languages, being a franco-Ontarian from Toronto. My mother's family is mostly, nowadays, on the West Island of Montreal but comes from different areas of Quebec. But of course Montreal is where the best economic opportunities are for anglophones in Quebec currently.

I just want to talk first about the road map and the mid-term evaluation, or perhaps the lack thereof. As Mr. Bélanger brought up, there may not be anything public that comes out midway through.

Mr. Trottier brought up the question of whether there are things in the road map that aren't working very well. You yourself were talking about the need, perhaps, to focus on certain key issues rather than broadening the scope.

I just want to ask what your thoughts are on how useful a mid-term evaluation would be, because of course even as this road map is ongoing, the next one is being planned. How useful would it be for you and others to have that mid-term report so that you could start the planning?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The process for the mid-term report was done. A questionnaire was sent to key stakeholders. Many of these stakeholders are part of the QCGN. Others are not. I don't know what has been said by key stakeholders. I know anecdotally what the members tell us, and in specific sectors I know more than what is anecdotal. For example, in the health sector, CHSSN, Community Health and Social Services Network, asked us to help them with their evaluation, being a third-party evaluation.

I don't know what our sector said. I think that any best practice or any knowledge you can find out from a formative evaluation is good to know before you go into the formative evaluation. Good practice in evaluation is that you look at the formative and you work towards the summative. So the answer is yes.

Mr. Dan Harris: I definitely agree that more information is always a good thing, and certainly I've always tried to collect as much as possible.

Now, it has of course been mentioned that you get about \$1 million worth of funding per year from different levels of government, more or less. And of course this is to help represent virtually a million anglophones in Quebec. That works out to about a dollar a person, which is actually not a lot of money.

How do you think it would affect your ability to represent and advocate for the community should there be cutbacks to that money you receive?

• (1005)

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: When the QCGN did our environmental scan a couple of years ago toward our strategic planning exercise, over 70 people were interviewed. It was felt at the time that the QCGN provided a very important service to the members. We work at a member level, so when you talk about representing the members, we also work with the members around their own ability in their communities, at the provincial level and at the federal level.

For example, the Senate committee came last year. A lot of our community members had never presented to the Senate, had not had that experience of presenting to the Senate. Ladies and gentlemen, if you've never done it before, it's a little unnerving. We helped our members prepare for the Senate so they could put forward their priorities, their challenges, and their concerns. Mr. Gourde, MCDC, Gaspé—these folks asked us for help to prepare. If we get cut, it's not about the QCGN representation; it's about our members having the ability to talk within their communities to their municipalities, provincial and federal...about their needs and challenges.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Good morning. Thank you very much for being here.

I have to say, your presentation and your presence here are very dear to my heart. I was born and raised in Montreal. I lived the first 26 years of my life there.

It's interesting. You say you lived in Toronto for a little while and never really felt part of Toronto.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Twenty-three years, and it was never home.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Obviously I'm just north of Toronto. I represent the riding of Richmond Hill and I'm very much a part of that community, and I feel a part of it, but be it ever so humble, there's no place like home. Certainly I feel I'm a Montrealer. I feel I'm a Quebecker, having grown up in an immigrant home, in a Greek home, primarily in the English community but very much a part of the bilingual fabric of Montreal.

I've heard the number of about a million English-speaking people in Quebec. I question that, because it's not the just the people who have English as their mother tongue. A lot of people are immigrants from ethnic communities who are moving to the country, and moving in the 1950s and the 1960s, the first language they learned when they came was English. If we put all those people together, I would suspect the number may be considerably higher than a million. Maybe, maybe not, but it certainly is as much of a challenge to find services in English in many parts of Quebec as it is to find French in other parts of Canada.

I take exception—and some of my colleagues may not share my view—when we refer to English Canadians or French Canadians as minority groups anywhere. I just don't like the word “minorities”. It's just a personal thing. I understand numbers; that's why we talk like that. It doesn't resonate well with me. To me, Canada is English and French, and it should be from coast to coast to coast. That's one of the reasons why I'm very happy to be part of this committee.

I want to talk a little bit about your conference. My colleague John Weston asked a few questions about it. Was it well-attended by seniors? What was the attendance at that conference?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Absolutely. In the spring, there were almost 100 people there, and the follow-up to it was a more focused conference, so we had about 30 to 40 people. That was deliberate. That was to focus in a bit more.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: As my colleague Dan Harris said, \$1 million is not an awful lot of money to communicate to over one million people. I see your role as making sure that people have access to services in the English language that they need. I would think that would be a major concern of seniors who have contributed their entire life to the country and their community as working citizens. Now they need some services that are vital to them.

Can you elaborate a little on what came out of the conference, in your experience, and what the key priorities would be of anglophone seniors in the province?

● (1010)

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: They want to know how to access, in their language, information about services. While government officials look for programs and services, seniors want to know where to go—and not only seniors, but caregivers. There is a big concern that they cannot understand well enough or get services because they don't know where they are.

As much as in Laval, where it's a growing English-speaking community, Vaudreuil-Soulanges is exploding in its English-speaking community. They want to know where the services are. They want to be able to attract people to give them services—for example, nurses, whether they be francophone or anglophone, as long as they can speak English and understand well enough to give the service.

It's interesting about seniors. It's anglophone seniors, but you're talking about Greek seniors. We had people from the Italian community, from the Greek community, and from the black community. So seniors are not about just the traditional Scottish English-speaking community; it's crosscutting in terms of who it helps.

I have to tell you something, if I have a second. Gemma Raeburn-Baynes was one of the winners in the little booklet I gave to you. She does a lot of work with youth and seniors. She's a volunteer *extraordinaire*. She said on TV, “When somebody recognizes you outside of your community, it's significant”. I found that fascinating. We are a community of communities in Quebec.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Correct. I totally agree with you.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: So our community of communities transcends just what we might look like today, so the Greek community, the Italian community—there were Greek people who represent Greek seniors, Italian seniors....

Thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

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

I will be sharing my time with my colleague, Mr. Aubin.

When you appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, you noted that “a number of initiatives in the roadmap do not have a component for the English-speaking communities of Quebec—for example, in the areas of literacy and child care.”

Mrs. Martin-Laforge, we travelled across the country. We met with minority francophone communities. We were surprised to see the programs in the communities. They were being provided thanks to roadmap money that had been sent to the provinces. The money was used to help support programs for literacy, early childhood services or keeping young people in their community. For example, Albertan families were able to have day care centres in their francophone schools. That ensured that the children attending the francophone day care would then attend the francophone school.

Unless I am mistaken, you seemed to be saying earlier that, in Quebec, this issue has not received attention.

Should the government proceed with another roadmap, would it be important, in your opinion, that consideration be given in Quebec to the issue of literacy, as has been done in all communities.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Often, it is difficult to implement a Canada-wide initiative in Quebec. It is because of the jurisdictional issues. So we are wondering how community initiatives under the roadmap can be offered on the ground.

Earlier, I said that the best practice for Quebec, in terms of the roadmap

[English]

—I'm sorry, English, French, *bilingue*.

They say we live longer and don't have Alzheimer's; I hope that's true.

• (1015)

The health model has been the best model for us. I don't know if folks in the committee will be seeing members of our community from the Community Health and Social Services Network, but that model has worked extremely well, to help the community, vitality, and individuals, to connect that very important...the individual and the community, and the connection to the province.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The other thing about the health agreement that's important is that it also answers questions of accountability. What we have here, then, is an agreement where federal money is coming into the province. The community has a say on where the money's going, and the community can track the money and work with the province. So this health agreement is really a model of how to support our community with federal money.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: I am still concerned about the evaluation of the current roadmap and I am particularly concerned about the next one. I know that you have prepared the Community Development Plan for English-speaking Communities in Quebec 2005-2010.

Do you have a new five-year plan that is about to be submitted? If so, could we have a copy?

In your opinion, how can we take the wishes contained in your five-year plan and link them to the next roadmap, if there is one?

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We are a bit in the catch-up phase on that.

[Translation]

We had a plan up until 2010. We asked that it be extended. Our members were in favour of extending it. We wanted to do some work in the community with respect to our longer-term priorities. Earlier, we talked about a five-year scenario. We can talk about the next 15 years. So, what will our priorities be over the next 15 years?

We obtained some money through a Canadian Heritage initiative. Unfortunately, there has been a bit of time lag. We will be holding an important conference in March in order to set priorities for the community.

At the moment, we are consulting across the province.

[English]

We call them roving consultations. We are right in the middle of doing consultations for a conference in mid-March that will bring together at least 100 people in the community to give priorities to the government.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Gourde.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Like you, earlier, I spoke about the importance of the anglophone community that comes from regions like mine. You talked about the economic importance, but I would also like to talk to you about the historical importance. Unfortunately, it is often forgotten in Quebec. These communities have made a difference at different times.

I would like to point out that, in 1995, during the referendum, contrary to what was reported, the 30,000 votes that were missing were perhaps in the Montreal region. This anglophone community quietly mobilized and voted massively in favour of keeping our country. This community made a big difference in the history of our country.

These people have never been recognized for their contribution. Simply and quietly, they showed, in democratic fashion, that they were attached to their country and that this was important to them. They made a big difference in the history of our country.

I am proud today to say this, because I felt this at the time. I was there, in 1995. I know this community, I know what they did had an impact on what we are today, a beautiful and great country.

Through our programs, do you think that we should be doing more studies on our history and on the history of these communities that are located everywhere, in Quebec and outside of Quebec?

• (1020)

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: When I mentioned a beautiful success story that was part of the roadmap, I was referring to the Cultural Development Fund. If there is something that we should keep, it would be the fund pertaining to schools. We have to be able to see how we can work in our schools to try to show young people the importance of their contribution to Quebec, Canadian and regional heritage.

We have a member from

[English]

the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, which does some fabulous work in Quebec with little museums in the Gaspé and in the Magdalen Islands. I was in the Magdalen Islands in September, and there are people there who are preserving their cultural heritage. The anglophones are doing wonderful work. It's not just to preserve the little church or the little museum. In the Magdalen Islands, there are more and more boats coming in, the big cruise ships. So there is cultural development. You get tourists coming in and you get employment, and this is really important for the economic development of the region. So with cultural development, *patri-moine*, you do it because it's important culturally and for a sense of identity for the community. But you also do it with an economic development mandate.

[Translation]

I am therefore completely in agreement with you when it comes to heritage and the development of culture. I have some very wonderful examples from the Magdalen Islands region.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Could you provide the committee with these examples?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would be pleased to do so.

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

Madame, you said you were an optimist, which brings to mind a phrase that I've often used: in society, both the optimist and the pessimist are required. One will invent the airplane and the other one the parachute. That's very much like Parliament. Government members tend to see things through an optimistic lens; opposition members will tend to see things through a pessimistic lens, and somehow Canadians are expected to see a balance out of that. Let's hope they do.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Monsieur Thompson, did anyone ask Mr. Corbeil the following question: If the two linguistic questions added to the short form as a result of the legal action undertaken by the FCFA had not been added to the short form, would he be in a position to provide the same kind of assurance as to the quality of the information? Was that question asked of Mr. Corbeil?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The question was not asked.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It should have been. Maybe we'll get a chance to ask him at some point if he appears before the committee.

On the matter of the Olympics, yes, it was a good show for two weeks, but that's two weeks, and 400,000 anglophones outside of Montreal, the ones you call from the regions, probably did not go. I understand the symbolic importance of the Olympics, but I also understand the daily importance to these 400,000 anglophones of access to education, access to early childhood services, and access to health services in their own language, especially the older folk, because you withdraw into your own mother tongue when you're at a certain stage in life and you're faced with certain illnesses. I know whereof I speak. I've had occasion to witness that in my family.

I want to put that in perspective. I don't denigrate the importance of what you said, Mr. Weston, but I don't think the comparison is a good one, and that's why we had a *feuille de route* and that's why we had an action plan.

• (1025)

The Chair: A point of clarification. This is not going to take from your time, but I think the numbers Mr. Thompson provided weren't entirely accurate. I looked up on my BlackBerry, because I thought it was odd that only 585,000 first official language spoken anglophones lived in the Montreal census metropolitan area. I looked it up on StatsCan. It's actually 801,000 out of a total of 995,000.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So 180,000 or so outside of the metropolitan census area. Thank you for getting the numbers.

The Chair: There are 194,000 outside of the census metropolitan area. To clarify, 995,000 first official language spoken are English anglophones in Quebec, of which 801,000 live in the Montreal census metropolitan area.

You have the floor, Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: How much time do I have left, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: You have two minutes left. I'll be generous—a generous two minutes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Oh, thank you.

Two questions. The midpoint evaluation of the action plan was made public. It's on the website. How do you feel about the midpoint evaluation of the *feuille de route* not being made public?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think it would be important to have access to best practices and information at a midpoint to make enlightened decisions. I would say this about anything.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

I have another question that is not related to the *feuille de route*. I don't know if it will be ruled out of order or not.

As parliamentarians, we will be asked in the fairly near future to deal with a bill that's now before the House, Bill C-315, I think is its number. Do you have an opinion on that bill, and, if so, are you prepared to share it with us?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The bill is under study at the QCGN. We have looked at previous bills from the Bloc and the NDP, and we are sensitive to the fact that it might be seen as an important *avancée* for the francophones in Quebec. Right now we are examining the impact on the English-speaking community, so we're in the process—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Will you share that with us once you have finished?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Yes. We are presently working with our elected officials, our board, to examine the situation to see how and if we can take a stand on this. It will be made available to you.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: If you come with a position on this, would you kindly give it to the clerk? We will then have it distributed to all members in both official languages.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I wish you'd ask the same question on the mid-term evaluation, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger, I have made my best effort to get that information for you. It is not available.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Are you still not able to tell us who you got that information from?

The Chair: I spoke to the parliamentary secretary and the parliamentary secretary's assistant. The clerk, I believe, has spoken to some people as well, and the information is not available.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay. Now we know where it comes from. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Weston.

Mr. John Weston: On a point of order, Bill C-315 is which bill?

The Chair: Bill C-315 is the one that I believe Monsieur Aubin has placed on the order paper. It concerns the application of Quebec's Bill 101 and *la Charte de la langue française* to federal institutions and regulated—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: If I may, it concerns amendments to the official—

The Chair: I'll give the floor to Monsieur Aubin for a point of clarification, and then we'll move on to the next speaker.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

It is a very simple bill aimed at giving francophones who work in Quebec in a federally regulated workplace the same language rights as other francophone workers in Quebec.

The bill does not pertain to federal institutions, which come under the Official Languages Act.

[*English*]

The Chair: It is federally regulated workplaces.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The reason I bring it up is because it is a bill that modifies the Official Languages Act. If approved at second reading, it will likely be referred to this committee. Therefore, I'm seeking information from one of the communities that is directly concerned.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Fine.

Mr. Galipeau, the floor is yours.

• (1030)

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are still talking about the 1995 referendum.

Mr. Yvon Godin: On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Monsieur Godin has a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Bill C-315 does not amend the Official Languages Act, but rather the Canada Labour Code.

The Chair: That is not a point of order, it is a point of information.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is a point of information.

The Chair: Very well.

Mr. Galipeau, you have the floor.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Does my time start now?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You get an F, Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I probably had an F the first time I came in here.

In the 1995 referendum, there was a great deal of emotion and fear among francophones living in a minority situation in Canada. Even though we did not have a right to vote in that referendum that affected us directly—it affected us probably more than anyone else—some of us went there. There are even people here at the table who were there. I was one of them, along with my family. We were there in solidarity with you.

I want to come back to something else that was said this morning. The long-form census has not been abolished. In fact, it was distributed to one-third of Canadian households instead of just to one-fifth. Moreover, the fact that people were no longer forced to fill it out resulted in a participation level that was higher than ever. I am not surprised to hear from the people at Statistics Canada that the data will be solid.

I want to come back to the question of money. How long has your organization been in existence?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: It was started 15 years ago. We are into our 16th year.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: And it took over from other organizations that existed before it. I would like to know what the annual budget was 15, 10 and 5 years ago and how much it is today. I have heard that the budget is \$1 million.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Fifteen years ago, the QCGN had no budget. I do not know what the budget was 10 years ago. I did not know that I would be asked this question and I did not bring those figures. We could provide you with the answer as a follow-up.

Over the past 10 years, the QCGN has begun to demonstrate to the government that it plays an important role. We represent our community in dealing with the Canadian Heritage Department on the Canada-Community Agreements. Those agreements set the provincial funding envelopes. Our province is special in that it has the anglophone minority. There is an envelope for the province, which includes funding for the QCGN as an umbrella organization.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Official language issues are a priority for this government. That is why we developed the roadmap, for which \$1.1 billion in Canadian taxpayers' money has been allocated for a five-year period. It is important for this investment to reach the appropriate groups, especially since a number of them continue to be quite sensitive. I remember one day when I was in the Magdalen Islands, which you have referred to, I made a jocular remark to another ferry passenger about the hay that he was carrying in his truck. I happened to make my remark in French, unfortunately. He was very short with me and told me to speak English.

[English]

“speak English”.

[Translation]

He was from the Magdalen Islands and I was from Ontario. It was really a reversal of roles. I simply wanted to talk to him about his hay. So that anxiety is always there.

I will now pass the floor to Mr. Weston, who wanted to ask a question.

• (1035)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Weston, you have five minutes.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

As a good entrepreneur, you often talk about best practices. I would like to know the circumstances and areas in which your organization has made the best use of taxpayers' money.

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Mr. Weston, are you talking about the QCGN particularly?

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: Yes. I want to know which investment gave the best results.

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: To answer your question I'm going to rely on comments from our members. I think that would be an important place. I think—I not only think, I know—our members believe that the QCGN provides a value-added to their organizations. It's not all even, but our members are working on the ground to deliver services to individuals in their community.

Where they are less able to come together and talk together about... The region of the Gaspé, the region of the Magdalen Islands, the region of the townships—they don't have the opportunity to come together and talk about the community at large. They work in their own communities, but they don't have that opportunity to network and to talk to each other about what they are doing with youth, what could be done at a more macro level.

Let me give you an example. I think this is a beautiful example I have for you. We were consulted by Sports Canada this summer on their action plan. They brought together the francophone minority communities and the anglophone minority communities, and they said we're doing the Sports Canada action plan, what do you think? The English-speaking community went there, and we went with four

community members from the regions. We were talking about what Sports Canada can do for the English-speaking community of Quebec. At the same time, we know the Canada Games are going to be happening in Sherbrooke in 2013. So as a result of working with our regions, a project has been designed out of funding to ask that all of the regions come together to demonstrate that in Quebec there is a strong English-speaking community at the Canada Games of 2013.

Without our helping our individual communities to make it available, to have them come to discuss, it wouldn't have happened. I still don't know if it's going to happen, because the funding might not be given, but there is the potential, in 2013, that people from all over Canada, at those Canada Games, will come to Quebec, to Sherbrooke, and see, my God, there's a vital English-speaking community here. It has the potential to show that, and it has the potential to bring young people in to offer services and to be guides and to be volunteers, from Gaspé, the Magdalen Islands, to talk together, to meet other people from Canada.

I think that's pretty valuable. I hope I'm right.

• (1040)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Dan Harris: Thank you.

Élaine Michaud and I are going to share our time, and she is going to go first, because my question kind of follows hers.

The Chair: Madame Michaud.

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud: I will be brief. First I would like to make a brief comment on something Mr. Galipeau mentioned.

As concerns the record participation in the long version of this year's census, I think we could perhaps consider that what it shows instead is that there is support for the maintenance of the long version of the census, and the need to have people understand the importance of the information collected.

That is another perspective. It is something to keep in mind.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I agree with you.

[English]

Ms. Éline Michaud: Now for my actual question.

When you appeared before the committee on April 22, 2010, you were concerned about departmental coordination. Do you feel that the coordination among the federal road map partners is still a problem, and would you have any recommendations to make for them?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We on the ground sometimes don't feel the efforts of coordination. We feel the departments are still working in silos. It's so important, I would think, for the francophone community outside Quebec, as well as for the English-speaking community, to feel interdepartmental work. I think there's a problem there.

[Translation]

It is not that there is a lack of good will, but I think that given the budget cuts, and the way departments are set up, the way they work, all this means that people work separately. I find that that does not foster true coordination.

[English]

Mr. Dan Harris: Following up on that—

Mr. Stephen Thompson: If I could just follow up on that, it's important to realize what that interdepartmental coordination means on the ground. We all live in communities and we all access services as individuals within our own communities. We don't access silos. We access fully functional communities. So the way our minority communities work is as a horizontal organism, not as a vertical organism—health, economic development. You go to HRSDC; you go to Health Canada. You go here, you go there. That's not the way you, as an individual, expect services to come from.

So this interdepartmental coordination, if it's done properly, has a real and significant impact on individual people on the ground.

Mr. Dan Harris: Following up still, can you tell us what resources are available to help the official language minority communities monitor the road maps implementation process, and also whether you think the existing accountability methods actually foster dialogue and greater cooperation among the road map partners?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Resources that we have.... There were questions around our funding. We get resources, and part of those resources are to help departments understand the monitoring on the ground. Are there enough resources? We could always do a better job. We could go through each of the departments and.... I can tell you one thing. I have had I don't know how many calls from different departments personally to evaluate their programs. People are knocking at our door all the time to evaluate. It's hard to be knowledgeable. I think I have a background in evaluation, so it helps, but if I didn't, I would be hard pressed.

The other thing you were asking was about...?

Mr. Dan Harris: Whether the accountability methods actually foster dialogue and greater cooperation among the road map partners.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think the will is there. I think the implication is that the involvement or the implementation is difficult.

Mr. Dan Harris: There's some room for improvement.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Gourde, do you have something to say?

•(1045)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Yes. I listened to Mr. Bélanger's question, but I am not sure that I understood the English version. You also referred to another question when I was outside the room.

As concerns the mid-term evaluation, it is not yet available. That is what I can tell you today.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I didn't ask if it was available, I asked whether it would be made public once it is completed. And the answer we were given was no.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I am telling you that today, the report is not available.

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger, you can ask me, as chair of the committee, to ask Canadian Heritage and the parliamentary secretary, in two months, whether this report is completed.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I am not interested in playing games. The question is very clear. When the mid-term evaluation report is completed, will it be made public? I think that is quite clear and simple. That is the question I have asked Mr. Gourde twice now.

[English]

The Chair: The clerk and I are responsible for getting information to committee members. I'll make the commitment that we will inquire in about a month and see whether or not the report is completed. If it is completed, we'll inquire as to whether or not we can get it. I'll make the commitment to you to do that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, the reason it's important that we know whether it's going to be made public is that this will drive how we deal with our own work now.

The Chair: I understand. I'm telling you as your chair, I'm going to inquire in a month. It's clearly not available today, but we will inquire in a month again to see whether or not it's available. It's not complete. You can't provide a report if it's not complete.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The question is, when it is complete, will it be made public?

The Chair: That's not available. That hasn't been made available. But I'm telling you that we're going to inquire in a month to see whether or not it's complete, and if it's complete, whether or not it's available.

I will let you know what response we get.

Yes, Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think that the government should give a clear answer as to whether the report will be made available or not. It doesn't have to be completed, but the government should at least give us an idea of whether it will be made public or not.

[English]

The Chair: I understand that, but in order to maintain order in the committee....

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Reports are being written that are not even being made public. Reports are being written that do not receive any response from the government. Reports are being written on what was done for one day in the far north and we are not even allowed to share those reports with Canadians. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent. The government is concerned about taxpayers' money. This committee works hard, but we are not even able to distribute our reports to Canadians. There is a problem here.

There will be a mid-term evaluation report tomorrow. We want to know if it will be made public, yes or no. That's all we want to know.
[*English*]

The Chair: I, as chair of this committee, have an obligation to maintain order, so that's why all requests for information need to go through the chair. I will make my best effort to get that information to you.

If you want to take this up directly with a government member or the parliamentary secretary, you can do it outside of this meeting, but I'm making my best effort, and I've committed, with the clerk, to inquiring in two to three weeks as to whether the report is completed, when it might be completed, and whether or not it's available. We'll let you know what the department says.

We're going to go to Mr. Harris and then Madam Michaud, very quickly because we have bells.

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Dan Harris: I have one quick housekeeping matter.

Earlier, in my first opportunity to question, I attributed a remark to Mr. Trottier about a question regarding whether or not things in the road map were working well. I believe it was actually Mr. Weston who said that. I want to clarify.

The Chair: Thank you for clarifying the record.

Madame Michaud.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éline Michaud: My comment goes to the same point as that made by all my colleagues. I understand that information requests must go through you, but the question that we want you to ask is not: "Is the report completed?" You can wait a few weeks, but we want you to ask if the report will be made available in future. We don't want to know the status of the report in three weeks' time.

The Chair: I will do that.

Ms. Éline Michaud: All right, but the way you explained the issue led us to believe that you were not seeking the same information.

The Chair: No. I said I would ask two questions, namely, is the report available and will the government distribute it to us?

Mr. Bernard Trottier: I must attend another committee at 11 o'clock. It is important that we adjourn.

Ms. Éline Michaud: That's fine.

[*English*]

The Chair: I know that, and I am trying to get through this as quickly as possible.

Without further ado, this meeting is adjourned.

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