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—
Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

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•(0845)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP)): Order, please. Today I am chairing the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages on this Thursday, March 8, 2012. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), we are continuing the study on the evaluation of the Roadmap: improving programs and service delivery.

This morning we have witnesses from the National Research Council Canada and representatives of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions and of Western Economic Diversification Canada. Each group of witnesses will have 10 minutes to make its presentation. Then we will move on to a period of questions, which will be asked in turn by committee members representing the political parties.

We will begin with Danial Wayner, Vice-President, Frontier Science, National Research Council Canada. He is here with Charles-Antoine Gauthier, Acting Director of Research Programs.

Dr. Danial Wayner (Vice-President, Frontier Science, National Research Council Canada): Mr. Chair, thank you for inviting the National Research Council to appear before the committee today. My colleague, Charles-Antoine Gauthier, and I are pleased to provide you with a report on NRC's initiative related to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality.

With your permission, I'd like to start by telling you about the National Research Council Canada. As a research and technology organization, NRC is providing strategic research, as well as scientific and technical services to develop and deploy solutions to meet Canada's current and future industrial and societal needs. NRC has a mandate to undertake, assist or promote scientific and industrial research in different fields of importance to Canada. We do this by leveraging our talent and world-class facilities that reside across the country to create further value and wealth for Canada and to help raise the nation's level of innovation performance.

Now, more specifically about NRC's initiative on our share of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013, let me begin by providing you with some background.

[English]

In March 2003, the federal government announced the action plan for official languages, known as APOL. The action plan identified the need for the language industries to invest in language technologies to compensate for the increasing shortage of the needed qualified workers. It also identified that language technology

and translation industries lack the R and D capabilities and financial resources to make significant investments in the development of innovative language tools and technologies.

From April 2003 to March 2008, NRC received \$10 million over five years from APOL to increase investments in research and development in language technologies. To deliver on these commitments, NRC created the new interactive language technologies group and participated in the establishment of the Language Technologies Research Centre, which I'll just refer to as the centre. It is housed on the campus of the Université du Québec en Outaouais.

The Language Technologies Research Centre was created in partnership with the Translation Bureau of Canada and the Université du Québec en Outaouais. The centre is a not-for-profit organization with the mandate to incubate and help small and medium-sized language technology firms obtain funding and other resources for internal R and D projects. The centre is now operational, and NRC played a key role in launching the R and D projects.

Through the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013*, NRC renewed its commitment to expend \$10 million over five years, meaning about \$2 million per year, in R and D to support the language industry.

•(0850)

[Translation]

The roadmap includes a horizontal results-based management and accountability framework managed by the Department of Canadian Heritage's Official Languages Secretariat. As such, NRC reports annually on its expenditures on R&D activities in direct support of the roadmap, as well as on its progress against the performance measures.

NRC's investment was used to create and operate its R&D programs and specifically to respond to the needs of two types of clients that constitute two different segments of the broader language industry. These are language technology companies and the end users of language technologies.

Language technology companies are Canadian SMEs in the information and communication technology sector that can license the NRC technologies with the intention of developing commercial products that will be, in turn, offered to the end users.

End users include translation firms, freelance translators, as well as users of language technologies.

[English]

NRC used the majority of the funding to produce a machine translation technology called PORTAGE that actually works, meaning that it is clearly among the best products available in the world today. It is used at the Translation Bureau of Canada and at CLS Lexi-tech, the largest private sector translation bureau in Canada.

Funding was also used to produce a translation aid tool called WeBiText, which is licensed to a Montreal-based Canadian start-up company called Terminotix. While targeted at translators, WeBiText also allows anyone to find a translation for a term by looking through millions of pages of multilingual parallel text on the web. It is particularly effective on French to English and English to French because it has access to the vast number of bilingual web pages of the Government of Canada.

Over the last three years, NRC's interactive language technology group has developed or improved six core technologies and tools. The group has also filed for four patent applications to protect the intellectual property generated by these research projects, and they continue to increase the commercialization of innovative technologies.

NRC has met its immediate targets specified in the road map logic model and results structure of the horizontal results-based management and accountability framework, and that was to strengthen the capacity of the Canadian language industries through the transfer of its language technologies. The transfer of the PORTAGE machine translation system to the Translation Bureau of Canada and to CLS Lexi-Tech promises to reduce the cost of translations, and could significantly increase the capacity of the government and the private sector to work in both official languages.

NRC played a pivotal role that no other organization in Canada can play in support of language technology industries.

[Translation]

The presence in Canada of a strong language industry is an essential factor in preserving Canada's linguistic duality. Clearly NRC's contributions to language technologies were a key solution to maintaining the competitiveness of the Canadian language industry.

In conclusion, I would like to say that NRC is proud of its accomplishments in this initiative. Together with our partners, we have built a world-class team creating jobs and bringing value to the Canadian language industry by providing them with a global competitive edge. Thank you.

[English]

Thank you very much for your time.

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Thank you for your remarks, Mr. Wayner.

Now we will hear from the representatives of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

● (0855)

[English]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie (Director General, Policy, Research and Programs, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions): Mr. Chairman, committee members, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving us the opportunity to be here today.

[Translation]

First, allow me to introduce my colleague, Gilles Pelletier, Director General of Regional Operations. During our appearance, we will place the implementation of the Official Languages Act in the Quebec context, we will discuss the mandate of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, and we will focus on how we are meeting our obligations under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality.

[English]

First a word about the linguistic situation in Quebec.

[Translation]

Unlike the situation in the other Canadian provinces and territories, Quebec anglophones constitute the official language minority community, commonly called an OLMC. Quebec's anglophone OLMC's represent 1 million persons. Of that number, 600,000 have English as their mother tongue, 400,000 are allophones, and approximately 30,000 are aboriginal.

There is a notable concentration of anglophones in Quebec: 80% of them live in the greater Montreal area. They have networks, institutions and a critical mass in their own community; 10% live in other large urban areas such as Gatineau, Quebec City and Sherbrooke; and the remaining 10% live in remote or isolated rural areas such as Gaspésie, the lower north shore and northern Quebec.

[English]

Many of Quebec's English-speaking communities are finding it difficult to achieve economic integration. Through its activities, the agency encourages the communities to get involved in their economic development.

[Translation]

Our agency's mission is to promote the long-term economic development of the Quebec regions, with special attention to economic low-growth regions and those that do not have enough productive employment opportunities. Our long-term objective is to ensure that Quebec's regions and communities increase their development capacity, vitality and prosperity in a significant and sustainable manner.

The agency must also assist in achieving the objectives of the Official Language Act.

[English]

According to section 41, we must deliver on our commitment to support the vitality of communities and the linguistic duality of Canada. The agency is also among the departments that contribute to the attainment of the road map for Canada's linguistic duality. One outcome of the road map aims to reinforce the economic development of communities. As you see, this is directly related to the original economic development mandate of our agency.

[Translation]

One of the positive measures we have taken to fully discharge our obligations under the act and roadmap is to develop and implement an action plan. The purpose of that results-based action plan, which meets the requirements of part VII of the act, is to promote the economic integration of the OLMCs. The plan is divided into six action areas: awareness, consultation, communication, coordination and liaison, funding and service delivery and, lastly, accountability. We developed this action based on a renewed approach to the OLMCs.

We have been forging ties with those organizations for several years now, and our meetings have led to a better understanding of the needs of the OLMCs and enabled them to gain a greater understanding of the services the agency offers and of the specific measures designed to enhance their vitality.

[English]

The purpose of this ongoing dialogue is to promote the integration of this community within the Quebec economy. Like the other federal departments, we also took action to fulfill our obligation with respect to parts 4, 5, and 6 of the Official Languages Act.

[Translation]

To respond to part IV, we have made a considerable effort to increase the awareness of our staff and to enhance our capacity to respond to the public in both official languages where required. Those efforts have been acknowledged by the Commissioner of Official Languages, who gave the agency a high mark in his more recent report card. The commissioner also gave us a good mark on part V, which concerns language of work. We invested \$41,000 in 2010-2011 to maintain linguistic gains and to establish the required linguistic profiles for the 322 bilingual positions out of the total 365 positions at the agency.

The agency now intends to take the necessary measures to try to increase anglophone representation in our organization and thus to improve our ranking on part VI of the act. We have already carried out promotion and recruitment activities aimed at anglophone university students. Lastly, with regard to part VII and section 41, I am pleased to inform you that the commissioner has given us an exemplary mark for the positive measures we have taken. In recent years, the agency has implemented an approach involving ongoing dialogue with the OLMCs.

Through the many activities we have introduced, we have been able to gain a clearer understanding of the OLMCs' needs and to communicate information on available programs and services more effectively so as to support the vitality of those communities.

● (0900)

[English]

In the spirit of the commissioner's recommendation, we worked to take more integrated action with the other federal organizations in Quebec. For example, we collaborated with Industry Canada in organizing the dialogue with the English language minority of Quebec.

[Translation]

These distinctions do us credit and reflect well on the organization as a whole. The Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality has made it possible to provide stronger support for economic development projects in the OLMCs. Through this pan-Canadian initiative, the agency received \$10.2 million allocated over five years to enhance the activities we were already conducting.

This initiative has helped fund projects presented by non-profit organizations and businesses. The agency approved nine new projects in 2011-2012, totaling \$2.6 million in financial assistance and \$9.3 million in investment. For example, the agency supported a pilot project of the Youth Employment Services agency. The purpose of that project is to provide support to young anglophone entrepreneurs located in the regions.

[English]

In its efforts to promote linguistic duality, the agency also supported a project led by the Committee for Anglophone Social Action. The project will help get the two linguistic communities to work in tandem, develop alliances, and share their know-how so as to increase their contribution to the regional economy.

[Translation]

Our business offices have also taken various initiatives designed to promote the vitality of the OLMCs in their areas. For example, our Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands office has supported various economic development projects in the past year and attended many meetings designed to support the community in structuring its tourism sector. In addition, the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality also provides for a performance measurement strategy implemented by the partner departments and agencies in the initiative. To do this, the agency is integrating that strategy into its own departmental performance measure. In this way, we will be able to provide data and periodic reports on the performance of projects being carried out under the initiative.

As can see, we are contributing to the vitality of the OLMCs by supporting actual economic development and diversification projects related to our mandate. We will continue providing our assistance to the OLMCs, not only under the roadmap, but also through our programming and action plan, as well as ongoing dialogue. Our contribution will enable these communities to take an active part in their economic development and to integrate more effectively into the Quebec community, regardless of the official language they speak.

[English]

Thank you for your attention.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lavoie.

[English]

Now we'll go to Western Economic Diversification.

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Watson (Deputy Minister, Western Economic Diversification Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is my pleasure to appear here today before the committee. I am accompanied by my colleagues, James Meddings, Assistant Deputy Minister for Policy and Strategic Direction and the departmental official languages champion, and France Guimond. Ms. Guimond, who is Director General of Operations for the Manitoba office, has direct experience in this area as she works with the communities we are discussing today.

As you know, Western Economic Diversification Canada is the regional development agency responsible for the four western provinces. WD's primary mandate is to promote economic growth, development and diversification in western Canada. Since its creation in 1987, WD has worked diligently to deliver on this mandate through focused programs and activities designed to support jobs and growth among small and medium-sized enterprises, encourage trade and investment, foster innovation and strengthen community economic development.

In our day-to-day work, WD recognizes that part VII of the Official Languages Act and the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality are invaluable to achieving our goal of a more competitive and diverse regional economy that is inclusive of all communities.

Canada's official language minority communities make a substantial contribution to our nation's economic strength, both domestically and in international markets.

Although French is the mother tongue for about two per cent of the west's population, seven per cent have knowledge of both official languages. That is almost 700,000 people.

• (0905)

[English]

However, the importance of linguistic duality surpasses its numbers. The roots of many francophone communities throughout western Canada are deep and formative in Canada's history. The rich history of francophone communities in the west represents a significant economic asset for the region and an additional dimension to the western Canadian presence on the global stage. It is important that the youth in these communities have the opportunities to be productive and to keep these communities thriving.

As well, immigration is contributing to the vitality, both culturally and economically, of francophone communities in western Canada.

[Translation]

My department is determined to cultivate these assets. WD's 2011-2016 Action Plan for Implementation of the Official Languages Act is the means by which we ensure that the act and the roadmap are

well entrenched in WD's day-to-day management of its business activities.

I am proud to say that the four francophone economic development organizations—the FEDOs—members of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network are key players in this regard, having been members since 2001, and we are pleased to support their work, and WD's staff—in particular, the department's official languages team—consult with them closely to respond to the needs of western Canada's official language minority communities.

[English]

WD, from its core funding, provides FEDOs with an annual budget of almost \$2.2 million, which they use to provide a wide range of business and community economic development services. This is above and beyond EDI funding. The types of services that were provided by FEDOs, or the francophone economic development organizations, are information services to 3,358 clients who have come in, in this period of time; 1,652 technical advisory services to people setting up and running businesses; and training for almost 1,500 clients.

The Commissioner of Official Languages has said that FEDOs are a best practice and something that could be looked at by other institutions.

My department is currently working with francophone communities in the west and FEDOs to develop projects, both under the road map's economic development initiative, or EDI, and under WD's core programming. For example, Manitoba's FEDO organization,

[Translation]

le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba, or the CDEM,

[English]

as it's known, is playing a central role in ensuring francophone entrepreneurs in Manitoba have access to the capital, training, and information they need to start or grow their small businesses.

[Translation]

More specifically, the CDEM is investing in youth entrepreneurship and attracting youth to return to rural communities, once they have graduated from postsecondary institutions. Also in Manitoba, WD recently approved a proprietary program-funded project with the Agence nationale et internationale du Manitoba—ANIM—to lead and organize the Centrallia 2012 event in Winnipeg.

Centrallia is a trilingual international business-to-business forum that will bring together over 600 business leaders from around the world to Winnipeg .

[English]

In Saskatchewan, we are working closely with the FEDO organization there, the Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan, also known as the CCS, to identify a potentially EDI-funded project to support francophone entrepreneurs in that province, and Alberta's FEDO organization, the Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, is helping to promote the francophone tourism industry across the west.

It is developing a technology application tool to inform Canadian and international users about francophone tourist attractions as well as tourism-related businesses offering services in French across western Canada.

[Translation]

Finally, I am most pleased with the Place de la Francophonie event at the 2010 Winter Games which was led by the Société de développement économique de la Colombie Britannique. This was a resounding success where our federal EDI funding brought together the local francophone community, the FEDOs, the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the Olympics, and the BC province to showcase francophone tourism and agrifood industries to an international audience.

• (0910)

[English]

The beauty of this event was that internally it allowed the four FEDOs from across western Canada to work collaboratively as one western partnership, leveraging a whole range of resources. Externally, it helped build a partnership with the B.C. government, which has since increased the recognition of the economic contribution of francophone communities.

These are just a few examples of how federal support such as the road map, along with the strategic partnerships, can promote the vitality of francophone communities both economically and culturally.

[Translation]

We continue to work closely with organizations, to raise awareness and to develop our department's "Official languages lens". This tool was praised by the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages when we first developed the concept in 2009. The "OL lens" has since been rolled out and it embeds OLMC considerations in the due diligence review that WD's officers undertake in project development.

Each project considered by WD employees is assessed using the "OL lens" criteria that have been developed by the department. Initiatives such as those I have mentioned today, have contributed to the high ratings WD has received from the Commissioner of Official Languages. WD was given an "exemplary" rating recently in recognition of our work in developing official language minority communities and promoting linguistic duality. We are proud of that assessment, but we are also aware that we can aim to do more.

In conclusion, we believe that, by supporting these communities, we are honouring the past and helping francophone entrepreneurs, including French-speaking newcomers and youth, foster economic growth in their communities. We are also positioning the west for the future.

[English]

Thank you for your time today. I look forward to your questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Watson.

Welcome, everyone. I apologize for being late.

Thank you for starting the meeting, Mr. Godin.

We have about an hour and a half for questions and comments.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

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

I will be putting my questions to the CED representatives.

Mr. Watson, earlier you said you were proud of the 2010 Olympic Games. I believe we could say that we missed the boat at the outset, at the opening. The Francophonie was not present, and that's unfortunate.

I know the government wants to conduct a major study for the 150th anniversary in 2017. It also wants to conduct a major study on how not to make the same mistake again. You don't have to make mistakes. It's easy; you make them and that's all. I don't see why we should study that for weeks on end. To ensure respect for both official languages, the two founding peoples of Canada and aboriginal peoples, we are being forced to spend more hours and weeks conducting a study to ensure that we do that without frustrating anyone. I don't know whether that's the idea.

I will be coming back to your economic organization from the west. You deal with the francophone communities, but, as you know, there is considerable job mobility today. Let's talk about that. Employers no longer want to set up new villages or to be responsible for them. That's what used to happen. They operated a mine somewhere and a village was set up there; they founded a village or a small town. Companies no longer do that. They bring in people from everywhere. I read an article on the subject in the newspaper yesterday. It stated that the government had said there was an incredible labour shortage in Canada, more particularly in the west. What is your agency doing to help Canada's francophones?

People will say that things are the way they are to: it isn't anglophones who have a problem. Canada's francophones are prepared to go and work out west. What is your organization doing to talk to companies like Suncor and those major companies where, with all due respect, francophones aren't welcome if they don't speak English? Let me explain. For example, back home on the Acadian peninsula, there've been a lot of closings in the forest industry. Paper mills have shut down in Miramichi, Bathurst, Dalhousie and New Richmond, in Quebec.

In the northeast and part of eastern Quebec, there are skilled labourers ready to go to work, but the companies say... I'll give you an example; I'll give you the background to what is really going on. It's possible to go and take security exams, but you have to go to Miramichi to do it, and they ask people to take the exam in English only. If candidates don't speak English well enough to take the exam, they will be disqualified.

A number of people from back home went out west last week. One qualified individual—a janitor, no less—went. He didn't need a lot of qualifications; I say that with all due respect. However, because he was unable to take the exam in English, he lost his job. He didn't get a single chance to sweep or wash a floor. He had the qualifications to do it. However, they brought in people from other countries. The article in yesterday's newspaper provided some statistics. They're bringing in people from the Philippines and China who have translators to help them take their exam. Go and check it out. I believe it's your responsibility to go and check that.

What is your agency doing to help Canadians, the first ones, get jobs? We need to break down the myth that, if you don't speak both languages in the west, if you don't speak English, you won't get it. However, the evidence is there. Foreign workers are being brought in and people say they are forced to recruit them because there aren't any workers in Canada. Back home, there are people who are prepared to go. They are aware of the reality of worker mobility; they take a plane. They call that a 20/14 or a 14/7. I made people laugh: I said I was doing 4/3s. I'm in Ottawa for four days a week and back home for three.

• (0915)

I would like you to tell us about worker mobility. I believe the agency could help members of the francophone communities who are prepared to go and work. These are brave souls who want to work but who have no place to go.

Mr. Daniel Watson: Thank you for your question.

Mobility in Canada is obviously a very serious matter. It is in fact extraordinary to see all the workers who travel from east to west and, in some instances, vice versa.

Within the mandate of the Department of Western Economic Diversification, we work with small and medium enterprises. We try to support them when they attempt to develop ideas for economic diversification in the west. So our work is about innovation and the development of new investments and new markets outside Canada and, in some instances, in Canada as well. We mainly work with small and medium enterprises and with the organizations that support small and medium enterprises. We provide our assistance mainly to francophone economic organizations with which we work very closely and which also involve small and medium enterprises that need employees, particularly for growing markets or to develop businesses. That is how we provide support in this area. We do not work directly with anglophone or francophone employees; we work with businesses, mainly small and medium enterprises. Suncor lies somewhat outside that area—

Mr. Yvon Godin: However, a number of small and medium enterprises work for Suncor.

Mr. Daniel Watson: There are a number of them, yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: What is your involvement in that area? You say small and medium enterprises. I met the representatives of the francophone section of the Alberta Economic Development Authority. They are at a disadvantage relative to anglophones because they only have funding and they are alone. They don't have three or four organizations helping them, as anglophones do. They are alone; that's what they told me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Please be brief, Mr. Watson.

• (0920)

Mr. Daniel Watson: Yes, that's fine.

When Suncor decides whether to buy its products from South Korea, the United States, Japan, Germany or Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, we want it to decide to buy its products from Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, not South Korea.

We will work with any entrepreneur or group of entrepreneurs that can sell their goods or services to Suncor. We will help those people develop better products, which they will sell to Suncor. We won't work directly with the employees, but rather with the businesses.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Watson.

Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Gourde, go ahead, please.

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

Thanks to the witnesses for being here.

My first question is for the representatives of the National Research Council Canada. In your opening remarks, you mentioned language technologies. I'm very much interested in that.

Can you say a bit more about that? You're on version 1, version 2 and version 3, if we are talking about translation software. We know that the quality of the first ones was mediocre, but I believe that has improved today. Can you tell us a little more about that?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier (Acting Director, Research Programs, National Research Council Canada): Thank you for your question. I am not sure exactly what you are looking for. If I don't have the right answer, we can come back to this.

For a number of years now, we have been working on the problem of machine translation to support translators. In most translation firms, translation is done in two stages. In the first stage, there is a draft, which is generally prepared by a less experienced translator.

That first draft is then revised by a more experienced individual, who prepares the final version.

The idea is to develop a technology that produces a machine-generated first draft. That would free up human resources to do much more work and to do the final revision.

We have added something to that basic work to make it possible to produce something of high quality. This is a learning system that will examine the translator's corrections at the end, and the machine will learn to correct its own mistakes based on what people do so that the system improves over time.

I don't know whether that answers your question.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: You're telling me that you are now on the second or third generations of those products. As I told you, the first ones that I saw produced translations in which few corrections had been made. One simply wondered what the translation meant. It is difficult for a machine to replace a professional translator who understands what the sentence means. When you translate word for word, you change the meaning.

These new technologies are delicate. That's why I wanted you to say more about how they have improved. There is a current shortage of translators in Canada, and these new technologies are increasingly being used. In some cases, this produces results that are not always satisfactory. From time to time, I receive drafts, and, sad to say, I have to reread them and correct myself. Sometimes you have to reread the English version to understand the meaning. Do you think this will rise to an acceptable level in two or three years?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: I believe we have already achieved an acceptable level within our organization. The idea is not to replace human beings, but to help them.

We have done a lot of work to "train" the system. It is very important to select basic documents to improve the machine. Consider Google's translation program. The entire system uses what the machine finds on the Internet. If you mix up legal texts with medical texts, for example, the machine is no longer able to produce a sensible translation.

We help translation firms select the right documents. We can have several versions of the translation software, a legal version or a medical version, for example. They will be intended for specific clients. This enables the machine to learn how to handle texts that come from such and such a client, for example.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Do your clients work with you to develop these new products? Or is the National Research Council Canada working alone?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: The research is done first at the National Research Council Canada. Then we work directly with businesses to help them implement the technology. This isn't something we can simply give a business in a box.

We really have to work with people, explain to them how it works, do part of the training for them and train the company's people so they can take charge of the technology. It's not very simple. We are working toward producing a new, slightly more automated version, but we aren't there yet.

• (0925)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Is this an initiative of the National Research Council Canada? Did the private sector ask NRC to take this initiative? This meets a need, but who took the first initiative?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: The need was identified in the Action Plan for Official Languages, which very clearly stated that there was a shortage of translators and a need for technologies to assist translators. That's why we focused on this problem first and foremost. It was the biggest problem identified at the time.

Now we have reached a point where we are starting to make this technology available to the private sector.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Will this technology be partly available to the public? If not, will it be reserved solely for the businesses that developed it?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: I don't believe the technology could be used by just anyone because of the need to train the machine. That being said, it is possible to supply the system in a particular field and to provide this in a box. So it might be possible to have a legal translator in a box, another translator in a box for the

airlines and a medical translator in a box. That would be possible, but it would not be possible for the basic technology.

You also have to understand something else. In translation companies, work that has previously been done represents an enormous amount of value for those businesses. That's where their intellectual capital lies. To be able to train a translation system using those documents gives them a lot of value. They are not particularly interested in sharing past work. That would be like giving their competitors access to their own translations.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: That's fine. Thank you.

How much time I have left?

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I have a brief question for the representatives of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. Earlier you said that the problem appeared to be the reverse in Quebec. You mentioned the recruitment of anglophone employees. Is your percentage of francophone employees that high?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: Our percentage of francophone employees must be about 97%. In addition, 88% of those francophone employees occupy bilingual positions. In his evaluation of the roadmap, the Commissioner of Official Languages gave us a slightly lower mark for anglophone recruitment. That's why we have taken slightly more proactive measures to try to increase anglophone representation.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Do you want to increase your representation by 12%, 15% or 20%?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: If I remember correctly, the target should be about 13.5%, which will bring us up to near the percentage that anglophones represent in the general population.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bélanger, it's your turn.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Chair, since today is International Women's Day and only one woman member is sitting at the table, I am offering to trade my seven minutes of speaking time for her five minutes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Ms. Michaud, it's your turn.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, since today is International Women's Day, we have suggested that Éline ask all the questions.

The Chair: Do you want to sit as chair?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): That would mean that I wouldn't be asking all the questions; that's not so bad.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Michaud.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

I want to thank all the witnesses for their presentations.

My first question is for you three. As the roadmap is already coming to an end, we are anxiously awaiting the mid-term evaluation. We have not heard about your summative evaluations. Have you started them? Exactly where are you in that process?

Anyone can answer first. Go ahead, Mr. Watson.

Mr. Daniel Watson: We are very closely monitoring every project we carry out. We have conducted a review of each of the projects that have been launched, such as the Olympic Games project, from which we have drawn some very positive conclusions. We were very pleased to see the amount of money derived from other sources, for example, following the Olympics project.

However, this question goes beyond purely financial issues. For example, in my remarks, I mentioned the growing recognition of the value added by the francophone communities in western Canada following similar events. When people see something, they see development, opportunities and connections that are being made between businesses and visitors who come from the rest of the world, connections that otherwise would not have been made.

• (0930)

Ms. Éloise Michaud: So I understand that you have evaluated various aspects but that there has not yet been a summative evaluation.

Mr. Daniel Watson: We are in the process of doing it. Of course, the program is not over. We generally wait until the end of the program before conducting the major valuation. However, during the process, we also review what is going on, and we intend soon to complete a review of what has happened to date.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: Thank you for your question.

As you probably know, the Treasury Board Secretariat's decision on the initiative offered two options: that each of the initiative partners conduct its own summative evaluation, or that we conduct it jointly with Industry Canada. I believe the same is true for ACOA in the west and for FedNor.

So we are working with Industry Canada. We have already provided information to the department, which will prepare the summary, the synthesis of the evaluations of the three agencies, and produce a summative evaluation that will then be integrated with those of the other partners. So that is already under way in our department. Information has been provided to Industry Canada. I know that we are about to see the first drafts over the next few weeks.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Thank you.

Dr. Danial Wayner: Thank you for your question.

We have a first draft evaluation.

[English]

I can say that it is now being considered by the executives at NRC. We're very pleased with the outcomes we're seeing, and there are a number of recommendations that we'll be bringing forward as well.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Do you know when that would be available to us?

Dr. Danial Wayner: That's a good question. It is not on the agenda for our next executive meeting, but I expect it will be on the agenda for the following meeting, which will be before the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Thank you.

[Translation]

Now I'm going to put some slightly more specific questions to the NRC representatives.

The \$10 million in funding granted in 2003 was renewed in 2008. Exactly how was that amount determined? Was it based on actual needs, proposed projects or the summative evaluations?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: Thank you for your question.

I'm going to consult my colleagues since we don't really have an good answer to give you. I know how the initial \$10 million amount was determined. It wasn't in response to project proposals from the NRC. The same was true for the renewal: that amount was probably entered automatically.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Would it be possible to make the necessary checks and provide the committee with that information?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: You want to know how the decision was made?

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I would like you to get a slightly clearer answer to the question I asked and to provide it to the committee.

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: I will take note of the question and provide you with an answer.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Thank you very much.

How do you manage the centre? How do you manage the funding granted under the roadmap?

[English]

Dr. Danial Wayner: Do you mean the centre or the language technologies group that we created?

[Translation]

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I'm talking about the LTRC.

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: I must clear up a confusing point in the documentation. The NRC receives funding to direct an initiative, the LTRC, which is referred to in the documentation as CRTL, the acronym for the centre's French name. There is also another non-profit organization called CRTL, which has its own governance and is independent of the NRC.

Does your question concern the NRC initiative or the non-profit organization called CRTL?

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Your clarification suggests to me that the LTRC itself manages the funding allocated under the roadmap initiative?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: No, the roadmap has funded the National Research Council. CRTL is a non-profit organization that must find its own funding. It is not funded under the roadmap.

•(0935)

Ms. Éline Michaud: I'll look into this matter a little further. I didn't get the right information.

Dr. Daniel Wayner: The support role in the circumstances consists in creating a research group whose purpose is to develop new language technologies.

[*English*]

In that context, we build partnerships and we've succeeded in developing new technologies and transferring them to our partners who are now using them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éline Michaud: Thank you.

How much time do I have left?

The Chair: Time is up.

Ms. Éline Michaud: No more time. All right. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud

Mr. Trottier now has the floor.

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

It's my turn to acknowledge the contribution of women within the Government of Canada and across the country on this International Women's Day.

I thank my colleague opposite for her questions.

I would like to talk about economic diversification. Let's start with western Canada. Western Economic Diversification Canada was founded in 1987, if I'm not mistaken. I am a former resident of western Canada. I grew up in northern Alberta and lived in a riding whose MP was Don Mazankowski. I think he was one of the catalysts in the creation of that agency promoting western economic diversification.

Could you talk about your mandate as it concerns innovation and diversification? What is the place of official languages in diversification? For example, you talk about production or expanding the western Canadian economy, which used to be based on agriculture and natural resources. What can we really do? What is the role of official languages?

You talk about tourism, for example. Are there any examples of that? Are there any industries they could use this asset that Canada has, its two official languages, to develop new businesses in western Canada?

Mr. Daniel Watson: Definitely. With your permission, I will ask my colleagues to cite the example of Centralia in a minute.

Official languages are an enormous asset. Canada's presence is much more strongly felt in international markets when we are able to speak with our business partners in the language they prefer. In Canada, our two official languages are obviously two major assets.

It is interesting to see that French, Swiss, Belgian and francophone African companies, which occupy an important place in the oil and agrifood industries, are very much interested in coming to Canada and to western Canada to take advantage of all our assets. Those

assets include natural resources and technological development, as well as the ability to work in the language of one's choice.

Recently, on two occasions, we supported a major project that directly involves these issues.

With your permission, I will ask my colleague France Guimond to talk about the Centralia project. She will tell you what it means for the economy in the west and internationally.

Ms. France Guimond (Director General, Operations-Manitoba, Western Economic Diversification Canada): Good morning, Mr. Chair.

The Centralia project received WD funding in 2010. That was the first time a forum like that was held in Manitoba. More than 4,000 international small businesses took part in it, and the results were very good. We finalized sales with a number of businesses, and there is also a very strong possibility that four major Manitoba businesses may be developing projects that could have a \$75 million impact.

With regard to official languages, a number of western businesses, operating at the national and international levels, were able to do business in French in Manitoba. Those are very good results.

I would also like to cite the example of the Manitoba Music Industry Association because you mentioned other sectors. That association is a non-profit organization that received WD funding to develop new international markets for businesses.

In Manitoba, the cultural organization 100 NONS has long been working with francophone artists and businesses. A number of exchanges were facilitated between 100 NONS and the Manitoba Industry Association. Even though the target markets are not the same, we considered the national mandate. There are a lot of exchanges and the results are fantastic. That's another example.

•(0940)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thanks very much.

I am speaking to the representatives of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. I imagine your organization's mandate is slightly different from that of the western organization. In the west, it's more a matter of diversification, whereas you are operating more in the regions—so less in Montreal and Quebec City—such as Gaspésie and the Magdalen Islands.

Could you give us some concrete examples of things that have developed with the minority communities in Gaspésie or the Magdalen Islands and that will assist those anglophone communities in developing their economies?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: Thank you for the question.

We at CED are concerned with economic development that is sustainable over the long term. Sometimes, to be able to have an influence on growth, we first have to promote the diversification of the community's economic base so that we can then help it grow.

The basic principle is that, if we want to promote diversification and growth, we have to be able to use all the assets available in each of the regions in order to achieve growth objectives. As the CED, we take action in that area. Sometimes we focus on diversification because the communities are at a less developed stage.

I am going to hand the floor over my colleague, who can cite some examples of what we sometimes do with regard to diversification or when we are at a more advanced stage of economic growth.

Mr. Gilles Pelletier (Director General, Regional Operations, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions): We intervene in the areas of entrepreneurship, tourism, innovation and economic diversification in virtually all Quebec regions where there is a significant anglophone community. In Gaspésie, more particularly, I can cite two examples. Among others, there is the

[*English*]

Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders.

[*Translation*]

We support the anglophone community of Grosse-Île. We are helping it develop projects in the cruise industry. As you know, we have an initiative designed to support the development of cruises to attract international cruise lines. We have mobilized the Grosse-Île community so that, through CED funding under the roadmap, it can renovate tourist sites of importance to the community that can also become tourist attractions for foreign tourists.

Another very promising project is that of the Committee for Anglophone Social Action. This is a very promising project that was also funded in Gaspésie. The purpose of that project is to develop cooperative networks between anglophones and francophones in the Gaspé region, to develop a spirit of entrepreneurship and mutual assistance that will enable both communities to develop economically.

We also have projects in the Outaouais, Montreal, Quebec City and across Quebec.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Weston.

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

As the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, I occasionally use the name West Van Whistler, the riding of the winter Olympic and paralympic games. I am very pleased to hear your comments. I believe the Olympic Games have left a legacy, especially at Whistler, but also across the province of British Columbia. For example, French immersion schools are still developing in the province.

My question is for you, Mr. Wayner. I am very much interested in the technological development you described, and I have a question in mind. If a small business is developing language learning software, how does it approach your office? Is there still some funding left? Do you have any recommendations for that kind of business, because I believe there are a lot of them in Canada? A lot of citizens speak several languages and are interested in learning more. I know someone in my riding who is considering developing that kind of business

• (0945)

Dr. Danial Wayner: Thank you.

That's a very general question.

[*English*]

If you don't mind, I'll just switch to English so I can make sure that I capture all the nuances of what I'd like to share.

In general, NRC has a role to support—

Mr. John Weston: Are you suggesting that we British Columbians miss the nuances when we speak French? Yes, of course.

Dr. Danial Wayner: At NRC, one of our roles, of course, is to support innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises, so we have a number of mechanisms to do that. One of them is our industrial research assistance program, which allows companies to come to NRC to provide a business case for an investment, and we have a contribution program that allows us to make a direct financial contribution to support those investments, which has to be shared with a matching contribution from the company itself. Across NRC, we have over 240 industry technology advisors who are in the field, who meet with these companies on a day-to-day basis, who support them not only with our contribution program but by providing business advice and strategic advice, helping them understand markets, and where the market growth can be not only domestically but globally. That is one mechanism that NRC has to support these companies, but the IRAP advisors in the field will also direct them to the parts of NRC that have research facilities or expertise that can support them as well.

In the context of the program that we're discussing today, if there is a software company that has potential or that has a technology for language translation, over the last 10 years we have built a world-class team.... I'll just say NRC's role in the program might be different from other programs because we are a research and technology organization. I can't stress enough how long it takes to build a team such as we have. We are very proud of what we've done over the last 10 years. We started with virtually nothing and in 10 years have built a team that has been able to develop technologies that are really, truly world class, and in some cases best in the world.

In reference to Madam Michaud's question, a significant part of our investment, of course, is in the salaries, in building these teams. Seventy per cent of our expenditures are salaries because we're a research provider and we actually have our own teams. We have an open door in order for companies to come in and discuss opportunities with us. We have programs that would allow us to build collaborative projects to help specific companies. What we expect is that we share the cost and share the risk of developing those technologies. But there are a number of ways for NRC to support these small companies, and currently one of our dreams is to have global domination of various industries, especially in the information technology sector.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I think I have a point of order from Mr. Menegakis. Go ahead.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I notice there's a photographer present in the room taking pictures of the proceedings. That is not standard practice here. It's not something we approved ahead of time.

I think it raises the question of a privilege in the future, and I'm making that point.

The Chair: As chair, I used my authority to allow the photographer to be here, simply to take pictures of Monsieur Aubin when he speaks during his round. But if the committee wishes to change that, I'm your servant and I'm prepared to ask the photographer to leave.

I note, though, that Monsieur Aubin has the floor right now for five minutes, and I've been assured by the photographer from *La Presse* that he's only going to be using pictures of Monsieur Aubin. Monsieur Aubin has consented to the use of these photographs.

If the committee is willing, we can allow the photographer to stay for another five minutes to take these pictures for an article they're working on. If not, as I said, I will follow your direction.

[Translation]

Mr. Bélanger, you have the floor.

Then it will be Mr. Godin's turn.

• (0950)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, I have no objection, provided you guarantee us that you will also allow it when we want to do the same.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, of course.

If media were to come in here to take pictures of the committee generally, obviously I would seek the consent of everybody here. In this particular case, it's simply Monsieur Aubin. I sought the consent of Monsieur Aubin. He consented. I asked the photographer not to be intrusive. That's the basis on which I made my decision.

As I said, if the committee wishes to overrule me in this regard and ask the photographer to leave in advance of Monsieur Aubin's five minutes, I obviously will follow the wishes of the committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Then it will be Mr. Trottier's turn.

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

Perhaps that could have been decided in advance. We could call it a minor error. It's normal for a photographer to follow a member since he needs to take his picture. That's been done in the past. That's the way it is in all political parties. It happens often. Personally, I once had a Radio-Canada photographer follow me for a week. He followed me into committee meetings and only took pictures. It's always been that way. To my knowledge, it hasn't been prohibited.

I just wanted to state my opinion. On another day, that could happen to one of you: a newspaper or magazine photographer might want to follow you. I know there are number of new members around this table who don't know that this has happened in the past. It is normal for citizens to see the work that politicians do; that's part

of a healthy democracy. That's the brief comment I wanted to make. I'm in favour of this practice, regardless of who is subjected to it.

The Chair: The photographer has asked me if he will be able to take pictures once the meeting has started.

[English]

In the interest of not disrupting the proceedings of the meeting, I quietly asked Monsieur Aubin if he consented, and he did. But in the future, if I know in advance that a photographer will be here, I will seek the consent of the committee before the meeting begins.

Monsieur Trottier.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Trottier: I will be brief. Thank you for that clarification.

Furthermore, Mr. Aubin is so good-looking, I understand why someone would want to take his picture.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bernard Trottier: We agree on that way of proceeding.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aubin, you have the floor.

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

Le président: Just a moment, please.

[English]

Yes, Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I respectfully request that this matter is not finished.

The Chair: I believe I had the implied consent of the committee to allow a photographer from *Le Presse* to take the photos.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I don't feel comfortable with a photographer being behind me.

If Mr. Aubin would like pictures, he can have them before the meeting starts or after the meeting ends. He can pose for the pictures. I have no problem with that.

I think it sets a dangerous precedent. I don't like it. Therefore, I'm asking that we vote on this.

The Chair: Okay.

Yes, Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would like to make a comment. This doesn't set a precedent because it has always been this way.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. All those in favour of allowing the photographer to take photographs of Monsieur Aubin?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The photographer will remain and may take photographs.

Monsieur Aubin, you have the floor.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, on this March 8, I hope you will allow me to express the hope that one day we will stop celebrating this day because we will have achieved equality in society. I would also like to note, incidentally, that my party has taken some real action in that direction. I believe this is really the way to go, but, in the meantime, I tip my hat to all those who, day after day, make an effort to achieve equality in our society. Thank you. That's all for March 8.

I thought it particularly interesting to hear about translation machines. This may be a new form of robot. In preparing for this meeting, I went onto the web, particularly the National Research Council site, where I found a paragraph that gave me a bit of a start and on which I would like to hear your comments. It was under the heading of the Canadian Astronomy Data Centre. It read as follows:

Due to the highly technical and dynamic nature of the content, expectations of adherence to Government of Canada Common Look and Feel and Official Language requirements may not be met.

Can someone explain to me why? Is it difficult to talk about science or astronomy in French? If we can develop specialized robots in medicine or legal affairs, can we imagine that it might be possible to create one that can process scientific data?

•(0955)

Dr. Danial Wayner: That's a good question. Thank you.

English is the main international language of science. We have a lot of associates, particularly in astronomy, and we provide a database.

[English]

to provide access to astronomical information. That's actually how we proceeded in these areas. The question is, should we or can we provide fully bilingual services?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: I imagine it must be much more difficult for a francophone to understand figures in English. It's really their context that has to be translated.

Why does anyone feel a need to state specifically that official languages might not be respected?

Dr. Danial Wayner: Could I see the paragraph you read?

Mr. Robert Aubin: Yes, I could send it to you.

I was wondering whether you had received approval from the Treasury Board Secretariat before publishing this kind of notice.

[English]

Dr. Danial Wayner: It's something that I will certainly look into now that you've raised it. It is NRC's commitment to provide access in the language of choice to all of our services. It's something that I will be raising after this meeting.

Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank very much. I imagine you will send us the results of your research into this matter.

My question was nevertheless very serious. Would it be possible to develop a translation tool that is focused more on the scientific world? Could that be a possibility even though a lot of communication is done in English?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: The technology developed by the NRC relies on access to a parallel body of text. In this case, that would require us to have French and English equivalents at the outset in order to train the machine. That is the limitation of the current technology; if that body of text is not available, it is impossible to start up the system. In an individual case, there is always a way to look at the content, to start from somewhere, and then probably to close the loop so that the system can learn from corrections.

I would answer yes to your question. However, I would perhaps temper your expectations by telling you that it may not become a reality by next week, although the fact remains that it is possible.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Eventually, under a new roadmap, if we allocated the funding—

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: Yes.

Mr. Robert Aubin: —we could develop that resource.

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: There are no technical reasons why that is not possible.

Mr. Robert Aubin: My other question concerns the website, which is in English only.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aubin.

Mr. Wayner and Mr. Gauthier...

Mr. Aubin, can you ask your question again?

Mr. Robert Aubin: In fact, I was wondering why the site was in English only. It doesn't contain anything specialized like the summary of a scientific treatise.

Le président: Thank you.

M. Danial Wayner: That's a good question.

[English]

But I actually don't have the answer right now. That's something that I will look into and report back on, if you wish.

•(1000)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

We'll suspend for five minutes.

•(1000)

_____ (Pause) _____

•(1005)

[Translation]

The Chair: Welcome to the continuation of the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[English]

We'll continue with Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Bonjour. I had a question for Danial.

Specifically, you have spoken at length now about the new translation technology, but I just wanted to dig down a little bit deeper. But I have a question first to which I think the answer is obvious. What's the market for the technology? What are the markets that are vying for this technology?

Are there dollars involved in terms of profitability?

Dr. Danial Wayner: Thank you for that question.

Of course, NRC is very focused on making sure we make investments in areas that have potential for economic growth for our companies. If we look today at the market, it is a growing market. One of the sectors of this market that's growing very rapidly, for example, is in security and security-related technologies.

As a testament to what we've been able to build over the last 10 years, we have had DARPA, which is the American Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the FBI both come to us to use PORTAGE and integrate it into their systems.

In the security area itself there are an increasing number of firms, but there are also great demands from the agencies themselves. The amount of information available is doubling every 18 months. The ability of our security agencies to assemble, analyze, and prioritize information is beyond the capabilities of the analysts they have. In many ways it's similar to the translation challenges that the bureaus are facing.

Certainly in those areas of opportunity we've built the base that allows us to move into translation from other languages as well, and that opens up global markets for—

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Yes. I was going to ask if the technology was limited to English-French translation, or is it a much broader platform?

Dr. Danial Wayner: I'll defer to my colleague, Charles-Antoine, for a technical explanation.

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: No, it's not. It's learning from an existing body of parallel texts, so it works on any language pairs, or almost any language pairs. In competitions we've scored very well in Arabic to English, for instance. I think, in fact, we came first against IBM and others. So it does work on other languages as well.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I'm very curious about this technology, and you've talked about different stages that it's at now. I guess it's being utilized currently, but is it being rolled out? Do you have a timeline of when it's going to be fully available, if that makes sense?

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: It's fully available now; it's being rolled out now. Inside translation bureaus there are tool chains that the company uses. The PORTAGE system has to be integrated into that tool chain in every translation bureau. It's been done relatively easily in the two large-scale bureaus that are using our technology right now. We're conducting trials in two other ones. Companies also want to make sure that they're getting a return on their investment if they're going to invest in this, but it is available now for rollout.

Dr. Danial Wayner: If you want to explore a little more around where even the translation technologies have potential for growth,

you can think about business intelligence tools, where companies like OpenText are providing tremendous breadth to companies to explore and analyze information. The integration of a wide range of translation tools allows Canadian firms like this to have opportunities to continue to grow and dominate the global markets.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Right.

I have a question for Jean-Pierre. You had mentioned in your OLMC initiative that you had been soliciting, I guess, from different groups concerns that they had with the program. I don't bring this up to highlight the negative; I ask it for this purpose. What are the concerns they have, and what are some solutions to those concerns that you can talk about today? Highlight maybe the top two concerns.

• (1010)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: I would say there is one that comes to mind the most. It depends to whom you are talking and where they're coming from.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: There are aboriginal and there are other areas.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: I would say the Montrealers and the non-Montrealers. So if you go outside Montreal, usually the biggest concern is with regard to diversification. Therefore, we support those communities to get together and develop their own development plan, their own diversification plan. Then we may support the implementation of the plan. That's what we do in Gaspésie or the North Shore.

The other concern is the same, then, for the majority in Quebec and in Canada. It's with regard to entrepreneurship and the lack of future entrepreneurs. So on that front, also, we support a lot of projects to help stimulate entrepreneurship within the English communities—

Mr. Bob Zimmer: So you see there's currently a lack. It has been stated that there's a lack, and you're helping expand it.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: Yes, there is a lack of future entrepreneurs. When you look at the trend, Canada and Quebec will soon be facing a severe lack of new entrepreneurs. The community is preoccupied with that. That's why we're giving that priority.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Zimmer, for those questions.

Monsieur Bélanger.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be quick about it.

First of all, I would like to respond to Mr. Aubin to prevent a lot of people from doing any needless work. If you type CCDA, Centre canadien de données en astronomie, into your browser, you'll find the French page. For the National Research Council, all you have to do is make sure that your pages are linked. There is a French page.

I'm not used to paying compliments, but I'm going to make one to the WD people. You have a good structure and you are doing a good job. I had the opportunity to see that in the four western provinces. It is unfortunate that you don't also take care of the territories. The new organization may perhaps learn from you, but I encourage you to continue what you're doing.

I also noted that Centralia has an excellent website. That event will be held from October 10 to 12, and the House is not sitting during that week. I was wondering whether there was a special pass for MPs.

Mr. Daniel Watson: We'll give you a warm welcome.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Perhaps some of us will go. I simply want to encourage you to continue your good work.

Now I turn to the CED people. Why did you just make an oral presentation earlier? I have two other written documents, but I don't have yours.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: I brought a limited number of copies this morning. I thought I only had to bring six copies.

The Chair: It's a bilingual copy, but it isn't a copy in both official languages. The copies are in French, but not in English.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Oh, it hasn't been translated.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: No, only the parts I read in English were translated.

The Chair: That was translated into French.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I understand. Why is that the case?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: We may not have abided by the rules. I didn't think I had to bring—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: When you speak to Quebec's anglophone communities, do you speak a little French tanned the little English?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: No, we obviously speak to them in English, or in the language of their choice.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Perhaps you didn't check to see that there were probably members who preferred to speak in English and others in French. You didn't take the trouble to do it in both official languages.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: No, that's my mistake.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It seems to me that Mr. Pelletier is your superior, isn't he?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: No, he's my colleague.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Aren't you the director general?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: No.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In any case, I believe that's a deficiency. You cited a lot of figures at one point, and I was unable to follow. As I don't have the document in front of me, I can't respond on that subject.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: I can guarantee you that, next time, the copies will be—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The next time maybe in three, four or five years. There may be another roadmap that the committee will be called upon once again to evaluate. We'll see. There may be other changes in the meantime. That will be done in any case. I can't ask the questions I would have liked to ask.

•(1015)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: If you wish, Mr. Bélanger, we will nevertheless make sure you receive them.

[English]

The Chair: I assure you, Monsieur Bélanger, we will have it translated and distributed.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I know that.

[Translation]

A little earlier you mentioned Grosse-Île. What is the population of Grosse-Île?

Mr. Gilles Pelletier: I can't give you the exact number of anglophones, but it's a small population of a few hundred anglophone inhabitants.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Are you talking about year-round or seasonal residents?

Mr. Gilles Pelletier: Year-round. It's one of the Magdalen Islands. There is a minority anglophone community consisting of a few hundred inhabitants. I could provide you with the exact number if you wish.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I went to Grosse-Île, and I didn't see any permanent population there. Grosse-Île is a historic site.

Mr. Gilles Pelletier: Yes, and there are also people who live there to maintain the site.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: They are people who work there.

Mr. Gilles Pelletier: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So there is no population that lives there permanently.

Mr. Gilles Pelletier: No, it's a population that works there.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You didn't mention that earlier. You used that as an example, but there is no population living on the island.

Mr. Gilles Pelletier: I cited the example of a project led by anglophones who believe it is important for their community as part of the economic diversification of Grosse-Île.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I suggest you find a better example than that one. There is no population living there.

That's really my final question because I'm disappointed with what CED has offered us this morning.

What kind of relationship do you have with the Quebec Community Groups Network?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: We meet with the QCGN. It's one of the anglophone community stakeholders.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: When do you meet with its representatives, and how often?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: I could provide you with a list of meetings.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Don't you understand that it's an umbrella organization for Quebec's anglophone community?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: Yes.

I can give you a few examples, if you wish, or I can provide you with a list of—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In any case, you'll be sending the documents to the clerk. If they aren't translated, we will have them translated. However, I do not understand what you want to give me.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: I have a list of the dates of our meetings in recent years. You asked me whether we had met with them.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes, go ahead; I'm interested in that.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: We met them on April 16, 2010, May 19 and 20, 2010, September 23, 2010, October 6, 2010 and November 19, 2010.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: What did you discuss that each of those meetings?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: There was one meeting on the economic development of the official language minority communities, the day of dialogue that we discussed earlier.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Are you consulting them in order to prepare your plan?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: On a more ongoing basis, the dialogue really focuses on the plan, on the programming and on the strategy.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is my time up?

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I will continue later if I have time.

Le président: All right.

[English]

Mr. Boughen.

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to everyone on the panel for sharing part of your day with us. We appreciate the information you're able to put on the table and also your comments.

I have one question. I was very interested in what Mr. Watson was saying about the partnership between the various parts of Canada at the Olympics. I'm just wondering if that partnership has been able to continue and to develop and encompass more Canadians, because it was indeed very effective, from my point of view anyway, and certainly the whole Olympic movement was done extremely well.

What has happened since? I guess that's the question.

Mr. Daniel Watson: Thank you very much for the question.

In a moment, I'll turn to my colleague, Mr. Meddings, who will talk a bit about some of the multiplier effects.

One of the things we do at WD in all of our investments is try to actually get much better leverage. In other words, it's not just what we invest, but what we can encourage others to invest in.

I think the question goes much beyond the financial in so many cases, because what is interesting, particularly in western Canada, is the number of people who don't understand as much as sometimes they would like to—or where no one is available to understand—about the value of francophone communities there, and what they can add and do add to the overall economy of western Canada.

If you'll permit it, my colleague Mr. Meddings has some numbers that show some of the multiplication factors. Just to give you a bit of context, our annual budget is roughly \$120 million a year for core programming, so that will give a bit of a sense of the scale of some of these multipliers.

Mr. James Meddings (Assistant Deputy Minister, Western Economic Diversification Canada): Mr. Chairman, with respect to the EDI funding, WD receives \$3 million, but we've managed to lever \$6.2 million through partnerships on these projects.

With respect to our core programming in the WDP, \$5.7 million has been directed towards projects in support of official language communities, but when that is included with the partnerships we have, that number grows to \$33 million.

Finally, and just very quickly, in terms of the economic action plan, about \$10 million in funding was directed again to official language communities, but with the partnerships that came in with this, that number went to \$22.7 million.

Quickly, to add the three together, approximately \$19 million in funding through WD levered \$62 million in partnership funding in support of those communities.

●(1020)

Mr. Ray Boughen: Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Boughen.

Mr. Harris.

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

Again, thanks to everyone for coming. I apologize, but I will be mostly ignoring the right side of the room. As deputy critic for science and technology for the opposition, I'm going to focus on NRC and ask questions in order to follow up from some of the other ones.

First is something that is partially but not quite related: would the technology being developed be applicable to glyph-based languages? I ask that in the context of first nations languages.

Mr. Charles-Antoine Gauthier: I believe the answer is yes. The reason I say yes is that we've done work in Inuktitut. I'm guessing that would apply to Cree as well, but I'm not an expert, so I'm not going to commit to saying yes on Cree.

Mr. Dan Harris: That's good. And it's good that it could be used for that, because protecting all of our languages is of course important.

Following on that, you spoke earlier about the intellectual property around the technology. At the end of the day, who owns and controls that intellectual property? Is it the NRC, or is it the partner companies that are involved in the project?

Dr. Danial Wayner: In general, when we develop technologies our intent is to make it available to any Canadian firm that can make use of it. We retain ownership of the technology and we license it on a case-by-case basis to other firms.

In other instances—and this is more of a general comment on intellectual property—where we've shared the risk and the cost of doing the R and D, we would actually be more open to other ways to deal with the IP.

It's rare that we would assign the IP or transfer the IP to another firm, but we would in some cases give an exclusive licence for work in a specific area. That still reserves the opportunity for NRC to create benefits for Canada by licensing the technology in other areas outside of the core business of our original partner.

Mr. Dan Harris: I definitely think keeping control of the IP is critical for the future, especially as governments seek new sources of revenue to ensure we fund programs like official languages.

Of course, there is the \$10 million that's gone into this project in the last several years, and until the end of the road map.

I'm also looking at the main estimates from Industry Canada showing that ICT and emerging technologies are going to be facing cutbacks of approximately \$24.5 million, which is far greater than this entire program. Could that have a negative impact on future development of this and other software?

Before you answer, because I'm sure my time will run out by the time you're done, with regard to this offer in particular—and coming from an IT background—continuing development will require continued funds. As Monsieur Gourde said, version 1, version 2, version 3....

As we keep moving forward, what kinds of investments will NRC need to keep this project going? Would you rather see that kind of funding come out of, say, a future-type road map or become more permanent stable funding for the NRC for continued development?

Dr. Danial Wayner: I've lost track of the first part of your question.

Mr. Dan Harris: ICT and emerging technologies are—

Dr. Danial Wayner: The main estimates—

Mr. Dan Harris: Yes, the main estimates are showing \$24.6 million in cuts.

Dr. Danial Wayner: Right. I'm not privy to exactly what the impact would be on NRC.

We're certainly waiting for the government to come forward with a budget, and all that will be clear at that time. I really can't comment —

•(1025)

Mr. Dan Harris: That is specifically in the NRC funding where that cut is coming.

Dr. Danial Wayner: Depending on where these come from, this may reflect in part the B-based funding we've received from previous programs that is coming to an end at the end of this fiscal year. If that is not renewed, that presents a challenge, not just for ICT but from the NRC perspective. Our objective is to look carefully at all the investments we make across all industry sectors and to ensure we're investing the resources we have in such a way that it creates the greatest benefits for Canada.

It's a fairly general answer, but from our perspective, as we move forward as a new research and technology organization, we expect to be led by the needs of industry. Where we see opportunities that industry is pulling...NRC will see this as opportunity.

Specifically in terms of what we need, that's also a difficult question to answer. We're actually at the point of looking carefully

across the board at all of our programs. I'm very excited about the initiative we've created and the team we've built that is really world class.

It's my expectation that we would find ways to leverage this to create more and more value for Canadians. With regard to the kinds of investments, I'm not prepared at this time to give a number. The team right now is about 15 people, and the budget we have is a little more than the \$2 million per year because we've leveraged resources from other places as well.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for coming to testify before us today. As you know, we are studying the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. It represents an investment of more than \$1 billion for our government. Under the roadmap, your organizations are all partners. It was very interesting to hear about the many possibilities that the roadmap represents for your organizations.

Could you tell us the areas or programs you would focus on under the roadmap if it were to be renewed after it expires in 2013?

Mr. Watson?

Mr. Daniel Watson: Thank you.

If there were ever a second component, we would continue the activities consistent with our mandate, which is the economic development and diversification of western Canada. I believe we would do that based on the successes we are currently having.

We would of course take into account the findings of an eventual evaluation in that area. The fact remains that the thrust would be that of our mandate, which is economic development.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Lavoie?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lavoie: Thank you.

The roadmap has enabled us to step up our support for the vitality of francophone communities. Like our colleagues from Western Economic Diversification, we would stay the course if the roadmap were renewed. We would continue implementing projects consistent with our economic development mandate to support the communities, as we have been doing for many years.

[*English*]

Dr. Danial Wayner: Even as we speak we continue to negotiate to license the PORTAGE software to other Canadian firms. I think it's critical for us to continue to invest and grow this sector in Canada. It forms the base for a multitude of other economic growth possibilities for Canada that we very much want to pursue.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Would you say that the road map has presented you with the ability to do that better than before you had the road map?

Dr. Danial Wayner: Absolutely. The road map gave us the tools and resources to grow this world-class team. It's something we should treasure, encourage, and keep moving along.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: It's important for us to assess your experiences, because we're 60% through the term of the road map now.

Do I have some more time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Watson, you mentioned the important work done by the four francophone economic organizations.

Has the roadmap been useful in facilitating communication with those organizations?

• (1030)

Mr. Daniel Watson: We work in very close cooperation with those organizations, which are an integral part of our service network in the west. We were already talking about those people. We knew that they had a lot of skills and competencies. That added an important component. It wouldn't have been possible to do what we did in Vancouver without that kind of support. If other funding were available, we would continue finding things to add to what we have already done.

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Aubin.

Pardon me, there is a point of order.

Mr. Bélanger?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I was misled on the subject of the site we were talking about, that of the Canadian Astronomy Data Centre. Mr. Aubin was right. If you look at the sub-archives, you see that most are in English. Some are in French, but, even though the titles "Archives du HST" and "Archives scientifiques du Gemini" are posted, when you enter the site, you see that it is in English only.

I want to apologize to Mr. Aubin and to retract the kind words I said to the people from the National Research Council. They still have some homework to do.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

In fact, that was not a point of order.

Mr. Aubin.

Mr. Robert Aubin: I want to hand the floor over to Mr. Godin since the purpose of the remarks I was preparing to make was to point out that the titles were French but that the vast majority of content was in English. As I have been told on the subject that the people concerned would be doing the homework, all that's left for us to do is to await the results.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Yvon Godin: My question is simple. I only have a minute left, I believe.

The Chair: You have two minutes left.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Watson, you know that I raised the problem of Alberta. As you say, I understand that the bilingualism of private businesses is not your responsibility. I know it is the responsibility of another department, no doubt the Department of Human Resources.

However, I met with the people from the Alberta Economic Development Authority. Have you met those people? Have you heard the demands of the other small organizations in the surrounding areas that say they do not feel that supported? One would think they only have one place to go and that is not easy to do so. And yet there is really some potential. You will increasingly have Francophones in the west.

Mr. Daniel Watson: We work with several groups in Alberta and elsewhere in the west as well. This is important. There are so many services being sold in Fort McMurray, for example, that come from other provinces such as Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. We are working with a number of groups.

The labour problems are enormous. We estimate that there will be a shortage of approximately 100,000 workers in Alberta over the next 10 years. So we will have to find people in Canada, aboriginal groups, francophones from eastern Canada, who would like to work there. That will be important for everyone.

Mr. Yvon Godin: If that's so important, would you say it's just as important to find a system to ensure that Canadians are the first ones to get jobs, even if they only speak French and aren't English Canadians? As Canadians, they would have a right to work in the west.

Mr. Daniel Watson: Here's a contribution we can make to entrepreneurs looking to supply goods and services in this economic system in western Canada. We have organizations that can help these other entrepreneurs, in French, in western Canada. That's the contribution we can make. Perhaps we should contribute more, but that is the goal we have set for ourselves, to ensure that they can participate fully in the economy.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Godin.

We will suspend for one minute.

[*English*]

We will suspend to allow our witnesses to depart. We'll remain in public, so members of the public are free to remain, if they wish, until 10:45.

• (1030)

(Pause)

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We are continuing the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We are now sitting in public to continue the committee's proceedings.

The committee has before it a motion and an amendment that Mr. Menegakis introduced at the last meeting.

Consequently, I want to read something to committee members. If they want all witnesses who appear before us to make their presentations by teleconference, they must know that this will not be possible all the time: there are two rooms that we can use for teleconferences, and they are not always available. Furthermore, some witnesses are here in Ottawa or in the surrounding areas. It costs less to have those witnesses come before us than to send them to a teleconference centre in the national capital region.

[*English*]

Just so everybody is clear, if you ask me to have all the witnesses for the study appear by teleconference, that will not always be possible. There are only two rooms available for teleconferencing, and sometimes they're not available.

Secondly, there are witnesses in the national capital region who will appear, and it will be much easier for them to appear in person than try to organize a teleconference room a couple of blocks from here for them to appear.

If the committee wants witnesses to appear via teleconference, I'll make my best effort, but in certain cases we'll have to ask them to appear in person. I just want to make you aware of that.

I will read the motion and the amendment of Mr. Menegakis. We're on the amendment.

The motion says:

[*Translation*]

That in relation to the study of the evaluation of the roadmap: improving services and program delivery, the proposed budget in the amount of \$63,900 be adopted.

Mr. Menegakis's amendment reads as follows:

That the motion be amended by adding after the words "be adopted" the following: "and that the Committee invite witnesses to appear by videoconference, and if not possible, that they be invited to appear in person".

[*English*]

We're on the amendment.

Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, I certainly accept your comments regarding my amendment. It is mindful of the taxpayers. We're all being asked across the country, from coast to coast, to tighten our belts. As parliamentarians, we have a fiduciary responsibility to the people, who have given us their confidence in being here, to exercise every possible opportunity to minimize costs. If they're outside the greater Ottawa area, we should exercise every effort to try to have witnesses appear before us via teleconference. If they can't, of course, we don't want to jeopardize the integrity of the study and the work of the committee.

• (1040)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

Monsieur Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, if Mr. Menegakis insists on his amendment—and, unless I am mistaken, he is doing so—I will move an amendment to the amendment to the effect that the committee

should invite witnesses to appear in person and, if that is impossible, that it invite them to appear by videoconference.

I therefore suggest reversing the order, as should be done, and as has always been done. I am therefore introducing that motion.

The Chair: Can you repeat your subamendment, please?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes. I therefore move: That the amendment be amended by:

(a) replacing the words "by videoconference" with the words "in person"; and

(b) replacing the words "in person" with the words "by videoconference".

The Chair: The discussion now concerns the subamendment moved by Mr. Bélanger. There are four minutes left in this meeting.

I hand over the floor to Mr. Harris. And then it will be the turn of Mr. Weston and Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Harris, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Harris: As you mentioned in your explanation, Mr. Chair, there are two groups that do the video conferencing. If we as a committee choose to try to call all of our witnesses via teleconference, we will perhaps unfairly monopolize the video conferencing abilities of the House vis-à-vis every other committee in the House.

Before we dispense with this question, I would recommend that we ask those groups and the folks in charge of them how much of a strain we would be putting on their resources if we asked all of our witnesses to appear via teleconference.

I recommend we suspend debate on this motion and amendment until we have that relevant information. Let's just deal with the budget at hand today and move on, and then come back to it at a later date.

The Chair: Mr. Weston.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Weston: We are examining the subamendment. Since we are in a hurry, I believe I can speak on behalf of all committee members who are concerned for taxpayers' interests by saying that the subamendment of my friend Mr. Bélanger completely alters our meaning. Consequently, I cannot allow it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: It completely reverses the intent of my colleague's original amendment, so I would absolutely not support it. We have all of the equipment here and just need another step to make it all work. I think we need to push forward and get that operational.

Mr. Dan Harris: The technical requirements on the other end of the line need to be explained.

The Chair: Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I understand what our colleagues want to do. That's not the problem; it's more a matter of respect.

We are coming to the end of the study. We met with people from the west, in Whitehorse and Yellowknife in particular. We met them in person. They are waiting for a report. They have not yet received it. It is to be hoped that we will resolve this one day.

In addition, we would have to tell them they are not even invited to Ottawa. We are living in a country where someone who is fortunate enough to live near Ottawa will always have the opportunity to be welcomed here, whereas there are people who live far away whom we are telling to stay home. That would be tantamount to a lack of respect for those people.

That is why I think we should leave it to the chair and clerk to send out the invitations. Out of respect for our communities, we should give them a chance to come if they want to come. If we must proceed by teleconference and there is no other way to do it, we will do it. We have always worked that way.

I have nothing against teleconferences. I just have one problem: I am afraid of what people in the communities will think. It's as though we were telling the people from Newfoundland and Labrador that they aren't invited to Ottawa because they live on an island. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador would not like that.

So it's a matter of respect for our communities. We have invited everyone from everywhere. There are still a few witnesses to come from the communities, and I would like to see them here.

The Chair: There is one minute left.

Are there any other comments?

• (1045)

[English]

Mr. Dan Harris: Mr. Chair, I was just going to ask you if perhaps you could clarify again for the committee the technical requirements on the other end. As you mentioned, there are two

groups the House has that go out on the other side to do the video conferencing.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Dan Harris: As I was saying before, if our committee monopolizes those two groups, particularly when we're inviting people from different areas at the same time—

The Chair: It's the will of the committee. If the committee wants to book all the rooms for teleconferencing, that's your choice. I—

Mr. Dan Harris: Oh, yes. I just think that there perhaps was a misunderstanding about the requirements on the other end. Yes, we have all of the facilities and all of the equipment here, but every time we call a witness via teleconference, there's a lot that has to happen on the other end.

The Chair: That's right, but it's up to the committee to decide what to do, so—

Mr. Dan Harris: Yes, I know, but I want the committee to have the information before we make the decision.

The Chair: We're out of time. We're going to book five minutes at the end of next Tuesday's meeting to discuss this.

It is essential that we adopt some sort of budget at next Tuesday's meeting. If not, all meetings beyond next week will be cancelled because I have no authorization to invite witnesses if I don't have a budget to pay for them to appear.

So if we don't adopt a budget next week on Tuesday, a whole bunch of things start to happen, because the Liaison Committee of the House is meeting and I need to be able to present a budget at that Liaison Committee meeting. As chair, I run out of money to invite witnesses at the end of next week. It's imperative that at the next meeting we come to some sort of agreement as a committee.

Without further ado, this meeting is adjourned.

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