



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Official Languages

LANG • NUMBER 015 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, November 24, 2011

Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

Thursday, November 24, 2011

• (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome, everyone, to the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We are here today, Thursday, November 24, 2011, pursuant to Standing Order 108 to conduct a study of the evaluation of the Roadmap: improving programs and service delivery.

Today, we will hear from two groups, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, represented by Ms. Kenny and Ms. Bossé, and the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, represented by Mr. Robichaud and Mr. Léger. Welcome to you all.

We'll begin with the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny (President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada): Good morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure for the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada to present its views on the successes and challenges related to the implementation of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. As the main representative of the French-language communities living in nine provinces and three territories, the FCFA bases its actions, as is the case with the Roadmap, on one major objective: to increase the ability of francophone citizens across the country to live in their language and to contribute to the influence of linguistic duality.

Since the start of the month, you have met with many organizations from our communities. They have talked to you about what they are doing to enable citizens to enjoy activities and services as part of their everyday lives. They have also told you about the importance of networks, gathering together, joint action and sharing good practices in the work of developing and implementing those activities and services.

In fact, they have told you about a reality specific to the francophone minority communities. Schools, community radio stations, health and justice services, welcome centres for immigrants, cultural centres and economic development support networks have been established because there were initially organizations and institutions that recognized the needs and brought together the bone and sinew of our community to meet them.

How could it be otherwise? In a context in which the francophone communities are often dispersed and remote, it is hard to see how they could ensure their development and access to French-language services of quality equal to that of the services enjoyed by the majority except by organizing themselves into networks and coordinating their activities based on specific issues and priorities.

The FCFA is no exception to this development model. With its slogan "Une voix qui rassemble," it is the ultimate expression of that model. The networking, collaboration, joint action and uniting approach inherent in what the federation does and is has on numerous occasions enabled us to make a tangible contribution to the lives of citizens who want to live in French.

Consider the French-language broadcast of the Vancouver Olympic Games. Barely a few days before the Olympic Games, a number of minority francophones still did not have access to the signal of the V television network, the official broadcaster of the games. Being well aware of the scope of the problem, the FCFA, through its national network, cooperated with a number of government, community and private stakeholders to find a solution.

The FCFA is also, and continues to be, the initiator of development sites that have enabled francophones to gradually gain increased access to services in their language. In particular, it was at the origin of the economic development, literacy and skills development, health and, more recently, immigration networks.

The federation coordinates a steering committee that brings together Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the provincial and territorial governments and stakeholders representing our communities. The FCFA also initiated the summit of francophone and Acadian communities, where more than 700 francophone citizens reported on progress and challenges in the communities and articulated a positive and common vision of that future.

Since then, the federation has coordinated the leaders forum, which comprises 43 agencies and institutions engaged in collaboration to carry out the Community Strategic Plan that emerged from the summit. The FCFA's position as leader of an extensive collaborative network that knows the priorities of francophone citizens makes the federation the inevitable point of contact for a federal government engaged in offering services in both official languages and supporting the development of the official language communities.

It is in that spirit, for example, that we are supporting a number of federal institutions in preparing and evaluating their action plans for the implementation of section 41 of the Official Languages Act. It is also in that spirit that the federation is collaborating with Canadian Heritage's Official Languages Secretariat to guide the Roadmap's implementation. This therefore leads us here to talk to you about this important government initiative, which is now at the midway point. Our comments on this issue are based on three components: major objectives, governance and accountability.

We'll begin with the major objectives. The Roadmap has definitely generated its share of successes. We have had tangible results in health and immigration, for example. However, although the Roadmap's emphasis on service delivery to citizens is welcome, support for the institutions and agencies called upon to provide those services remains a weak point. To echo what the representatives of the Société Santé en français told you, professional health training is definitely very important, but there has to be a place in the community where those professionals can provide the services, and that place must be managed and administered. The same logic obtains for every type of service provided to citizens.

● (0850)

It is important that the next Roadmap expand the approach based on the delivery of services to citizens, relying on the strengthening of the capacities of the networks that provide those services. This is part of the formula for success.

When a citizen accesses a service, that is because there has first been a market study. In this case, there is a market study, and it is the Community Strategic Plan that emerged from the 2007 summit, which, as stated in the Roadmap, clarified the needs of the official language minority communities.

We therefore recommend that the next Roadmap closely match up with the priorities expressed in the plan by the communities themselves. It should also rely on interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration in order to achieve tangible results for francophone citizens in an economic and efficient manner. The FCFA and its members are also working closely on common issues with the Conférence ministérielle sur la francophonie canadienne.

With regard to governance, when we are asked about the impact of the Roadmap at the midway point, one of the challenges our communities face is the lack of clarity. It is often difficult to establish a direct connection between an investment and a result in the field, or even to know whether a specific initiative has been funded out of the Roadmap or another program.

Where our communities, with a view to efficient planning, would have liked a breakdown of investments by department, by year and by initiative, the government has instead operated by means of ad hoc announcements. We would be hard pressed to tell you at this point what percentage of funding has reached the communities and what percentage has remained in the federal institutions. This challenge is indissociable from the challenge of coordination.

Implementation of the Roadmap requires a central authority that can oversee what each of the federal institutions concerned is doing, demand results and coordinate match-ups with all partners. The Official Languages Secretariat, which is responsible for implement-

ing the Roadmap, is not equipped or in any position to perform that work efficiently. This coordination deficiency has highlighted a harmful effect of the Roadmap. Largely left to their own devices, certain federal institutions that receive funding have stopped investing their own resources in support of the official language communities. That was definitely not the effect sought by the government.

The last governance challenge concerns consultation. The Roadmap's horizontal management framework provides for very few mechanisms for dialogue with the official language minority communities, as a result of which some federal institutions have set targets and objectives for themselves without consulting the communities that do not necessarily reflect the objectives of the communities themselves. A horizontal management framework for a renewed Roadmap should provide for systematic consultations with the communities for the development, implementation and evaluation of each of the initiatives.

As regards accountability, we are all very much aware of the fact that the amounts of money associated with the Roadmap come from taxpayers. No one likes waste and everyone likes to see results. However, we have to have the human, financial and technical capacity to do the work.

As I mentioned earlier, our organizations are in the position of providers of a growing variety of services to citizens. However, in business, measuring customer satisfaction is an inherent part of service delivery. This is another solid argument in favour of strengthening the capacities of our organizations and institutions, particularly with regard to research and evaluation. This accountability also extends to provincial and territorial governments. When the federal government transfers funding to them, it confers on them responsibility to meet its official language obligations. However, the language clauses in the transfer agreements currently do not enable the government to ensure that funding has been well spent in the planned manner, with benefits for francophone minority citizens. And yet this is taxpayers' money. With that in mind, it is important to develop better accountability mechanisms and to include progress targets and indicators in the language clauses.

The last point I would like to address with you is the evaluation of the Roadmap. There has been a lot of talk about the mid-term report in your committee's proceedings. The FCFA is pleased the committee has adopted a motion in favour of publishing that report, which we definitely need.

That said, it is important to note that the FCFA and its members have very little information on how the summary evaluations that should begin this fall will be conducted. Furthermore, although the FCFA and the organizations receiving Roadmap funding were consulted for the community perspective at the mid-term point, we have not seen the report on those consultations and are concerned that our observations should be taken into account. This leads us to the lack of clarity we referred to in the chapter on governance.

• (0855)

In conclusion, I would say that, while the Roadmap has definitely produced tangible results, it had a somewhat chaotic start. It was announced in June 2008, three months after the start of the first of the five fiscal years over which it was spread. We had to wait until March 2009 to see the first investments made. Supposing the Roadmap is launched on April 1, 2013, not much time remains to trigger the consultation process in order to develop its content. From a logical standpoint of effectiveness and efficiency, we cannot afford to have a hiatus after March 31, 2013 that would suspend all work started under the current Roadmap.

Thank you for your attention, and I am ready to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kenny.

Now we'll hear the people from the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Mr. Ronald Robichaud (President, Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse): Ladies and gentlemen members, distinguished guests. First I want to thank you for inviting the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, FANE, to speak as part of this evaluation of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. I am here with our executive director, Jean Léger.

FANE's main mission is to neutralize assimilation of the province's francophones, to the extent of its resources, and to promote our country's two official languages, while working toward the development and vitality of our community. Its main objectives are to promote the common interests of the Acadian and francophone population of Nova Scotia; to further collaboration among the francophone associations, institutions, societies and agencies; to act as both an interest group and a community development agency; to act as official representative of the Acadian and francophone population; and to ensure the linguistic, cultural, economic, social and political survival and development of the province's Acadian people.

Since its inception, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse has contributed to the initiation and advancement of a number of files, including those concerning the schools, economic, political and socio-cultural fields, youth, women and seniors and those related to literacy, immigration and communications. FANE also put pressure on the provincial government to pass the French-Language Services Act of 2004.

Among other things, you have asked us to give you our observations regarding the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013. Our executive director will now give you FANE's position on that subject.

• (0900)

Mr. Jean Léger (Executive Director, Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen members.

First of all, we are very pleased that the present Conservative government has continued this effort to develop and implement an action plan to reinforce this fundamental value of our country, linguistic duality. Now let's hope that developing this kind of plan

for official languages becomes a normal and important thing for all parties at the bar of the House in Ottawa.

In preparation for our testimony today, we conducted a survey of our members. We received 20 responses from FANE's 29 member organizations, slightly more than two-thirds of our members, which is a fairly reasonable sample.

The findings indicate that 81.3% think the Roadmap has been an asset for the community. The existing and recurring government programs designed to support the communities are not enough to enable the communities to develop and grow fully in Canadian society. So this plan helps a great deal.

People thus think that this edition of a Roadmap or Action Plan for Linguistic Duality is of prime importance and enables the community to do work that it would be unable to do under regular programs. This survey also shows that nearly three-quarters of our organizations, that is 73.7%, have received funding under the Roadmap. Here we are also thinking of investments in a few sectors such as early childhood, the Grandir en français program and the construction of community school centres.

With regard to schools issues, the Roadmap has enabled our school board, which is experiencing a sharp increase in registration, to improve the offer of its services through additional funding, because the current funding formula of Heritage Canada's Official Languages Support Program does not favour our school board for historic reasons. The Roadmap has therefore made it possible to correct that situation.

As you know, the Acadians and francophones of Nova Scotia did not get their homogenous French-language school system until 1996. Now the provincial Conseil scolaire acadien enables young francophones in our province to make enormous educational progress in French.

In addition to opening new schools and new community school centres, a lot of work has had to be done—and much work remains to be done—to access services in our language. We must continue to reach the largest number of rights holders. Approximately 50% of our rights holders are said to be registered. Consequently we still have to go after the remaining 50%.

The community school centres that have been supported by the Roadmap have received major contributions. The governments of Nova Scotia and Canada have invested in four communities: Truro; Rive-Sud, which is the Lunenburg region; Par-en-Bas, the region of the Pubnicos, Tusket and Wedgeport; and, lastly, Halifax. It is now important for funding to be available so they can operate.

As you know, the Acadian and francophone community is a burgeoning community. New regions have developed and new schools have been built at the request of parents and the community. Those schools must also be able to enjoy adequate funding.

Our survey also shows that our members credit the Roadmap for the Cultural Development Fund. The Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, which is associated with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, has also participated to a greater degree. That effort has enabled the economically disadvantaged region of Cape Breton to take a more active part in the economy. In that regard, note that we have a lot of work to do to achieve equality with the anglophone community.

The survey also revealed that 17% of francophones 15 years of age and over have less than a grade 9 education. Consequently, we still have a lot of work to do on literacy. That percentage is distinctly higher than the figure for anglophones, which is only 8.6%, a gap of 8.4 percentage points. That's virtually twice that figure.

In addition, 28.5% of francophones 15 years of age and over have an education ranging from grade 9 to grade 13. That figure is 8 percentage points less than that of the anglophones in the province, which is between 35% and 36%. There is a genuine education gap. It is often people who have not had access to French-language schools who now have literacy challenges in their everyday lives. They have difficulty taking part in the economy as they have literacy levels lower than those of the anglophone majority.

We have obviously had successes with the Roadmap as regards French-language services, thanks, among others, to the Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse, which is supported by the Société Santé en français. With the aging of the population, the challenges will also continue.

• (0905)

Our Réseau Santé, which is supported by the Roadmap, has been able to support some excellent initiatives, such as early childhood services, speech therapy screening and family services program. The Roadmap has also helped improve our capacity to offer French-language health services in the Annapolis Valley and, of course, to work on recruiting health professionals.

With regard to health professionals, we want to recognize the efforts of the Consortium national de santé en français.

In francophone immigration, the Roadmap has also helped increase collaboration between the Acadian and francophone communities of the Atlantic, which has vastly increased our capacity.

I would like to say that the Roadmap has supplemented other federal investments. It has also enabled us to work more closely with anglophone agencies. We're now working with anglophones on both immigration and economic issues. This has really had complementary effects, which, for us, are structural effects in the very long term.

It is difficult to see how the Roadmap is progressing. As the FCFA mentioned, we do not have that much data to determine its actual impact. I believe it is important that the departments concerned by the Roadmap engage in a sustained dialogue with the communities. That is perhaps what is somewhat lacking. That might be consistent with subsection 43(2) of the Official Languages Act, which refers specifically to consultation. It would therefore be desirable to conduct more consultation because we have overall development plans. There is one at the national level, and the provinces have them as well. It is important to align the two. Consequently, communication and dialogue with the departments are very important.

It is also important for the departments and agencies investing in the current Roadmap not to drop the ball once funding is exhausted. We suggest that they find ways to continue their engagement with the communities. Allow me to explain.

For us, one concrete example of this situation has been the withdrawal of Industry Canada, which was identified in the previous plan, the Action Plan for Official Languages. Industry Canada was working very closely with the community because that department had money from the Action Plan for Official Languages. However, when the money disappeared, the department completely withdrew. Unfortunately, we now have very little contact with Industry Canada in Nova Scotia. And yet there are some major issues in which Industry Canada could support the communities. So attention must be paid to that.

We also believe that the community relies on a well-organized community network, which is a strength and promotes the bilingual nature of our country. We would like the federal government to continue strengthening this network because it is the backbone of our continued existence.

Now I would like to hand over to our president so he can tell you about our recommendations.

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: Thank you, Jean.

Our recommendations are: that there be another Roadmap that is at least of the same scope as the one we are discussing today to enable the full implementation of section 2 of the Official Languages Act; that the successful initiatives made possible by the Roadmap be set out in the next Roadmap or integrated into existing or new programs; that the plan be promoted to a greater degree to the communities and to the Canadian general public as a whole; and that the various departments report to the principal interested parties, the communities, as the Roadmap is being implemented.

Ladies and gentlemen, those are our comments. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have an hour and a quarter at our disposal to hear comments and questions from committee members.

We'll begin with Mr. Godin.

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

I would like to welcome you to the committee and especially to discuss this mid-term study of the Roadmap that we are conducting, as well as what will be happening in future.

Mr. Robichaud, I heard you say that you wanted the Roadmap to return. Ms. Kenny, I believe you said that as well. What is its importance for you? I want us to go further because the question whether there will be another Roadmap is still up in the air.

Mr. Léger said how the Roadmap had supplemented certain previously existing programs. Do you have any other comments to make on the importance of this Roadmap?

• (0910)

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: I heard my colleague from Yukon tell you this week that he wanted it 200%. I will say that I want another Roadmap one million per cent. That's not to bid his figure up, but as we said earlier—and Mr. Léger said it as well—we've generated some momentum. We've created programs that we would like to see last. If we take an initiative and it's no longer around and no longer funded in two years, I find it hard to see how the government's investment to date can continue to produce results. So, in my opinion, it would be inefficient not to renew the Roadmap and to abandon certain initiatives.

As I mentioned earlier, we must not expect to see an increase in the capacity of our resources to offer those services because that plate is already full.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé (Director General, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada): I would like to add something to what Ms. Kenny said. When we see the current investments, we see that the Roadmap has to be renewed in certain cases, for example, to make Termium accessible to the public. When we appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance, we asked that the government reiterate that commitment in the next budget and that that renewal be based on our community's strategy plan, which acknowledges and very clearly identifies the issues and proposes courses of action. We're calling for a much closer alignment with what the communities are asking for and much closer collaboration.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Let's talk about collaboration. I heard that the Roadmap was mainly based on health, immigration and so on. Now I hear Mr. Léger say that Industry Canada was in the old plan, but has been ruled out. But it was good for us.

Ms. Kenny told us that it was one million per cent important for there to be another Roadmap. Next week, the figure may be two million per cent. Let's hope the government understands the message. Hearing you today, I find it encouraging that the communities are saying that the formula put in place has gradually increased since the beginning, in 2001. It's encouraging to hear that. They say that something is happening on the ground, but that some improvements can be made. Unless I'm mistaken, when you talk about being accountable, that doesn't mean it's you who will be deciding at the other end. It's more a question of partnership between the community and the government, so there are discussions to determine what happens on the ground and so you, as a community or organization representing your community, have a say because you are close to those people. You want to be heard.

Again with regard to accountability, are you also saying that money has been sent but you don't know how it's being spent? For example, some groups have said that money is going to certain provinces, but once it's there, they don't know how it is being spent. Is the money being well spent? Do you also have a problem in that regard? Would you like there to be improvements in that area?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Let's consider the case of the transfers that are made to the provinces, not necessarily just under the Roadmap. Let's consider education transfers, for example. Recently we've seen that transfers are being made for French-language schools or for immersion schools, but that the province is deciding to use them for other purposes. We must make sure we have mechanisms with performance indicators. If a transfer is made, we

must ensure that the portion that must go to the community goes to the community.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's the problem for me. Yes, it's true that education is a provincial jurisdiction; we agree on that. It's not the federal government that will say what the programs will be. However, section 43 of the act provides that there will be investments for promotion. Based on that, there will be money for the schools. It's unacceptable for people not to know whether the province is using that money for that purpose or not, or for there to be doubts that the money has been allocated to that. Whether we're talking about the Roadmap or not, it is unacceptable for the federal government to send money to minority communities, for people to say that the money is not going to the communities and that no one has to be accountable. Not only is that the case, but no one will tell us what happened to that money, if it was used elsewhere.

The Commissioner of Official Languages himself said it. He spoke with the provincial ministers, who told him they were receiving money, but that they were spending it elsewhere. I believe the federal government can't say that it is because of areas of provincial jurisdiction that it can't know where the money goes. That doesn't mean you have to count every cent or every program. When we talk about provincial jurisdictions, we know that the programs fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces, but the money should at least be used for minority community programs. Do you agree with me?

• (0915)

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: This week, the FCFA and a few member organizations spent a day with the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development discussing transfers to the provinces and language clauses. The answer we received from the department is that, in fact, the memorandum of understanding between the federal government and the province does not really contain a language clause, in any case one concerning Human Resources and Skills Development. It's more of an administrative contract. So there is not really any accountability; federal funding is being transferred without any further concern as to how it will be spent.

Mr. Yvon Godin: How does that work in Nova Scotia? You said it was going to help the schools, early childhood. You mentioned education.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Jean Léger: Personally, I have no concerns about that. I haven't heard that federal government money was being invested in the province and not going to the communities. I haven't heard any talk about that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: A good party, the NDP.

Some voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jean Léger: In my 10-year career as executive director of FANE, I have previously heard those kinds of things, although I haven't heard any in the past few years. I haven't heard that about the Roadmap. I spoke with the people at the department of education and our provincial Acadian school board, and there has never been any mention of money that has been lost somewhere or that didn't go to the communities. That isn't necessarily a concern for me.

However, I would like to answer your question and to tell you why we should have another Roadmap, and why it's important. The reason is that the illiteracy rate is very high. Francophones are not yet fully able to take part in the Canadian economy, in Canadian democracy or Canadian society. We've started. We are working on the immigration issue. We have to continue. There are also other sectors.

The next Roadmap must not only continue providing assistance to sectors that have needs, but also support development in other sectors so that the francophone and Acadian communities can participate fully in Canadian society. That is why I am in favour of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, so that we can be equal, to a certain degree, to the extent we can afford it, with the majority communities in each of the provinces.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde.

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

Thanks to the witnesses for being here this morning. We are privileged to have witnesses of your calibre and representatives of your federations which are showing so much leadership on linguistic duality in Canada.

I know your federations have put action plans in place. The Roadmap has facilitated certain initiatives. It has made it possible to launch certain initiatives. However, in what direction do you want to go with those initiatives, and how can the next government measures help you after the Roadmap expires?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: I'm sorry but I'm having trouble hearing you. I didn't understand the last part of your question.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I'll summarize. The Roadmap enables your federations to put initiatives in place. Some initiatives were already in place. You've been able to continue work on certain initiatives and to introduce others. In future, what direction will the initiatives designed to improve your communities take?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: The francophone and Acadian communities, together with the leaders forum, have established the work priorities of their Community Strategic Plan. In that plan, we talk about our space, that is to say everything that pertains to communication, the press and our community networks. We also talk about our population and immigration issues. Initiatives have been implemented across our francophone and Acadian communities, and we have a duty to support them. For example, it can be established in the Roadmap that such and such an initiative, let's say the creation of a community radio station, will be funded. However, the initiative has to continue once the Roadmap expires. Otherwise, in my opinion, that's a wasted investment for the government and the

community. We have to ensure that we continue what we're building and that we don't stop halfway through the construction.

• (0920)

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: I'd like to mention that community people, like me, in Nova Scotia, in Acadia, are prepared for the difficulties and are used to the challenges involved in working with our anglophone communities. However, we want better things for our children.

The Roadmap has made major success possible, in particular in the French-language schools of the CSAP, where there is a program, *Grandir en français*, for children four years of age. It's why our French-language schools have been a major success in the province. Children start school with a certain level of French. A lot of exogamous parents don't speak French at home. Their four-year-old children are entitled to one paid year in the program so they can start learning French before they begin school.

For example, my son's daughter is in the program, and her French is incredible. Every day, I realize just how much the children love the program. I'm convinced that success is possible in Acadia, in the francophone community, in our province, when we work together like that. It is the Roadmap that's really responsible for the success of that specific program. It's a major success for us.

Mr. Jean Léger: Mr. Gourde, I would like to point out that research and innovation are fields where we need additional investment. Our communities often have community organizations whose funding makes it possible to do some awareness, collaboration and communication work, but I believe we have major challenges in the area of research and innovation.

We say we don't know how the departments should invest in the communities, but if we were better prepared and better equipped for research, we would be able to inform the departments of our results. We would be able to establish performance indicators in our communities and really monitor our progress. We currently have trouble determining certain aspects such as vitality indicators, and that makes work on the ground difficult.

The Roadmap could help fund not only the major researchers, but also action research in the field. That would enable us to do a better job and ensure that Canadian investment yields even more.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Léger, earlier you said that the francophone community was perhaps disadvantaged relative to the anglophone community in the area of education, in particular, and that that was causing problems. That part of your presentation troubled me. Could you give us more details on that matter?

Mr. Jean Léger: All right. That mainly concerns illiteracy. As you know, the provincial Acadian school board, our homogenous school board, has only been in existence since 1996. Prior to that, people often attended mainly anglophone or bilingual institutions. We really didn't have the necessary infrastructure to teach them French. Consequently, a large percentage of people today are unable to function either in French or, in certain cases, in English.

It's extremely important for us to address that. Some of our Acadian and francophone communities are facing economic challenges. I believe that illiteracy is the root of that problem and that the next Roadmap could put the emphasis on remedial literacy in certain communities.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: In what specific age group are these people?

Mr. Jean Léger: I would say this challenge essentially concerns the age group following the 25- to 30-year-olds. That's a very active group in our society. Younger people have studied in a slightly more appropriate school system and at university.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Would those people need a year or two of remedial work? How do you view the matter?

Mr. Jean Léger: I'm not a literary or literacy specialist, but we're talking about family literacy here. We currently don't offer Acadians and francophones in our province an adequate program that would enable them to catch up. Training is often intended to enable people to finish high school, but as a result of various circumstances, literacy levels are too low even among people who have high school diplomas. Consequently, they have to be brought back up to an adequate level.

• (0925)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

Mr. Bélanger, go ahead, please.

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

Before asking questions, I would like to make a few points relating to statements you made this morning.

Since we returned to the House in September, there have been proceedings that sometimes trouble me. When motions are introduced in committee, we're asked to sit in camera. Consequently, the debates are held in camera, the decisions are made in camera, and only the decision is made public. So no one knows what goes on. The House Standing Orders prohibit us from speaking in public about debates held in camera.

However, the House Standing Orders do permit me to do what I'm doing right now. You've seen the agenda: the second part concerns motions. Some of my motions are outstanding. I'm going to bring two forward, when we come to that part. One of those motions dates back to September 22. I gave notice of that motion, I believe, in June. It concerns the report that the committee prepared at a prior session on immigration.

We did a very important job. Moreover, Mr. Léger, you contributed to some of the recommendations in that report. The committee tabled an almost unanimous report. I believe the Bloc Québécois dissented. I asked that the committee take up the report again without making any changes and table it again with a view to getting a response from the government.

That work was in fact only half done. We wanted to get answers from the government to enable us to continue. Since we've started the mid-term review of the Roadmap, the immigration question has constantly resurfaced.

So this morning, when we get to it, I am going to move that we adopt that motion, which read as follows:

*That the third report entitled *Recruitment, Intake and Integration: What Future for Immigration to Official Language Minority Communities?* of the Standing Committee on Official Languages in the third Session of the 40th Parliament be adopted again as a report of this Committee, that the Chair do present it to the House, and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee request a comprehensive response from the government on the recommendations contained in that report.*

The government will give any answers it wants, but that will enable us to take this up again.

The second concerns a motion for which I gave notice earlier this week, when people from Yukon testified before us. I want to thank the chairman for mentioning to me that I should perhaps delete a few words from it to make it acceptable. That motion reads as follows:

That the Committee travel to Nunavut in winter 2012 to complete its tour of the territories begun in 2011 as part of the study undertaken in the 3rd Session of the 40th Parliament on the development of linguistic duality in the northern Canada, and table a follow-up report in the House of Commons before the summer recess in 2012.

These are motions that I intend to introduce later and that I naturally intend to support. If my NDP colleagues intend to support them, they may say so before we sit in camera because we may once again be asked to do so, something we cannot debate. It has happened in the past that members of the Conservative Party have voted in favour of proceeding in camera, while the members of the opposition parties disagreed. Since they are the majority, we have sat in camera and, as for the rest, we may not talk about it.

I'm taking advantage of the time allotted to me now to speak about this before we are asked to sit in camera if that is requested. With "ifs", you can put Paris in a bottle. I apologize to the interpreters because that's one more "if".

I also think it is important for our communities to know the intentions of their representatives here in committee. That is what I intend to do. If we had to sit in camera, I would not be able to talk about it, but since the Standing Orders of the House allow me to talk about that before the fact, I have done so this morning so that you know.

I had a third motion, but I will not be introducing it out of respect for one of my colleagues who is not here this morning. That was the motion requesting that the committee ask the headhunter, the individual who organized the competition for the Auditor General, to appear. On Tuesday, we heard the comments of one of our colleagues who said that he might perhaps support such a motion, but since he is not here, I will withhold it. I am going to wait until he is present.

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

• (0930)

The Chair: You have two minutes left.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

Ms. Bossé, earlier you said something that concerns me to a considerable degree: the Department of Human Resources told you that it was not responsible. That runs counter to the Official Languages Act. Section 25 of the act states that, where the government transfers responsibility to a third party, whether it be a province or other entity, it may not be released from its duty to do so.

Do you have any brief comments to make on that subject?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: That's exactly what we were told. We put the question directly to the representative of the Department of Human Resources who was present, and we of course intend to contact the department on this matter.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you also intend to inform the Commissioner of Official Languages of it?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: We will definitely send a certified copy of our letter to the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

Ms. Kenny, in your address, which I will be carefully reading because it contains a lot of things, you said something that disturbs me. You said that, as a result of the Roadmap, certain departments were withdrawing their own programs intended for the communities. Do you have any evidence in support of that?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: It's hard for us to prove it, as we said it, because there is a lack of clarity. In the random example of an employment assistance program for francophones offered by a department, we are unable to determine whether the money to maintain that program comes from the Roadmap or from investments already planned.

In addition, some funding provided for under the Roadmap is recurring and still reserved for the departments. For example, the Canada Public Service Agency, whose centre for excellence receives \$17 million that is used to pay salaries and support activities that have been ongoing for some time now. I learned that fact from the department itself.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I was going to suggest asking the new Auditor General to conduct a study on the matter. However, that might be a little difficult for him, and he would have to delegate it to someone else. That might nevertheless be something that could be done, to request an audit of accounts to separate expenses under the Roadmap from those under programs previously planned by the departments.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

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

The Chair: Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Thank you, and welcome to our guests. I would like to put my first questions to Mr. Robichaud.

Mr. Robichaud, you mentioned that there was a program in Nova Scotia enabling children to start learning French at a very early age. I believe you said at the age of four. Can you explain that program a little more? Is it a pilot program?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: I believe the project is managed by the francophone school board, the CSAP, and it's entitled Grandir en

français. The project targets children four years of age, before they enter school, and it's like a—

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Are they anglophones?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: They are rights holders, individuals who have a right to start school in French. Francophone immigrants belong to those groups as well, like my granddaughter.

In our area, there are a lot of exogamous families whose members don't speak French at home. When their children start their first year at school, they don't have a certain level of French. So it's hard for them. This program, from what I understand, is funded by the Roadmap, and it is helping to improve the French, literacy and lives in French of the children, who then are much more successful when they start school. The CSAP people say the program is one of the things that has contributed to the success of our French-language schools in the province. The French-language schools in our province are enjoying greater success. Our numbers are up, more than those of the anglophones. It's a major success.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: The best time to learn French is when we're young. I learned French as an adult, and it was very difficult.

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: You speak well. I wouldn't know—

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Is the program available across Nova Scotia?

● (0935)

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: That program, Grandir en français, is being implemented in all the francophone schools of the CSAP.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Is this project very successful?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: We're having an enormous success with this project. We're not having as much success with our French-language schools because it takes a lot of time to establish those schools. Our school has been under renovation for 10 years now. We now have 203 students, but the school, once renovated, will be able to hold only 125. We're enjoying major success with this program, but we have other problems.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You mentioned that a lot of your programs had been successful as a result of the Roadmap. Could you give us some examples?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: Yes.

Mr. Jean Léger: The successes have been in the field of health services. Under the Roadmap, one project enabled an anglophone organization in the Annapolis Valley to provide services in French. What is interesting, in the case of this example, is that it makes it possible to maintain a dialogue with anglophones and anglophone groups and to give them a clear understanding of the needs of that community. In health, we're also talking about speech therapy services provided in early childhood. It is very difficult to find speech therapists in Nova Scotia. However, the Roadmap has enabled us to develop speech therapy services to assist children in the schools. There are other examples of this kind, in particular the Grandir en français initiative, which is very significant.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You mentioned that 81% of your communities or your associations—

Mr. Jean Léger: I was talking about our member organizations.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: There are 29 of them, and 20 of them responded to your survey. And 81% of those respondents felt that the Roadmap was an asset.

Mr. Jean Léger: Yes.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: To what—

Mr. Jean Léger: I believe that 73% of the organizations have received funding and have thus been able to carry out their mandates more effectively. Obviously, they will say it's an asset. Given the successes experienced by the province, that I've just mentioned, we can obviously only say that the Roadmap has value.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: There's something I haven't understood. You said that 17% of students 15 years of age and over had problems, that they were not at the same level as anglophones.

Could you give us more details on that situation?

Mr. Jean Léger: Of course.

The level of literacy of those people is not equal to that of the anglophones. So they have to catch up in order to achieve the same level as the anglophones.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: What explains that situation?

Mr. Jean Léger: There are historical reasons related in particular to education and access to education. As regards the economic aspect, our regions exploit certain natural resources. In the fisheries, for example, youths 15 or 16 years of age leave their studies to become fishermen or to work in the plants.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Lastly, I would like to know what percentage francophones represent of Nova Scotia's population.

Mr. Jean Léger: They represent 3.4% of the population.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Trottier, go ahead, please.

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks as well to our guests for being here this morning. I'm very pleased to hear the French Canadian voice. I've lived in a number of regions of Canada, and now I'm living in Toronto. I've also lived in London, Ontario, in Alberta and, for a certain time, in Montreal. I see a major difference in the needs of francophones across the country.

Based on your comments, we can see that your assessment of the Roadmap is quite positive. It has resulted in changes, despite it's chaotic withdrawal in 2008. You talked about that earlier. I'm also hearing some constructive criticism, among other things the fact that certain matters should be clarified and that a stronger connection should be established between Roadmap investments and results. You also talked about the need to establish better performance measures, particularly as regards client satisfaction.

Can you tell us how we could better measure client satisfaction in your communities?

• (0940)

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: The member organizations of our federation work directly in the field. It is easy for us to survey the matter, but we have to have the time and resources to do so. As in the case of any business that wants to progress, be efficient and improve its service and performance, I believe it is important to measure the level of satisfaction and to see how we have served citizens. That

could be done through a survey or a study in the field in cooperation with the government or even by the government. It's essential for us to be able to measure the efficiency of the services we provide.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: In fact, there are various ways. The Roadmap targets and performance indicators, in most cases, were not identified in collaboration with the communities. In many cases, we were not consulted for the purpose of setting those targets. So we realized that they do not correspond at all to what we would have liked. In fact, we would have liked the targets to be higher. In immigration, for example, the target is a 1.8% increase in the number of immigrants in our communities, whereas we are aiming for a minimum of 4.4%.

Various means have been used in the past. For example, surveys have been conducted by departments such as Canadian Heritage. There have also been surveys, research. We have had round tables with management and the elected representatives of organizations. Summative evaluations are underway. We have to ensure that our communities, our citizens, are an integral part of those exercises. These are all very valid methods, but, in some cases, they have been abandoned in the past few years.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: I would like to speak before putting the question to the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

It is no easy matter to have truly consistent performance measures across the country. The census is not conducted frequently enough to measure linguistic vitality. For example, to get mid-term feedback, we can't tell from census results what change has occurred between 2008 and 2011.

How could we start up a measurement process for the next version of the Roadmap? Perhaps the Nova Scotia people could describe that approach?

Mr. Jean Léger: I'd like to develop a concept that has always interested me for Nova Scotia, for example, because it's a concept that is extensively used in Quebec, particularly in the RCMs, where there are research observatories on the region itself.

As for the francophone community, we don't really have those research observatories that would make it possible to compile studies on the communities. I believe there would be a lot of benefits in setting up this kind of initiative because the departments could also take advantage of them, as well as the communities and organizations.

As to what indicators should be used and how the data will be measured, I'm not a methodology expert. However, I believe there are strategic factors, such as these observatories, that could enable that.

When I presented my brief to you earlier, that's what I said. At some point, we need more research and innovation. The research observatories could be one way to do that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I would like to raise one point that I consider quite important. In a number of studies that are currently being done by the departments, the language issue is not included. They're trying to define the francophone economic space by working at Statistics Canada, Industry Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, but the language question is never raised. So how can we manage to develop profiles of anything?

Incredible research is being done in the departments. I have learned a lot about Human Resources and Skills Development Canada this week. There is a departmental research plan, six research themes, 20 research units in the department. However, the communities have access to absolutely none of that.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aubin.

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

I'll take 10 seconds to assure Mr. Bélanger of the support of the NDP members for his motions, since they support the positions the party has held for a long time. So we'll be there.

Welcome and thanks to each of our guests. Thank you for your clear presentations, which I believe really strike a good balance between the strengths and weaknesses of the Roadmap.

I noted that mention was often made of the lack of clarity in the investments and in the consultation process, and I would even say in the assessment that we are conducting. That has made me think, as I meet the groups, that we can say virtually whatever we want in the report we come up with in March, since the methodology underlying the evaluation is unclear to say the least.

Let's move on immediately to the next Roadmap because that's perhaps where our efforts should be focused. What can we do better?

I have barely five minutes at my disposal. Without wanting to interfere in your speaking time, I'm going to ask you to give me concise answers. You know that we are in the midst of a budget-cutting process. Are you afraid that what might appear as funding in a future Roadmap is what is put on a platter and then withdrawn from recurring programs? Have you heard of any cutbacks that might affect you?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: We've had no wind of that, but that's definitely a concern.

We've seen it here; there are certain things. For example, the Treasury Board Secretariat already existed, but it's been put here. So it's entirely funded by the Roadmap. However, it was already there and it was already providing services.

Since it was put there, does that mean that it's an investment that will no longer be made? If there is no more Roadmap, will the Official Languages Secretariat responsible for designating offices disappear? I imagine it won't, but we have to ensure that there is continuity in the investments. That's why we're saying this isn't clear. We're not saying the investments aren't being made; we simply don't know.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Robichaud, did you want to add something on this question? No. That's fine.

In your presentations, you talk at length about consultations and genuine collaboration that you would like to see established among the various departments. Fifteen departments are already involved in the Roadmap.

I have two brief questions. Are there any departments not currently involved in the Roadmap that you would like to see join the next Roadmap?

Do you have a suggestion to make regarding the involvement of those various departments? Shouldn't they be spearheaded by a single department that sets guidelines? There could be a kind of single window. Do you really have to beg and knock on all the doors of every department every time?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: I could add that, in our province, we have an overall development plan for the Acadian community and our 29 member associations. Under the next Roadmap, we would like there to be a collaborative relationship with the government on how that funding will meet the needs of the province's overall plan for all our member associations and all our communities because they need all possible assistance.

We're still trying to survive in terms of our cultural and linguistic activities. We need all possible assistance, and the Roadmap is a very effective tool. We would like to increase the plan's effectiveness.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: If I may add something, the Community Strategic Plan is also adjusted to the overall development plans. So we have a big plan for the community as a whole. We suggest further aligning it with the priorities of the new Roadmap.

Would we like other departments? Ideally, we would like them all. However, it would be good to reinforce what's already in the Roadmap. Consequently, it should not be forgotten that, as regards network capacity, the plate is already full and our resources are way overexploited. Reinforcing the capacity of our association network would be necessary and well received.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I don't think the important thing is to add departments.

I think we first have to take the Community Strategic Plan with the issues and investment priorities that are identified. We have to ask ourselves what departments are relevant to the plan, with the overall development plans, of course, because that forms a whole.

Mr. Robert Aubin: So it would be preferable to start with the communities and move up to the departments, rather than the reverse, if I understand correctly.

Mr. Léger wanted to add something.

• (0950)

Mr. Jean Léger: I would like to speak. Given the economic challenges that our country and the world are facing, I believe the economic departments and agencies should play an enhanced role.

For example, I note the absence of Industry Canada. That's not clear. I believe the Department of Industry should be at the table and take part in the work, as well as all the agencies that are part of Industry Canada. I believe that francophones and Acadians must also be prepared for the current economic challenges.

That department should be a participant in the plan.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aubin.

Thank you, Mr. Léger.

Mr. Weston, go ahead, please.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks as well to our guests today.

My name is John Weston and I come from British Columbia. I like to listen to stories about the use of French. I think French has developed in all parts of our great country.

It is our role as legislators to be accountable to the Canadian people. We occasionally criticize the government. It is normally the opposition's role to do that, but we do that as well. It's good

[*English*]

to catch them doing things right.

[*Translation*]

I believe the minister should hear your report, Mr. Robichaud. In future, it will be very important to know what we've done right when increasing pressure is being brought to bear regarding the budget.

My first question is for all of you. This government is putting the emphasis on accounting and efficiency.

In five words or less, what could we do to improve the Roadmap? You mentioned coordinating departments. Is there anything else?

Mr. Robichaud, you may begin.

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: We think there should be increased collaboration. We are the mouthpiece of the community, and we do a very good job with all the member associations.

There should be greater collaboration and better communication between the community and government. That would make it possible to know how projects are advancing, how they are being measured and how we can build on good results achieved by the other provinces. That would also provide better services to our member associations and to the citizens of our communities.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

And you, Ms. Kenny?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: I can say it in seven words: targets and performance indicators established through consultation.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you very much, that's very specific.

Ms. Bossé, what do you think?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: We talked about consultation. I would say reinforce capacity for better data collection.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

Mr. Léger, it's your turn.

Mr. Jean Léger: I would say: impact, dialogue, transparency, collaboration and innovation.

Mr. John Weston: Perfect. Thank you very much. The gold star.

After 50 years of linguistic duality in Canada, what is your vision, Mr. Robichaud? Would that vision be realized with or without government financial support?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: An increase in the number of francophones in the provincial cultural, economic and political fields. In other words, take our place.

Mr. John Weston: Ms. Bossé, what is your vision?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: We have a vision in the Community Strategic Plan. I can quote that vision from memory. The vision is that all citizens who choose to live in French and to speak French, whether permanently or from time to time, have the capacity and environment to do so.

Mr. John Weston: Anywhere?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Anywhere. I'm thinking of the 4,000 franco-phone students in British Columbia's French-language schools and of the 45,000 students in the immersion schools.

Mr. John Weston: Is the vision the same for the anglophones?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Yes. We have to expand this area of exchange and respect.

• (0955)

Mr. John Weston: What is your vision, Ms. Kenny?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Personally, I dream of a Canada where I can live in French and bring up my children in French.

I will respect my anglophone neighbour's choice not to do so and to do so in English. I would like him to respect my choice as well. I will also respect and admire people who choose to be bilingual.

Anglophones who choose to live part of their lives in French are, in my opinion, English-mother-tongue francophones. So I consider you a francophone.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you.

And your vision, Mr. Léger?

Mr. Jean Léger: For me, it would be full implementation of paragraph 2(a) of the Official Languages Act. That paragraph concerns equality and equal chances for French and English speakers in our country. It also concerns the possibility of living and growing in French and English wherever one is in Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Ms. Michaud, go ahead, please.

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you very much. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Kenny, you talked a lot about the Community Strategic Plan, which I find very interesting. All the associations are developing strategic plans. So I imagine you drew on that in preparing a more comprehensive plan. Is that correct?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Yes. Those are the overall development plans. That's the name we've given them. The sectoral organizations have a strategic plan. Everything is integrated into the Community Strategic Plan. There are obviously differences from one region to the next, depending on the needs and situations of each.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Could you tell us briefly about the main priorities that have been identified in your strategic plan?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Yes, five areas have been developed. I spoke earlier about our population. There is also our space, our governance, our influence and our social and economic development.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I would like to add that the Community Strategic Plan was developed and adopted following community consultations in the field in 2006. A steering committee travelled across the country consulting the communities and identifying those issues, the development priorities. It included, among others, members of Canadian Parents for French. In June 2007, 800 francophones met in Ottawa to validate all that content, to adopt the Community Strategic Plan and to undertake to implement it by 2017.

Since then, those 43 francophone organizations have met annually to examine the work they have done throughout the year.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Do you currently think that everything that has been identified in the Roadmap corresponds relatively well to what you identified, or are there any more specific initiatives that you would like to see in the next Roadmap to respond to what you've proposed?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Earlier Mr. Léger talked about Industry Canada. So there are areas and sectors of intervention that are not represented enough. The Roadmap's weakness is in reinforcing the network's capabilities, which is also its objective.

Mr. Jean Léger: May I answer?

They have a national perspective, whereas we have a provincial perspective. I think it is important to know that. In Nova Scotia, our Acadian and francophone communities are completely scattered across the province. There are 10 regions in all, nine of which are rural. We see that rural life in Nova Scotia is currently crumbling. The major priority for us is sustainable rural development. The unemployment rate is 30%, and communities are losing their populations, as people go away to work in other provinces. We have nothing against the other provinces, but we would like the population to remain in our communities. We have a major challenge. I would say this is the first challenge that was identified by our overall development plan.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Thank you very much; that was very interesting.

You've seen the motions that have been introduced. We'll talk briefly about the study on the north. If, in an ideal world, we followed your recommendations, there would be more consultations for the development of a new Roadmap.

My question is more for you, Ms. Kenny and Ms. Bossé. What importance could the report on that study have for the recommendations that you could make on another Roadmap?

• (1000)

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Are you talking about the mid-term report underway?

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: No. I'm talking about a study on the north that was undertaken by the Standing Committee on Official Languages during previous sessions.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Was that on immigration?

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: No, the immigration study is another study.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: It's the study on the Northwest Territories.

I can simply tell you that the work done by this committee is very important. The work done by the previous committee was just as important, like that of all the committees since they came into existence.

I believe that, if it was worthwhile for a committee to examine one point, whether it be immigration or another topic, it would be interesting to see that report, particularly because we've learned this morning that it was unanimously adopted. I wouldn't want to see the work you've done here disappear tomorrow morning and no longer be important. I say that without any partisan bias.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: In fact, I see that all the regions are represented in certain sections of the profile you've presented here. A report such as that can simply enhance the information that you submit to us and improve our recommendations regarding the representation of all francophone communities in the north. It was in that perspective that I asked you the question.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: Absolutely.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: The same is true regarding the immigration report. We have all come to appear. We're taking a lot of our time to support the committee's work. It is very important for us that the government give us a response so that we can determine how to orient our actions, develop our plan and establish better collaboration.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud. Thank you as well, Ms. Bossé.

Mr. Menegakis, go ahead, please.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Good morning. I want to thank you for coming to appear today and for giving your presentations.

The Roadmap is a very important initiative for our government. It represents an investment of more than \$1 billion. I believe the cultural programs are very important for our youth and seniors.

Could you tell us how the Roadmap has helped in the development of those kinds of programs?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: For youth and seniors?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Yes.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: For youth, we can very definitely talk about the Jeux de la Francophonie. The Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française, which has testified before this committee, also administers programs related to employment preparation and translation scholarships. Of course, all that is very important in preparing young people for employment, but also for reinforcing their identity and sense of belonging to a community, leading them to act as citizens and thus to contribute to the development of their community and their country.

As for seniors, I know they are working hard to establish the policy on aging. The New Horizons for Seniors Program, which is administered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, is also very important for them. It is also a very interesting pilot project in a number of communities, in Ontario, among others. The seniors are encouraged to get more involved in the community and to work more closely with the municipality.

It was Roadmap funding that made it possible to promote these actions. Without Roadmap funding, they would not have been possible. These are a few examples, but every organization can provide more.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Ms. Kenny, do you want to add something?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: The entire Music Showcases Initiative for Artists from Minority Official Language Communities component is very important. We have magnificent artists who are not very well known across the country. When they become known, Quebec adopts them as its own. I'm thinking of Roch Voisine, among others. Everyone thinks he's a Quebecker, but he isn't. In fact, he's Acadian. There's also Damien Robitaille, Marie-Jo Thériou, Daniel Lavoie, who is Franco-Manitoban, and so on. This is a showcase for our young artists, and it helps establish stars, idols for francophones, and that makes an enormous contribution to identity reinforcement.

•(1005)

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Robichaud, Mr. Léger, are cultural programs available in French across Nova Scotia?

Mr. Jean Léger: The survey that we conducted of our member organizations established that the Cultural Development Fund had contributed to our community as a whole. Funding from that Canadian Heritage program is available across the province. A number of organizations have benefited from it, although I believe a lot of work remains to be done in the cultural area, particularly with regard to youth and cultural identity. Leadership sessions have to be provided. There is still work to do, but the availability is there.

In addition, let's simply say that the federal government enables us to do things that the province perhaps can't afford to provide for us. Nova Scotia is currently going through a period of budget cuts. That's probably the case in a number of other places in the country. As culture budgets are not increasing, the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality has provided our communities with supplementary funding.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you.

Do you want to add something, Mr. Robichaud?

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: In difficult budgetary times, as is currently the case, cultural activities are always the first funds

affected. However everyone really needs them. In our province, people are losing their French. That's the case of a lot of seniors, who nevertheless spoke French when they were young. Cultural activities afford people an opportunity to take part in Acadian francophone culture. And that's very important for us.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Robichaud.

Mr. Harris, go ahead, please.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Thank you very much.

Thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

I would like to pick up where my colleague left off regarding the study on linguistic duality in Canada's north.

Since we are in a period of budget cuts, we have to spend every cent the right way. Our committee has already spent \$100,000 on the northern study. We believe it is very important to finish it so that organizations such as yours can see the results of that research.

Do you have any other comments to make on the northern study?

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: I would just like to repeat that I have a great deal of respect for the work that is being done here by all members, as well as for those who were here before you, and I hope the next committee will have that same respect for you. If the study were not completed on time and something happened, I hope the next committee would resume the study that you are conducting because you and the departments have devoted a great deal of time to it. I simply wanted to say that again.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I also think the northern reality is very specific. It's definitely very appropriate that the committee complete its study and take into consideration the current struggles between our community organizations and their territorial government in that context.

Cases have gone before the courts and judgments have been rendered. You can't imagine how much effort our poor—and I mean "poor"—little organizations, with so few resources, have had to make for those judgments to be implemented—I'm talking about the Northwest Territories here.

I think it's very important for the federal government, through this committee, to be aware of these facts in order to find the best way to support these communities in a federal-provincial relationship.

Mr. Dan Harris: The Canadian north really has its own challenges. In my former life, I was employed by a company that worked with the Nunavut government on its website. Even though that territory has a very small population, that site is offered in four languages. That raises new challenges.

I would like to go back to the case of Nova Scotia. I've told the committee a number of times that I spoke French more often when I worked in Alberta in last year than in Toronto. And frankly that was because the majority of Francophones there came from Nova Scotia and the rural regions.

I find it very interesting that you spoke about research and innovation since I am the deputy critic for science and technology, which includes research, discovery and innovation. You said Industry Canada was previously involved in language programs, but no longer. In fact, you want that to include an economic component for sustainable rural development.

Could you elaborate on your thinking on that point? I would definitely be very interested in talking to you about it later to see what we can do in the long term.

•(1010)

Mr. Jean Léger: Currently, for example, we are involved in raising our community's awareness of sustainable rural development. We have had two seminars and one annual general meeting, AGM, to make our communities aware of the importance of getting organized to engage in rural development.

The second stage is mobilization, in which people commit to working on their rural development.

We are facing a challenge because we have very little research. There is research, but it isn't put in a context that we can use. Industry Canada could definitely support us at some level in developing or finding this research, but also to find ways to resolve or work toward resolving specific difficulties or problems in our communities. So I think a relationship with Industry Canada might enable our communities to get along much better.

It's true that we nevertheless have relationships with the Rural Secretariat, which reports to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, but I believe Industry Canada, like ACOA and all the other economic departments and agencies, needs to work with us. A department as important as Industry Canada could play a role like the one Canadian Heritage plays in the language field. It could be the gateway department that would enable us to address the entire problem with the Canadian government as a whole.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: The most recent summative evaluation states that Industry Canada's programs, as designed, do not at all meet the needs of the official language minority communities. It would be very important to refer to that evaluation in the next Roadmap.

The federal tourism strategy was introduced very recently, in early October. It states that Industry Canada is a leader in ensuring that the needs of the official language minority communities are taken into consideration in the strategy's implementation. We will be having a meeting with the department's officials on December 1 to determine how they will go about that. It is a very important event on the committee's radar.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Bateman, welcome to our committee.

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): It's a pleasure and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for all the presentations this morning. I find them very interesting.

I am very impressed to see the collaboration involved in this publication. It's much more than a brochure: it's an extraordinary collaborative effort.

With regard to collaboration, do you think the current methods promote exchange and permit greater collaboration among all the Roadmap partners?

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: You're asking whether there is greater cooperation, whether we are satisfied with the cooperation?

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Yes because it seems to me it's really necessary in order to succeed.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: I entirely agree with you: collaboration is necessary. We definitely talked about interdepartmental and inter-governmental collaboration. There is definitely a lot to do in that regard, in particular with the Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee, on which a number of departments, such as Health Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Industry Canada and, of course, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, sit with the community representatives. We're really trying to bring all these partners to work together. This is a job that requires a lot of effort. We recently managed to bring together all the partners involved in the economic integration of newcomers. We're very pleased with the success of that effort.

However, there is no authority, there is no office, whether it be at Canadian Heritage or elsewhere, that can require that collaboration. There's no accountability in the collaborative effort. We are therefore finding interdepartmental and intergovernmental communication difficult.

•(1015)

Ms. Joyce Bateman: But there are apparently no collaboration problems among all the provinces and territories.

I'm particularly proud to see the Canada brand here.

Ms. Suzanne Bossé: Yes, absolutely. These are the census figures.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: I'll answer your question very briefly: absolutely, there is collaboration among the organizations. All the organizations that represent the provinces and territories as well as those of the sectoral organizations, sit on the board of directors of the FCFA. As president of the FCFA, I have an incredible, united board of directors that collaborates and shares, which means a lot and improves matters. We can say that when the francophone and Acadian communities talk, they speak with one voice. That is the strength of our network, and that is what brings everyone together. It is the thread that runs through this beautiful Canadian francophone community.

And, yes, we have a great partnership with the government.

Mr. Ronald Robichaud: I would like to comment on what Ms. Bossé said. In the province of Nova Scotia, FANE brings the commitment of our associations and of the people in our communities to the table. They are proud to be francophone Acadians, and they have confidence that we will meet their needs.

However, we need all the assistance the FCFA and this committee can provide us. The efforts we have made are very significant and very critical to the survival of Acadia in the coming years. We are facing some enormous challenges. Collaboration is very important. It's the only thing that can help us succeed.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Yes.

I come from Manitoba. My riding is Winnipeg Centre, and we are nearly as big as Nova Scotia. As you said, it's three point something. It's approximately the same size.

It seems to me the official language minority communities don't just need collaboration, as you said, madam; they also need big efforts. In what circumstances does that work or not work? I'm interested in that because I come from Manitoba and we are very small like you.

Mr. Jean Léger: I think it's a question of capacity. In my experience as a former executive director, I saw sectors develop because there was a community capacity that made it possible. For example, we know that immigration is important, that francophone immigration is important. How do we work toward that? We don't have the means, the resources, the capacity or the intelligence. We have to build that capacity.

The Roadmap, or funding from the federal government, particularly Canadian Heritage in our case, enables us to develop that capacity, this wealth of our communities, this knowledge, to address very important issues such as immigration. A sector that doesn't have the capacity or resources will find it very difficult to develop. We can have all the collaboration in the world, if we don't have the resources or the ability to do it, it will be very hard to do.

• (1020)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Godin.

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

Our colleague Mr. Lauzon said earlier that, when you are an adult, you take longer to learn a language, even if it's your first language, French. I think that's a bad sign for the new Auditor General. If it takes so much time, he won't be learning it in a year. I can't help but mention that because there are people who have jobs here and who think they're going to learn everything in 1,200 hours.

I appreciated your comments on the study that was conducted and the importance of community. Ottawa makes decisions. Even though we're in Ottawa, we come from everywhere. Ottawa is a building where you go in and make decisions. Ottawa is the federal government. We come from everywhere. I come from Acadia. I know people back home. I talk with people back home. Every member comes from his constituency.

If we consider the study that was conducted in Yellowknife and Whitehorse, it would be an insult not to move forward. We spent more than \$100,000 to go to Yellowknife and Whitehorse. Some qualified people took notes. We have all those notes. We reported what the people said there. That was reported to Parliament. We hope the government will change its mind and we'll continue writing that report. Otherwise we'll be insulting those people in those communities. Those people really feel far removed from Ottawa and from

the decisions that are made there. I wanted to make that comment because I know it's very important for those people.

We started a cross-Canada tour and those people were waiting for us. Now they want this report to be written. It would be a shame not to do it and it wouldn't be respectful of them. We have to continue. We have to go to the high north and finish the tour so that we can say we really visited all of Canada. We should also get the views of the people on the ground, which is important.

You say there is the Roadmap, all the institutions, the departments and so on, but there has to be a door where we can go and knock. It was recommended that we go to the Privy Council. The Privy Council has to be responsible. The Treasury Board issues directives, but then there's the Privy Council. There is a door where we can go and knock.

Are you in favour of those recommendations? Every time there's a problem, we turn to a department. Is Canadian Heritage responsible? The representatives of Canadian Heritage said that the department had a responsibility to provide money, but not a responsibility for what happens. Another department is responsible for that. What do you recommend? Someone should have responsibility for giving everyone orders, just as the Privy Council has the power to give orders to the departments.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: I would like to clarify one point. We're talking about the Roadmap, not the act. There are two things concerning the Privy Council. There is definitely a coordination role in relation to the Roadmap, a central coordination role that would help clarify matters for everyone. Where do matters stand regarding the investments by year and by department?

It is important for the government and for the communities to know where those investments are going. If this is an action plan, a five-year Roadmap, let's have investments spread over a period of five years so that we can see and effectively plan the resources we can deal with. Then it would be easier for everyone to go and knock on one door rather than on 10 doors and try to sort out who is distributing what investment.

Mr. Jean Léger: My understanding of the federal government is that there is indeed a main door for the Roadmap, but the other doors shouldn't be closed either. We wouldn't want to go into a ghetto with one organization in particular and then lose our connections with the other departments. Industry Canada isn't there, but Industry Canada needs to play a coordination role in its sector. The same is true of Immigration Canada.

As for the Roadmap, Canadian Heritage, from what I understand of the Official Languages Act, is somewhat responsible for that. Now is it playing its role fully?

• (1025)

Mr. Yvon Godin: I don't want to say that we're closing the doors to the other departments because that wouldn't make any sense. We want the departments to work with the communities. However if something isn't working, there has to be a place where we can go and knock. If things aren't working with one department, there has to be a door where we can go and knock and say that they aren't working with that department.

Mr. Jean Léger: From what I understand, that's the role of Canadian Heritage.

Mrs. Marie-France Kenny: It's the role of the Official Languages Secretariat. However, as I said earlier in my address, it isn't equipped well enough. We must ensure that it is given the tools and the resources necessary to play that role.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, go ahead, please.

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

The unemployment rate is 30% in your region. Are your federations putting forward any initiatives to develop entrepreneurship?

Very often, it is the entrepreneurial spirit, in addition to education, that counts for a lot and improves matters. In my region, we had a similar problem 30 years ago, and the authorities at the time implemented initiatives to enable people to take charge of their situation. Based on the resources and human capital available, people worked together to create their own jobs and develop businesses. There were fewer jobs at the time. Regardless of the time or place where you are in Canada, there comes a time when the unemployment rate is higher.

Today, the businesses that were established during that time are on their second generation, soon their third. A lot of initiatives involving the various orders of government have been put forward. I'm pleased to say that my region today has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. A lot of businesses are flourishing there.

Are these kinds of initiatives being put in place in your riding?

Mr. Jean Léger: There are some in Nova Scotia. We have very close ties with Solidarité rurale du Québec, which plays a very important role in rural and regional development. Representatives from that organization came twice to present concepts used in Quebec. That doesn't mean that we are going to use Quebec's rural model. However, you are right that a certain effort has to be made to take charge of our situation. That's one of the main issues of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. We will be working toward that to the extent we can and will be accepting all the assistance offered us.

Some partners are doing a lot of work, including RDÉE and the Nova Scotia Economic Development Council. These are essential players. Our university is also playing a key role. ACOA should probably sit down at the table with us as well.

Yes, efforts are being made, but I believe they are not targeted and organized enough to have an impact. However, we are working on that.

The Chair: I want to thank the witnesses and committee members. We will suspend proceedings for two minutes to give witnesses the time to leave the room.

Thank you for your presentations.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I have a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: The witnesses are not required to leave the room, Mr. Chairman. We are not sitting in camera.

• (1030)

[English]

The Chair: I understand that, but people have to leave the table. We're suspending for two minutes so that we don't have chaos while we go into committee business.

I want to thank the witnesses for their presentations, and the members for their participation.

We're suspended for two minutes.

• (1030)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1030)

The Chair: We've come out of the suspension, and we're now into the second part of the orders of the day. We've been given

[Translation]

two notices of motion from Mr. Bélanger.

I will give him the floor so that he can introduce his first motion.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, as you will remember, in September, I talked about a report that had been tabled during the previous Parliament. We had suspended debate on the motion at the time out of respect for my colleagues, even though that report was public. They said this morning that they had not had the opportunity to read it.

Considering in particular what we have heard this morning, I would like to reintroduce the motion officially. It reads as follows:

*That the Third Report entitled *Recruitment, Intake and Integration: What Future for Immigration to Official Language Minority Communities?* of the Standing Committee on Official Languages in the third Session of the 40th Parliament be adopted again as a report of this Committee, that the Chair do present it to the House, and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee request a comprehensive response from the government on the recommendations contained in the report.*

I don't believe it is necessary to add much more. In view of what the two groups have told us this morning and in order to continue this important work concerning immigration, we need to know the government's orientations. That would be possible if we obtained a response to the 21 recommendations contained in the report, which moreover the FCFA would very much like to see.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mauril.

The motion has already been moved, so it's live on the floor.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: With all due respect to the comments made by the opposition members, it's been common practice in this committee to go in camera when we're discussing committee business. So I'm moving that we go in camera.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I request a recorded vote, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: For a recorded vote on this, I will give the floor to the clerk.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>