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Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome everyone to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Thursday, April 26, 2012, and this is our 38th meeting. Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are here for the study on the Evaluation of the Roadmap: Improving Programs and Service Delivery.

Today, we have four groups joining us.

[English]

Dr. Graham and Madame O'Donnell from Concordia University are present. Welcome.

We also have Mr. Gates and Madame Stronach from the Regional Association of West Quebecers.

Thirdly, we have Mr. Buck and Mr. Meyers from the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation.

Our fourth group

[Translation]

before us today is the Société nationale de l'Acadie, with Ms. Enguehard and Mr. Doucet.

Welcome, everyone.

We are going to start with the representatives from Concordia University.

Mr. David Graham (Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs, Concordia University): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank all the members of the committee for agreeing to hear from us today.

We are going to do our presentation in English, but I can assure you that, at the end of our remarks, Ms. O'Donnell and I will be ready to take your questions in either English or French.

[English]

Thank you very much, members of the committee, for receiving us today.

I'll say a few words on behalf of Concordia, and then I'll ask Dr. O'Donnell to complete our brief presentation.

We will be very happy to take questions in either English or French.

Although the roots of our founding institutions go back more than 160 years, Concordia University, as it stands today, was formed in 1974 through the merger of Loyola College and Sir George Williams University. Concordia is an open and engaged university with a student body of over 46,000 in the faculties of arts and science, fine arts, engineering and computer science, the John Wilson School of Business, and the School of Extended Learning.

By creating links between education and social responsibility, Concordia fosters an academic environment that allows students and faculty to thrive on an interdisciplinary approach to research, creative activity, and community engagement. Since its founding, Concordia has been characterized by the cosmopolitan and socially complex nature of Montreal. We pride ourselves in what we see as our unique mission of social integration. Concordia is proud to be an English language institution in Montreal, the metropolis of Quebec. We also pride ourselves in having a unique mission of transformation in our society, a mission we believe to be essential.

Concordia houses, and is proud to house, the Quebec English-speaking community's research network, QUESCREEN.

[Translation]

In French, it is called the Réseau de recherche sur les communautés québécoises d'expression anglaise.

[English]

QUESCREEN was officially launched in the spring of 2009 and is a joint initiative of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, located in Moncton, New Brunswick, Concordia University's School of Extended Learning, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

QUESCREEN is a network of researchers, community members, and institutions dedicated to developing research capacity related to Quebec's English-speaking communities. The goal of QUESCREEN is to strengthen and maintain a network of researchers and institutions to produce and share evidence-based research results on the English-speaking minority communities of Quebec. Our research partners include the Quebec Community Groups Network, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and Industry Canada.

Concordia University's research profile and research capacity have been making great progress in recent years. From structural and functional genomics to computer security and human development, Concordia encourages a collaborative research environment where different research units complement the university and our society as a whole. With this big-picture thinking in mind, housing QUESCREEN is a natural fit for Concordia.

Research produced by QUESCREN and its partners helps assess questions of fundamental importance for Quebec's English speakers, such as community vitality—and Dr. O'Donnell will have something to say about that in a moment—demographic shifts, identity, arts, culture, and heritage. The network is an ideal vehicle for researchers, service providers, and policy-makers to share information and best practices. A key example of this is QUESCREN's annual conference, which shares results of studies carried out by many researchers on Quebec's English-speaking communities. It fosters fruitful exchange between English- and French-speaking research producers and users within the context of the province's most important annual research event, the congress of the Association francophone pour le savoir.

From our perspective, we believe that all stakeholders, that is, government, community groups, and community members, benefit from thorough, up-to-date research and analysis on the English-speaking communities of Quebec.

What do we mean by research? More than a simple collection of statistics, we feel that what is really needed is an accurate portrait of the English-speaking communities of Quebec, who we are, where we're going, which policies are working, and which policies may need improvement. There are many myths about Quebec's English speakers held by the French-speaking majority, and to some extent by the rest of Canada. For example, there is still a prevailing view that anglophones in the province are relatively wealthy compared to the Quebec majority, when in fact we now know the opposite to be true.

Accurate, up-to-date research on the English-speaking community can help eradicate some of these myths and sensitize the population to the challenges we face. Critically, this research will provide the government with an additional tool to review, evaluate, and improve existing policies and proactively develop new policies to deliver services and support long-term development.

I'll now ask Dr. O'Donnell to say a few words about QUESCREN.

• (0850)

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell (Coordinator-Researcher, Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN), Concordia University): Good morning.

I would now like to take you through one specific example of the valuable research the network has produced, and hopefully we can discuss others later in our exchange.

QUESCREN has recently coordinated a review by external researchers of a community vitality framework in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage. "Community vitality" is a term that we are hearing with increased frequency, not just with respect to official language minority communities, but in a host of community-based initiatives.

Measuring community vitality is a huge challenge, as the metrics are not obvious. This project will provide government, community groups, and other stakeholders with a model of community vitality, key indicators, and evaluation methodology. This is the kind of contribution that researchers can make to community groups who deliver services on the ground and also to government partners.

This example is only a small part of what we have been able to achieve in a short period of time with very limited resources. We firmly believe that improving government support for official languages, specifically in research, even in a challenging economic context, is a very sound investment.

Funding for QUESCREN operates on a contract-to-contract basis. Without stable, predictable levels of funding, it is extremely difficult for us to develop continuity and to establish a long-term vision of research initiatives that we can accomplish. The good news is that this area of research is gaining interest, and researchers increasingly want to turn their efforts to studying the English-speaking communities of Quebec. On the other hand, we are operating at capacity and have been forced to refuse certain requests. Current funding allows for only one full-time staff member, the network's coordinator/researcher, along with consultants as needed on an activity-by-activity basis. Moreover, the nature of special research project funding also poses a challenge.

We have been privileged to work with government partners on special projects, including the one mentioned above. We are proud to have been able to produce professional results on a variety of groundbreaking subjects, often with tight timeframes. The experience has led us to conclude, however, that even better results could come from a more sustainable, structured relationship between Concordia and government for this kind of research. Beyond improving research, this would have the added value of developing research capacity, namely, community capacity to participate in and benefit from research and researcher capacity to work in partnership with the community.

Long-term results of this kind of investment would be enhancement of the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking communities and positioning the research community, including English-speaking researchers in Quebec, as relevant and effective societal observers and actors. While we are sensitive to the time and budgetary constraints of our colleagues in the Department of Canadian Heritage, we feel we would all be better served if the government worked towards developing a culture of research in official languages, and especially in Quebec's English-speaking community.

In partnership, we can help develop an environment where universities and research institutes can conduct research with a cohesive, long-term vision.

Thank you.

• (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame O'Donnell.

Now we'll have an opening statement from the Regional Association of West Quebecers.

Ms. Heather Stronach (Executive Director, Regional Association of West Quebecers): Good morning, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen.

The Association of West Quebecers is an organization whose mission is to serve and support the English-speaking population of the Outaouais by fostering an environment in which it can thrive. This means that the association is an information hub: we have an easily accessible website; we publish four newsletters a year; and we promote events of our partners and within the community at large through our website and our bi-weekly electronic bulletin. This keeps the English-speaking community current on events and issues.

The association undertakes a variety of projects to support youth and seniors to showcase outstanding volunteers through our annual awards banquet; to request that the City of Gatineau increase services in English; to develop activities for youth and assist them in developing confidence in the French language as they ready themselves for the workplace; and we have conducted a survey for seniors to hear what their needs are.

The association offers a new residents package. This package contains essential and valuable information for newcomers settling in the region or planning to move to the Outaouais. These are just some examples.

West Quebecers' territory is the entire Outaouais region, which covers a total of 33,000 square kilometres. This area includes an urban amalgamated City of Gatineau, smaller towns in the Pontiac and the Gatineau Valley, as well as more rural areas, such as Rapides-des-Joachims, L'Isle-aux-Allumettes, and Calumet Island.

According to the census of 2006, there are 55,235 anglophones in the English-speaking community in the Outaouais. This represents 16.3% of the region's total population of 338,190. In this instance, when we refer to anglophones we are talking about people who define themselves as speaking English most often at home.

In addition, approximately half the anglophones in the Outaouais are unilingual English speakers, which represents a special challenge for them.

Also, roughly half of the English-speaking population consists of seniors. This population in the Outaouais, with a central urban core and communities scattered over a wide territory, lives in an environment where French is the majority official language. As a result, the English-speaking community faces a diversity of challenges to maintain itself.

We are by no means the only organization that concerns itself with the needs of the English-speaking communities. Our partners include CEDEC, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation, which concerns itself with the economic and employability issues that result from the decline of industries—for example, the forestry industry.

The Western Quebec Literacy Council works diligently to improve functional literacy in the region.

The Outaouais Health and Social Services Network provides valuable support to the English-speaking community regarding healthy living and general health information.

It goes without saying that the Western Quebec School Board, the Western Quebec Career Centre, and the Heritage College CEGEP are focused on educating our youth to be equipped for further education and to enter the workforce.

● (0900)

More recently, West Quebecers finds itself focusing attention on the difficulties the English-speaking population may have in accessing information about public services in English.

The possibility of doing the kinds of things I have mentioned, whether through our organization or others, depends upon continued federal government support. Without core funding it is impossible to maintain a permanent organization that can be a source of initiatives, and without project funding it is unlikely that many projects will get off the ground.

Since 2007 the federal government has pursued the line of action known as the road map to linguistic duality. This includes assistance to community organizations of official language minorities granted by federal departments. This assistance enables these minorities to take action to strengthen the economic and social foundations of their communities.

For the anglophone minorities of Quebec—there are approximately 11 regional associations across the province of Quebec representing these minorities—such federal assistance is particularly significant. It is the conviction of anglophone community leaders that their communities have a role to play in Canada's French-speaking province, and federal assistance provided through the vehicle of the road map provides practical support for that conviction.

The continued existence of these communities is a contribution to that diversity of the region and the province, which we believe to be an essential characteristic of Canada.

I thank the members of the committee for giving West Quebecers this opportunity to speak on this matter.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll have a statement from the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation.

Mr. John Buck (Executive Director, Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation): Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, *membres du comité*, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today. It's really an honour for us to be here.

CEDEC is Canada's largest organization with a mandate to pursue economic development, including entrepreneurship and labour force development for the English-speaking official language minority community.

On March 31, 2013, the expiration date of the current road map, CEDEC will have received almost 70% of the total investments identified in the road map dedicated to economic development for the English-speaking communities in Quebec.

CEDEC is one of thirteen sponsors for the enabling fund for official language minority communities, which is managed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The other recipients of the enabling fund include RDÉE Canada and members of its network across the country.

The road map has contributed enormously to our community's vitality and has enabled CEDEC to play a critical role, optimizing the economic potential of English-speaking communities in Quebec and seizing opportunities for job creation and economic growth. Our primary levers in the road map include the enabling fund and the economic development initiative investments managed by Industry Canada and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

One of CEDEC's key roles is building leadership capacity within communities to identify and build on assets through research, comprehensive community plans, and targeted projects. These plans ensure that the English-speaking community can leverage resources to remain competitive and innovative and contribute to the economic prosperity of Quebec and Canada.

Since 2008, CEDEC has leveraged over \$7 million in direct investment in community-based economic development initiatives. These funds are generated by partners, thanks to the \$2.7 million per year received from HRSDC's enabling fund, an important component of the road map. During the last fiscal year alone, CEDEC has leveraged directly \$2.9 million, or \$1.07 for every dollar contributed by the enabling fund.

Throughout the first four years of the road map, the federal government has contributed 47% of our leveraged resources, and a good portion of this can be attributed directly to support from the road map and specifically Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. Resources leveraged from provincial sources over this period are about 30%, which underlies our ability to build constructive partnerships with the provincial ministries, agencies, and organizations. This cooperation is essential to economic development for Canada's English-speaking minority community, and this is made possible by virtue of the road map and the impressive work of the 8,500 volunteer hours alone last year that contributed to our initiative.

CEDEC always seeks to generate opportunities for the English-speaking community of Quebec and beyond. In the examples of community economic development that I'll share with you today, each one of them illustrates a leverage effect for the majority population and OLMCs across Canada.

In the Magdalen Islands, CEDEC has provided direct support for the development of comprehensive community plans around tourism in order to diversify the vulnerable fishing economy. These plans are serving as the beacon for community economic development, and CEDEC is keeping partners and stakeholders focused as they search for resources to enact the plans. Coming out of the overall economic downturn that we've recently experienced, CEDEC has helped to broker \$824,000 to realize various tourism projects in this area alone.

Some other examples include the business vitality initiative, which is a process that brings together the business community with other stakeholders to measure the business friendliness or readiness of a community. Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions has supported this process in two communities so far: Campbell's Bay, in the Outaouais area, and the City of Témiscaming. This bilingual tool can be used in other communities, thanks to funds from Industry Canada that have allowed us to create resources and train Quebec-based facilitators.

In May 2012 we will be presenting the business vitality initiative to 180 rural development agents of the Solidarité rurale du Québec, who are situated across the province. We already have a strong relationship with this organization, both at the Réseau level and directly in some communities. We see great opportunity to leverage the BVI through relationships such as this one.

In 2008 Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions supported the start-up of Bikes in the Bay Motorcycle Festival in Campbell's Bay, which is still going strong and inspiring neighbouring communities to partner at a regional level. CEDEC built the community's capacity to conceptualize and organize this festival over several years. The demonstrated capacity built through this catalytic event was a contributing factor to the introduction of the business vitality initiative in Campbell's Bay.

● (0905)

In 2010 Industry Canada financed a study of small and medium enterprises within Quebec's English-speaking community. This report confirmed that SMEs need English language networking and support services to help them thrive and grow in Quebec and be in a position to innovate, create jobs, and play a part in diversifying local economies.

Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, through the economic development initiative, is helping us to expand, in geography and in scope, the CEDEC small business support network. This investment is exponentially increasing our ability to build economic prosperity for small businesses within English-speaking communities, the broader Quebec economy, and OLMCs across Canada.

CEDEC's mature workers initiative is addressing issues and opportunities related to the English OLMC's rapidly aging population. We are breaking new ground with a study of English-speaking mature workers, as well as with surveys targeting employers, recruitment agencies, and employment service providers. Through these studies, CEDEC is building a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with supporting a mature worker to obtain employment.

Community economic development is a long-term process that requires effective planning supported by sustained financial commitments from the federal government. This is essential if we are to establish meaningful partnerships that generate tangible results for our communities. All of these successful initiatives are a direct result of the investments of the road map.

At a broader level, CEDEC engages federal government partners through the National Human Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic Minority, which we often simply call the national committee.

This March, for the first time, the national committee met jointly with Le Comité national de développement économique et d'employabilité and RDÉE Canada. This meeting set the stage for cooperation and ongoing dialogue about how we can leverage the competitive advantage represented by all of Canada's OLMCs within the national and global economy.

In closing, I would like to respond to Mr. Weston's question posed to HRSDC in a previous session, where he asked about the impact of the road map on the hearts and minds of Canadians. I think this quote is quite telling. Let me share this quote from one of our valued stakeholders, Mr. Bill Stewart, mayor of Campbell's Bay, in the Outaouais area:

CEDEC was instrumental in the revitalization of Campbell's Bay and our neighbouring municipalities want to tap in to this tourism opportunity as well. Without CEDEC's leadership, expertise and vision, our community wouldn't have gotten as far as it has with this economic opportunity. We're more than just partners now; we're like family.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

● (0910)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Buck.

[*Translation*]

We are now going to hear from Ms. Enguehard and Mr. Doucet from the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

Ms. Françoise Enguehard (President, Société nationale de l'Acadie): Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, the Société Nationale de l'Acadie was born 131 years ago out of the Acadian renewal at the end of the 19th century, expressing the desire of our "stateless people" to develop its own distinctive voice. "Strength in Unity" is our motto: it attests to our determination to grow strong within this Canada of ours, a country we do not question and whose nationality we proudly bear.

The SNA is the oldest francophone institution outside of Quebec; it existed long before official bilingualism came into being and it is here to stay. The SNA is a federation representing each of the Atlantic provinces francophone associations and, since 1988, the four corresponding youth organizations—a unique innovation in our country that guarantees the longevity and originality of the SNA's ideas and actions.

The SNA is the only body representing the Acadian people—its only means of promotion at home and abroad. For more than 60 years now, it has represented Acadia to member states of the Francophonie, mainly France and Belgium, with which it signed bilateral people-to-people agreements that are unique. It is also active in the Americas, most notably with the Acadians of Maine and Louisiana. In short, the SNA represents the Acadian people at home and on the international stage, and it delivers important services in the Atlantic region, a space that the SNA is the only francophone organization to occupy.

Our priorities are demographic growth and immigration, youth, culture and identity, literacy, and communications. The SNA plays a key role in these sectors by delivering services that contribute to the economic development of the Acadian people and, as such, of the Atlantic region as a whole.

In the area of demographic growth and immigration, the SNA has set up, in 2007, a round table on francophone immigration in the Atlantic region. It brings together experts from the four provinces who are developing an immigration strategy for the international market. This offers organizations and the provinces an essential service made possible only because of the international stature of the SNA.

In the cultural area, the SNA's initiative for the promotion of Acadian artists internationally is a unique service, whose usefulness and reach are recognized by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) that funds most of this initiative because of its economic benefits.

Culture also means being proud of one's identity and in this regard, the SNA, since 2004, has assumed responsibility for the World Acadian Congress, an international event organized every five years that draws thousands of participants. In 2014, the CMA will be held in northern New Brunswick and the bordering Temiscouata region of Quebec and northern Maine, an international initiative that will bring millions of dollars in economic benefits to the region.

For youth, we are launching this year a promising initiative, a youth mobility office bringing under one roof all the possibilities in training, exchanges and travel-work placements abroad for young Acadians and francophones of the Atlantic region, and, conversely, for youth from the Francophonie who wish to come to Acadia to learn a new skill or share their knowledge. Agreements with Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, France, Belgium, Louisiana and the four Atlantic provinces, allow us to deliver quality services in a concerted and economical way. Moreover, the SNA has for many years organized Atlantic youth events, such as the Acadian Youth Festival in the area of culture and the Acadian Youth Parliament in leadership. In 2007, we also set up a round table on literacy with Atlantic-provinces and federal experts who are working together in a concerted effort to fight this major problem.

Today we wish to share with you our ideas on the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality from which we get our core funding—from the national fund—and to offer our suggestions for the future.

First of all, I want to emphasize that the roadmap has been a great improvement. It gave us all—the SNA, its member organizations and indeed all the Canadian francophonie—the benefits of a precise development plan, national in scope, taking into account the community, its priorities and objectives, and for a five-year period that allowed for longer-term results-oriented planning.

Here are our recommendations for the future.

We are in favour of continuing the present roadmap model over a five-year period.

We recommend that more federal departments be involved in the roadmap in the spirit of section 7 of the act.

● (0915)

We encourage multi-year agreements in order to foster long-term capacity building for community organizations.

We are in favour of core funding for organizations because of its leverage effect. For each dollar of core funding, tens of other dollars are raised.

In the case of the SNA, however, the present core funding is insufficient to fulfill the organization's mandate: we receive \$168,000—which works out to about 50 cents per Acadian, as I like to say—an amount that has practically not changed in six years and that is not meeting our most basic expenses. This year again, thanks to special projects, the total funding of the SNA is around \$800,000; but such an effort, year after year, means some very expensive human costs and undermines the SNA's capacity to devote energy to important projects, such as a communication effort with the anglophone community and the protection and promotion of our Acadian symbols.

In this regard, we would like to suggest two new approaches to secure adequate core funding for the SNA. Recognizing its unique position in the country as the only francophone organization representing the Acadian people—that is, the second francophone founding people of Canada—we suggest that the federal government create a trust fund to secure the base financing of the SNA, or create a special fund for the SNA outside of the national fund.

With such a model ensuring adequate core funding, as is already the privilege of other groups financed by the national fund, the SNA will be in a position to fully achieve its mandate, which is to promote Acadia, and thus Canada, around the world, and to develop, in the Atlantic region, the links, projects and initiatives that are needed to enrich the region both humanly and economically.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Enguehard.

We now have one hour and a half for questions and comments.

We will start with Ms. Michaud.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Good morning.

First of all, I would like to welcome all the witnesses joining us today. We appreciate your comments, since, as you must already know, our committee's meetings on the study of the roadmap will be used as a basis for, or perhaps even become the substance of, the evaluation. So your comments are greatly appreciated, given that it doesn't seem like there are other consultations scheduled with the groups directly affected.

On behalf of Mr. Yvon Godin, I would also like to give his regards to Ms. Enguehard and Mr. Doucet. Though he couldn't be here today, he really wanted to send his regards to you in particular. So there you go.

My first questions are for you, Ms. Enguehard. You explained that the Société nationale de l'Acadie is the only organization supported by the roadmap that recognizes the Acadian people. Could you tell us how the work that you do to fulfill your mandate is different from that of other groups? How is that going to be reflected in your daily activities?

● (0920)

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: Representing the Acadian people comes with great responsibility both in terms of pride and identity. We are the bearers of history, responsible for the symbols of the Société nationale de l'Acadie. Let me give you an example of what the term “bearers of history” means.

As you probably know, the Grand-Pré site is a candidate for one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites. We have worked closely with Grand-Pré's nominating committee on this.

As I said, we are also responsible for the World Acadian Congress, which includes putting out calls for bids. We are sort of like the Acadian Olympic Committee. It also means forming a jury, setting up everything and keeping the World Acadian Congress going.

And since we represent the Acadian people on the international stage, we have affiliate members: Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, France, Louisiana, and Maine. So we have many responsibilities.

Over the past few years, we have been doing international work with ACOA to continue to develop relations with Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon; the funding for the work came from other federal organizations.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Thank you.

In your presentation, you talked about two new approaches or support mechanisms for the SNA that could be developed in the next roadmap. I have a number of questions about the creation of a trust fund for Acadians in particular. Could you tell us a bit more about this and explain how you could benefit from a fund like that?

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: We came up with the idea of a trust fund because, like all Canadians who pay taxes, we worry about financial difficulties and the ensuing burden. We were looking for new solutions to this problem.

The first advantage of the trust fund, as we see it, is that the money would not be paid to the SNA, but it would stay with the federal government's assets. Of course, we have to think about the uncertainty of interest rates, but this fund would allow us to have stable and ongoing core funding, about which we wouldn't need to constantly worry from one year to the next. Our main goal is to find new approaches to secure the funding of our organization.

[English]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: I have a few questions for Mr. Graham and Ms. O'Donnell as well.

I thought something really interesting in your testimony was the research aspect. Last week we had Mr. Forgues from the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities. He told us about the importance of research and all the data you can collect from that research to create new government programs and evaluate them. You mentioned the importance of that as well in your presentation.

When you think about Statistics Canada, I'm guessing they are an important source of information for you in your research as well. I was wondering if you think the cuts and reductions in the information output at Statistics Canada will affect the information on which your research is based.

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: QUESCREN, the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network, works in partnership with many research institutions and community groups that conduct research. While I myself am a specialist in qualitative research, so don't generally have access to statistics, I do work in partnership with many groups that make a lot of use of statistics.

One that I could underline that has also worked with CEDEC is the Community Health and Social Services Network. They carry out very extensive regular research using Statistics Canada data to understand the situation on the ground of Quebec's English-speaking communities in the Island of Montreal and in the regions. These are called the baseline data reports, and I would strongly recommend that people use them if they need information about many aspects of Quebec English speakers—rates of poverty, education rates, and social networks. They do very extensive reports on an annual basis.

I've been told by them and by other partners that their work will be compromised, unfortunately, by reduced access to statistical data, which is one of the concerns about changes in the statistical production.

• (0925)

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Thank you very much for that answer.
[Translation]

My next question is for the people from CEDEC.

In your presentation, you mentioned that, by the time it expires, you will receive about 70% of the roadmap investments for the economic development of English-speaking communities in Quebec.

Could you tell me whether you will be receiving 70% of all the investments for the development of English-speaking communities or 70% of the investments for CEDEC?

Mr. John Buck: Thank you very much.
[English]

Perhaps I'll respond in English because my notes are in English.

Thank you very much for that.

When we make the reference to the 70%, we're really referring to those two distinct portions of the road map that relate to economic development, so the enabling fund managed by HRSDC and then the economic development initiatives led through Industry Canada and, in our case, in the region of Quebec, managed by Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. The total for the enabling fund represents somewhere in the area of about \$13 million destined for Quebec; the total for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions to administer represents about \$10.2 million. That combined value...if we look at that over the five-year period of the road map, we will have received by March 31 roughly 70% of that value.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

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

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us this morning. I really liked your presentation, Ms. Enguehard from the Société nationale de l'Acadie. You talked about what the roadmap gave you and you made recommendations, which is really helpful to us.

Let me make a suggestion, which I often make to witnesses. If you have any other clarifications to make, please go ahead. I will then ask the other three organizations to do pretty much the same thing.

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: You would like me to add to what I've already said?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: If you want to add—

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: I think I have been specific. I said what I had to say. I'll be pleased to answer questions, but I don't think it's necessary to come back to the matter.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

Perhaps we could start with Concordia University.

Mr. David Graham: Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

Ms. O'Donnell and I discussed this issue yesterday over supper. We came up with a few specific things we'd like with respect to the increased capacity that additional resources could bring us, but I'll let Ms. O'Donnell tell you about this.

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: Thank you for the question.

Currently, the network I coordinate at Concordia University works in partnership with three institutions: Concordia University, Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities. The network exists in partnership, but it is subsidized through a contract. Since the contract will unfortunately run out next year, it is difficult for us to plan any long-term projects.

For instance, let's look at research groups that make research requests for projects that will run for five years, which is normal in the case of a large academic research project. I was recently asked to provide information and resources to help with the progress of this project that will run for five years. Unfortunately, it is difficult for me to commit to it. I told them that I was interested, that the network was interested, but that we could not promise that we will be there for five years.

In short, as concrete support, we would like to have a guarantee that the funding will last three to five years, instead of two or three years at a time, or that the trust fund of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities—CIRLM—in Moncton will be increased, so that it can support us more substantially in the years to come.

• (0930)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I'll now address the representatives of the Regional Association of West Quebecers.

What are your recommendations?

Mr. Noel Gates (President, Regional Association of West Quebecers): What was the question?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Do you have any recommendations to make about the future of the roadmap?

Mr. Noel Gates: With respect to funding?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Exactly, along the same lines as—

Mr. Noel Gates: Funding is always at the heart of the matter for every organization, isn't it? This is especially true for organizations where resources, both financial and human, are fairly limited. As Ms. Stronach said in her presentation, without core funding, it would be almost impossible to do any work. We would not have a physical space where we could organize our activities. We would have to do small-scale work that wouldn't amount to much.

The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages made some recommendations in the report that came out last year on funding organizations like ours. It recommended greater flexibility in how these organizations are funded.

We fully understand that there must be some requirements for public funding, but the process to apply for funding and to present a summary of what has been accomplished is always difficult, because the request must be submitted a few months in advance for the activity that we want to undertake. When the time comes to put things in motion, the circumstances are fairly often not exactly as we had expected, and adjustments are necessary.

With respect to our relationship with Canadian Heritage, which is the source of our core funding, I must say that the department has shown some flexibility when it decides on the value of the funding requests and the subsequent results. The fact remains that, for organizations like ours, our core funding barely changes from year to year. Over the past 10 years, and I have some experience here, our core funding has increased 2%. I think you'll agree with me that this isn't exactly keeping up with the rate of inflation.

What are we asking for? Of course, we're asking for a little more money. That's what we're always asking for, isn't it? With a little more money, we could do a lot more.

I see that the chair is motioning to me. I'm sorry.

•(0935)

The Chair: No problem. Thank you, Mr. Gates.

Mr. Bélanger, you have the floor.

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

Good morning, everyone, and welcome.

[English]

I can't help but notice, Madam Stronach, Mr. Gates, the names you have, and I wonder if you're related to those families.

Ms. Heather Stronach: It's a nice thought.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I want to pick up on the financials you mentioned. *Le Plan d'action*, which came before *la Feuille de route*, from 2003 to 2008, totalled, as our analyst would know, about \$800 million. There was a difference on an annual basis. It was an amount that was augmenting...so in the last year the total was over \$200

million, compared to the first year, which was \$140 million, or something like that. I take it, therefore, that for *la Feuille de route*, the amounts are pretty well fixed from year to year. We've seen an analysis on what it is.

Would you believe that if there was to be another *la Feuille de route*, it should perhaps be on an augmentation curve from year to year, so that indeed some of the inflationary impact would be attenuated quickly?

Mr. Noel Gates: Yes, I would agree entirely, Mr. Bélanger. I don't think we would ask for the moon.

Just to put it in very simple terms, we work with a very dedicated staff of two people. With a very dedicated staff of three people, we would find that the whole of our operation would go much more easily. So I thank you for the observation.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Perhaps someone else is listening. We'll see.

For Concordia—and again, I have just the one shot, so I need very quick answers—what is the relationship that you've evolved with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council? Is there a coordination with what you're doing and what they're doing?

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: Unfortunately, there is at this point no coordination.

For the information of the committee, several years ago there was a special program to support research on official language minority communities, which no longer exists.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It's a shame.

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: It is a shame. It would be very welcome, to answer Monsieur Gourde's question too, to see a renewal of that program, which, according to what I've heard, produced some interesting results.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: My next question is for the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

Ms. Enguehard, I don't want to be mean, but I assume people sometimes call you "Ms. En Garde".

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: I'm called all kinds of things: "Ms. En Guerre", "Ms. Enguhard", "Ms. En Garde".

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I say that because you really are on guard for the community.

Thank you for your presentation. I would like to know whether you found this idea of the trust fund in the report of the late Senator Simard.

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: We didn't need to. It's something we've been thinking about for a while now. It already exists in Acadia. Quite some time ago, the Government of New Brunswick created a trust fund for the *L'Évangéline* newspaper, which *L'Acadie Nouvelle* took over. As a result, the newspaper, as the only independent newspaper, can continue to represent Canada's Acadian population. I think this solution may be innovative in our case.

• (0940)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask a favour of our analyst. A heart-wrenching report was presented by the late Senator Simard. A Progressive Conservative, this politician made several recommendations, including one on establishing a trust fund, a restorative fund intended for official language minority communities, not just Acadian communities. If there is a summary of that report, I think it would be interesting and beneficial to have it distributed to all committee members.

I am also in full agreement with the matter of protecting monuments. I had the opportunity to meet with Roméo LeBlanc, not when he was Governor General, but when he was Minister of Public Works, and we spoke about the project to protect the Monument-Lefebvre, in Memramcook. It became a gathering place for the community, didn't it?

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: That's right. Since 2005, the Société nationale de l'Acadie has had a program that commemorates the Acadian odyssey through monuments throughout Canada, and also abroad. In October 2011, we inaugurated a monument in Houma, Louisiana. These are also interesting and important tools for tourism development in regions where there often aren't many tourist attractions, such as in Cape St. George in the Port au Port Peninsula in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: As you know, Canada will have its 150th birthday in 2017. You are going to hold a world congress in 2014 and, in theory, the next one should be in 2019. If I may, I would like to suggest something. I would find it interesting if the World Acadian Congress was held in Ottawa in 2017. It would be fascinating to have a big tintamarre, the kind we see in the Acadian Peninsula, on Parliament Hill. I don't know if it would be possible to organize a special assembly. I'm not looking for an answer; I simply wanted to throw the idea out there and let you think about it. I think it would be interesting for the rest of Canada to see the Acadian presence in the heart of the country—I consider the capital of Canada to be the heart of the country—and not just in the Atlantic provinces. Acadians are everywhere, and it's a pleasure to meet them.

My last question is for the representatives of the Regional Association of West Quebecers.

[English]

We're neighbours. I'm from Ottawa, and I'm a *francophone de souche*. You're anglophones from the Outaouais. We live together. We cross the bridges hundreds of thousands of times.

Can you give us a synopsis—from your impression—of the overall state of the anglophone community in west Quebec? Is it improving? Is it okay? Is it respected?

Mr. Noel Gates: I think it's extremely difficult to give an overall picture, sir. For one thing, we talk about the anglophone community, but sometimes it's better to talk in the plural about the anglophone communities. As I think you know very well, there is a world of difference between, shall we say, the Pontiac and the Gatineau Valley and between those people who live out in the country and us urbanites who live in the city of Gatineau.

I would say we're probably dealing with an extremely mixed picture, which is made more mixed by the economic ups and downs of the region. Gatineau, I think you can regard as being relatively prosperous because it has, at least until now, enjoyed a stable source of employment, which is the government. In the Pontiac and on the other side of Gatineau, in the direction of Papineau County, you have industries based on forestry, which have been in decline. You have mills that have closed down and you have people looking desperately for other sources of employment. We've had some reference to the beneficial effect that has been achieved by the work of CEDEC, for example, this morning in Campbell's Bay, which of course is in the Pontiac.

Overall, I think there is some recognition within the city of Gatineau itself of the fact that there is an English language community. In some respects, it is very good. In some respects, it is less than adequate.

I would just mention, in conclusion, Mr. Chairman—excuse my verbosity—that this very week we are running a survey through the local papers and through our website about access to services in English in the city of Gatineau. I'm hoping we get a good response to that because it will be very interesting to see what the findings are.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Gates.

We'll take a brief health break of two minutes.

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_____ (Pause) _____

[Translation]

The Chair: We'll start with Mr. Trottier.

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

I'd like to thank our guests for being here this morning.

As you know, it's been a few weeks, a few months even, since we started studying the roadmap. It's always good to receive comments from groups that benefit from the roadmap. It's really the communities you help that benefit from the roadmap.

Ms. Enguehard, you said that it was good to have long-term support, that to have long-term plans of four or five years, it's important to have long-term support, as well as some coordination among the departments. This is what we have tried to put in place. The amount of funding is quite large and, of course, every group always wants more. There was \$1.1 billion for five years. So it isn't surprising that the groups that come here always ask that we continue to provide funding and that we even increase it.

There is one group of people that did not come and testify, and that's the taxpayers, those anonymous people who pay out of their pocket so that we can invest in groups through the roadmap.

• (0950)

[English]

The backdrop, and the reason I mentioned the taxpayer not being represented here, of course, is the fiscal challenges the government has. It doesn't matter whether it's the United States, France, Spain, Greece, or Quebec—all governments everywhere are wrestling with fiscal challenges. So, ultimately, the question becomes one of priorities.

Every group can say that their group is the priority, but I was wondering if you could just help us, in terms of our evaluation, in thinking through evaluation criteria, without saying “our group is the priority”. Mr. Bélanger can appreciate this, having been in cabinet in the past and their government also faced with that question of prioritization: where do you spend money, which also implies where do you not spend money.

I'll ask maybe each in turn, if you were to put yourself in the shoes of the Department of Heritage and the Minister of Heritage, and thinking about the next version of the road map—there will undoubtedly be a next version of the road map—what would you say the different criteria should be to come up with a plan for determining where to spend money? I'm thinking at a higher level than your own group, putting yourself in the position of, say, that heritage minister.

I'll start with Concordia University. It might be difficult to put you in that position, but it would be useful feedback for us, as an evaluation committee, if you can think about those priorities. You're probably aware that with the road map we're investing in seniors, in youth, in culture, in health—a wide variety of different aspects of the linguistic reality of Canada.

Mr. David Graham: With your permission, Monsieur Trottier, I'll say a few words and then perhaps I'll ask my colleague, Dr. O'Donnell, to add something from her perspective.

The question you raise is an absolutely vital one. It is about priorities. I would point out that like everyone in the room, I think, I am a taxpayer. The taxpayer is indirectly represented here, and more directly by you perhaps than by us.

Having said that, it seems to me that it is critical for the Government of Canada never to lose sight of its mission of doing whatever it can to guarantee the vitality of all our minority communities in Canada. I think there are payoffs for the taxpayer in that.

For example, if we hark back to what Dr. O'Donnell was saying about developing metrics and parameters for assessing community vitality, having lived in Newfoundland for many years, which is where I had the good fortune to meet Madame Enguehard many years ago, I have seen it firsthand there, and more recently in Quebec, the terrible pattern of loss that arises when community vitality cannot be sustained, when communities are hollowed out and emptied and people vanish from those communities, either to migrate to nearby cities or, in the case of both Newfoundland and English-speaking Quebec, to other provinces and other countries. That is a terrible loss for Canada, it seems to me.

I think it is incumbent on the Government of Canada to do what it can, within the limits of fiscal responsibility, you're absolutely correct, to sustain those communities, because they are part of the fabric of this nation and they contribute vitally to sustaining the fabric of Canada.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: I'm understanding, then, that a key criterion would be the vulnerability, if I can encapsulate what you're saying. If there's a group that's being threatened with disappearance altogether, that would take away from the fabric of what Canada is.

Maybe I'll ask some of the other groups to comment quickly in the time available.

So give maybe a one-minute sense, in a few words, to help us establish criteria for prioritization. I'll go with the West Quebecers group, please.

• (0955)

Mr. Noel Gates: I would certainly regard the maintenance of vitality, which is so much talked of these days, as being a fundamental criterion. It's the question, certainly, of trying to establish a reasonable set of categories, or metrics, or whatever the right word is, for determining what is vitality. That I think is something that has to be worked out in consultation between the groups involved—including ourselves, West Quebecers—with the Department of Canadian Heritage and other departments that are involved.

With respect, I would not have the emphasis put quite so much on vulnerability. Mr. Graham has stressed that very effectively. But once you've got a process of enhancing vitality under way, you want to keep it up. That means that support has to continue for a period of years. I would certainly side with Mr. Graham in saying that this is an investment for the taxpayer. We are all Canadian taxpayers, and the whole business of maintaining minority communities is an essential part of Canada as we see it.

Thank you.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: The Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation, please.

Mr. John Buck: Thank you, Mr. Trottier, for the question.

I can certainly appreciate the difficult priority-setting challenges you have. In fact, I can recall very recently one of the individuals who appeared before you who simply said, we need a lot of money and we need it for a long time. We would probably agree with that statement, but we appreciate the need for us to be very transparent and accountable, and we appreciate the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

The two factors that we would look at most closely are really very much a part of the way we evaluate success, and in fact the way our current funder, the majority funder we have, through HRSDC evaluates the success of the enabling fund. That is through leveraged funds and also through concrete partnerships that are established.

There are two very precise criteria. If I may elaborate very briefly, the leveraged piece of that is critical because it talks not about the road map being an expense but rather an investment. When we look at every dollar spent—and we made reference to this in our presentation—for the past year we can demonstrate \$1.07 of immediate leverage generated in the economy to more than 100%. If we look across the country at the investment, there is \$69 million going through the enabling fund over the five years. The average across the country is actually a three-to-one ratio. There's a clear value there that's being generated, and something I think we can speak very boldly to taxpayers about and let them know that we are doing wonderful things with a relatively minimal investment in this space of economic development.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Buck, you read the archives of our previous meetings. That was really special. Thank you.

I'm very interested in the research you are doing at Concordia University. Thank you very much.

We just heard Mr. Buck say:

[English]

“we need a lot of money and we need it for a long time.”

[Translation]

We've heard this type of statement repeatedly from the groups who have appeared before this committee. Could you talk to us about the conclusions that indicate that we need to eliminate certain programs because they aren't effective, or does it look like we should continue all the programs that are in place? Are there any other conclusions?

Mr. David Graham: Is that question for me?

Mr. John Weston: Yes, it is for you, if you wish to answer first, Mr. Graham, or Ms. O'Donnell.

Mr. David Graham: Thank you. This is the big question for the Government of Canada. We can't do it all. As a university administrator, I know that all too well. The way things are currently, when there are increases in one area, there need to be decreases elsewhere. However, I don't agree that we need a lot of money over a very long time. I spoke with Ms. O'Donnell last night. The needs of the network she runs and coordinates are modest. A relatively modest sum would make it possible to increase the capacity, in partnership with the university that I have the honour of representing, for instance by funding another researcher position. That would enable us to increase this leverage effect that my CEDEC colleague just spoke about. It isn't up to us to suggest budget cuts, because I don't want to target other programs I know almost nothing about.

Mr. John Weston: You are right to say that. I clearly recall that, when I was supporting an opposition party, it was very difficult to criticize, but now, we need to make the decisions and establish

priorities. As another leader once said, it's difficult to establish priorities. Isn't that right, Mr. Bélanger?

I think it was you, Ms. O'Donnell, who spoke about community vitality. But we always have difficulty establishing success measures.

[English]

What's community vitality and how do we measure that? We've discussed that a little bit this morning.

[Translation]

What are the criteria for success? Is it always up to the government, or could the community find success in working with the government?

Mr. Buck, perhaps you could answer that question.

[English]

How do we see that community vitality progressing, increasingly independent of government support, so that we know we're sowing the seeds of success but not always taking the taxpayers' money and investing it here?

•(1000)

Mr. John Buck: Thank you, Mr. Weston, for the question. It's a very important question that we look at in terms of sustainability in our communities and diversification of those resources that support much of what we do.

We've made reference this morning in our brief to the business vitality index and another initiative we've done, the community vitality index. We've done both through the support of Industry Canada and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

If you'll permit me, I may ask my colleague, Mr. Myers, to respond to the main criteria there. He's our vitality guru and I think is best positioned to respond to that.

That question around creation of partnerships and considering sustainability is definitely a large part of the response there.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Buck.

Go ahead, briefly, Mr. Myers.

Mr. Grant Myers (Provincial Economic Development Officer, Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation): I'll be very brief.

A guru is a bit generous, but I'll go from there.

I can only speak from the perspective of the work we do. I think when we're looking at vitality, as John said, we're looking at measuring how a community can sustain economic development in the long term. We have some tools that we work with to do that, not the least of which is a tool developed by HRSDC called the community capacity assessment tool. That enables communities to gauge their growth in their ability to chart their own economic future among a number of variables. We can measure the impact of our work and see changes in how well a community can sustain itself in the long term. That includes investments from a variety of sources. It cannot be sustained merely by the federal government.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Enguehard would like to answer Mr. Trottier's question. He asked what the criteria were.

Ms. Enguehard, you have the floor.

• (1005)

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: I think the Canadian taxpayers, and that includes us, are also very aware that one of Canada's main criteria has always been the respect and treatment of its minorities. I would add that a country's greatness is measured by how it treats its minorities.

On the francophone side, the leaders' forum, which stems from the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, has a strategic plan and established priorities. The priorities should be determined in collaboration with that organization. As Mr. Graham so eloquently said, it isn't up to us here to pit ourselves against the others and determine what should be given priority.

Within this very large framework, I think this should be the preferred approach. That was the response to that question, but we would now like to answer another.

The Chair: Thank you. I would ask that you be brief because Mr. Dionne Labelle would also like to ask some questions.

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet (Executive Director, Société nationale de l'Acadie): With respect to the indicators intended to measure the vitality of our communities, it certainly isn't easy to answer that question.

Further to the francophone summit in 2007, the leaders' forum developed a community strategic plan. We are currently working with researchers and a colleague from Canadian Heritage to identify performance indicators. The goal is to measure the vitality of our communities at the end of the project. We are working with Canadian Heritage to secure these performance indicators. It isn't an easy task, but if we manage to measure the success and progress every time there is a plan, I think we will really be able to see what criteria will enable us to continue in that direction.

The Chair: Mr. Dionne Labelle, you have the floor.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today. I'll start with Ms. Enguehard, and I will come back to certain aspects of your presentation. I will also address our Conservative friends, in particular Mr. Gourde.

Let's take the example of a youth centre in a municipality, and the centre has a budget of \$150,000 to \$160,000. A regional organization has an assured core budget of \$300,000. Here, we're talking about an organization with a mission to defend the interests of one group, in this case, Canada's Acadians. It must also promote the group around the world, so we're talking about core funding of \$168,000. Personally, I find that figure astonishing.

In your document, you say that you would like to receive funding comparable to that of other groups that receive assistance from the

national envelope. How much funding would you like to have so you can ensure that Canada preserves its Acadian identity, which makes the country what it is, in the same way that Quebec does?

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: Several organizations are funded from the national envelope. Personally, I have not managed to find out how it is funded since 2007. However, I know only too well that the SNA is on the bottom rung of the ladder. In 2006-2007, we were the organization receiving the least funding. The organization right behind us received core funding of \$160,000.

You will notice that I specifically said that, each year, we manage to bring our budget up to about \$1 million. If you want a—

[*English*]

bang for your buck,

[*Translation*]

—we are a quite extraordinary example, especially given what we achieve. But it is clear that we cannot go on like this for ever because of the major costs involved. For the Société nationale de l'Acadie to be able to fulfill its mandate, our core funding has to be more than doubled. There are no two ways about it.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: It seems to me that you are right. I do not want to speak for my party, but it is clear that your organization's mandate is important for Canadian unity. If we really want to be serious in our defence of the official languages and of linguistic minorities in Canada, the core funding of your organization must be reviewed. I have no doubt about that.

My second comment goes to the representatives from the Regional Association of West Quebecers.

Of the 52,000 people who use English in the Gatineau and Pontiac regions, 25,000 are unilingual anglophones. I am particularly thinking of elderly anglophones who live in a francophone world. In their relationship with the provincial government, do you feel that they get enough help in receiving health and support services in their own language? Is there work to do in that regard? Do you get any requests along those lines?

• (1010)

Mr. Noel Gates: The establishment of the organization that Ms. Stronach referred to, the Outaouais Health and Social Services Network, has really helped to solve that problem. We played a major role in raising the money needed to establish the organization and now it is independent of us. It is constantly working to inform English-speaking people about health matters.

Additionally, it tries to give a voice to the elderly people you mention, for example, who often live in quite remote locations. In terms of cooperation with the province, I feel that is where the network plays an essential role, by mobilizing resources to help people who live in isolated places. As seniors, they have health problems, and on top of that, they are not able to speak French. I would also say that it is impossible to ask them to learn French at that stage of their lives. The time for that is past, isn't it?

It is likely that a lot of work remains to be done. At least we have an agency in our area that plays a major role. The Outaouais Health and Social Services Network also has an advisory committee that represents anglophones.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Your turn, Mr. Menegakis.

[English]

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Good morning. Welcome.

Thank you very much for your presentations. I found them all very informative.

It's particularly interesting today. I have an affinity, of course, with Dr. Graham and Dr. O'Donnell. I'm a graduate of Concordia University, arguably, I might say, the best university in Canada, but I'm very biased.

Mr. Gates, welcome back to the Hill, sir. I know you've worked here for some time as an interpreter for the House and for the Senate. You are here in a different role today.

I find it a little bit of an oxymoron, or very difficult, to use the words "minority communities" in Canada when we speak of the French-speaking community or the English-speaking community across the country, given that the founders of this land were English people and French people. But here we are today, it's the reality, and we have to refer to you as a minority. I'm almost apologetic when I use the word "minority" because I don't think you should feel like a minority group anywhere you live in Canada. That is the thing that I believe is the goal, if you will, of the road map.

The road map represents an investment of over \$1 billion for our government, specifically to address the very issue of vitality and vibrancy and long-term success, if you will, of the English-speaking community in Quebec and the French-speaking community everywhere else.

We are studying it. We're about 80% into it now. It is going to expire in 2013. We don't know what the next phase of it will be, whether we'll call it the road map or something else, but hearing from groups such as yours today, all of the groups, about the importance the road map has played in the programs that you have initiated and in helping you with your good work, it's obvious that we need a replacement, if not a continuation of the road map right now.

This is the first question I'd like to ask—and I don't think I'm going to have time for many questions given that we only have about five minutes each here. Assuming that we continue with the road map or something to replace it, where would you focus? There is a question of sustainability of funds. You want sustainable funds to be able to continue the programs you have, but in addition to that, are there some new initiatives that you will be focusing on that you'd like to see in your organizations that can be enhanced by the provision of more funding through the road map or the continuation of another program of some sort?

• (1015)

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: I will answer in English.

In the document I gave you we have priorities. Those priorities will continue because they are deemed to be what is essential for the continuation of the Acadian people. Also, it would be untoward for an organization such as ours to change our minds on what the priorities are. Those priorities have been long thought out: youth and demographic issues, issues related to the exodus of people from rural to urban communities, the departure of the youth, the need for francophone immigration. The identity in the culture in our case is something that is always on the agenda and has to stay on the agenda if you represent people. The literacy issue is an absolute plague and has to be addressed. We are doing our best. And communications... because it is indeed essential that the Acadian people be better understood, especially by the anglophone communities. That's what we had planned to do and have been unable to do because of lack of funding. I will just reiterate that those would continue to be our priorities.

[Translation]

The Chair: Do you want to answer as well, Ms. O'Donnell?

[English]

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: We've mentioned priorities that have been set by community groups. I would like to underline that one of our longstanding partners—the Quebec Community Groups Network—has recently completed a priority-setting exercise that brought together many, many stakeholders, including QUESCREN, to debate and come up with a list of priorities. I will leave it to them, because I believe they are presenting within the next couple of days, to discuss the priorities that they, in consultation with communities, have identified. It includes some of the same issues that Madame Enguehard has discussed—the issue of seniors, the issue of youth, and community diversity, which is a very particular issue defining the English-speaking communities and so on.

Naturally, I would underline that QUESCREN, which is working with QCGN, would always like to support those developments with research so that we can clarify what the precise issues around any of these identified priorities are, whether it's demographic issues, economic issues, or others. I would say that all of the priorities identified should be accompanied by evidence in research.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Your turn, Mr. Benskin.

[English]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Thank you.

I'd like to thank my colleague from Richmond Hill for his remarks. I, too, have an issue with the term "minority", especially in language issues. The French and the English are founding members of this country. Although there are satellite communities scattered throughout this very vast country, what holds both communities together is language. The nuances that we're seeing here are really about the particulars of the Acadians, who have a very particular history, and anglophone Quebecers have a very particular history that is different from anglophones outside of Quebec. I would hope that maybe we can start thinking about using other terminology other than "minorities".

Another comment I would like to make is that a government's job really is not to spend money but to invest money. Ultimately, whether that investment comes back in terms of GDP, or finance, or cultural and social growth of that country, it is an investment. Every dollar is an investment. It's impossible to separate taxpayers from those who actually receive the services.

One of the things that I think

• (1020)

[Translation]

Ms. Enguehard mentioned the importance of protecting people's culture. That is really important in the anglophone community too. I come from a cultural community myself.

I would like to ask the people from CEDEC and our other participants what they have done to significantly improve the cultural aspect.

[English]

It's something that's apart from economic sustainability, but the culture of the people,

[Translation]

what you have done to maintain or improve that aspect?

Let's start with Ms. Enguehard or Mr. Doucet.

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: I will let my executive director speak to that.

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet: Thank you very much for your comments.

A proud Acadian whose name I am sure you know, Jean-Marc Nadeau, often says: "a small apple is no less an apple than a big apple". So, even if we are talking about a people like the Acadians, who are not really numerous in comparison with other peoples, we are all peoples, we are all human beings and we all want to cultivate the common identity that unites us.

As to your question of how to develop culture as such, I feel that, in order to make sure that a community or a people can endure, we have to invest in its youth. In our French-speaking schools, we often talk about identity-building. Young people have to be imbued with things that will develop their pride and their identification with their culture and their mother tongue.

When dealing with youth, we often talk about "aha moments", the times when a kid has an experience that will make him think about, understand and relate to his identity and his culture. He will choose to cultivate them and use them to advantage for the rest of his life. He will register his children in francophone schools, participate in community activities, and so on.

So we need all the initiatives that the government can support that will let kids experience events in which they get out of their communities, meet people from other places and experience those "aha moments". Among many others, they are some of the indications, we feel, of the long-term development of the vitality of our communities.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. John Buck: Thank you, Mr. Benskin.

It's a terrific question, and one that's interesting to look at in economic terms, which would be generally the lens that we look through when we examine this.

Largely, part of the role that we have to play in Quebec as an organization that is vertically integrated with operations across the entire province is ultimately creating partnerships with the majority linguistic community. In fact, with more than 200 very concrete partnerships that are documented, a lot of what we're talking about on a regular basis is the added value of having the English-speaking community around the table deciding on the future direction of our communities and demonstrating that added value, not only with respect to ideas and with respect to directions, but also with respect to culture and this element, which is so critical.

Again, looking through a very economic lens, I think we see a lot of the possibilities to promote culture from a tourism perspective. We're very proud of the tremendous amount of work that's been done in the area of research associated with tourism.

Working with partners, not only within the English-speaking community in Quebec but the French-speaking communities outside of Quebec in the rest of Canada, CEDEC and RDÉE Canada and its stakeholders across the country are deeply involved in an initiative that would see us promote this culture for tourism reasons, and it would see terrific economic benefits for the country as a consequence.

If I might just add one brief statement, because we've heard two comments about minority communities, one of the interesting and I think perhaps most important assets of the investments that we see coming through the road map are that they contribute not only to the vitality of the linguistic minority communities.... When we look to Quebec, for example, and talk about 990,000 English speakers who reside there, in fact every dollar that gets invested there has an impact on the entire community, and in many cases an exponentially greater impact for a region than just a very specific linguistic minority community.

• (1025)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

I think that we will be using the word "minority" for a long time into the future, because the rights of linguistic minorities are enshrined in the Constitution of Canada.

We now move to Mr. Williamson, the only member from New Brunswick here with us today.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Yes, thank you very much.

[English]

I'm going to continue with the *en garde*, for a second. It was Churchill who said,

[Translation]

"Prenez garde: je vais parler en français."

I come from the south of the province, where we do not have a lot of Acadians. But we have a place called Saint Croix Island, where Samuel de Champlain spent the winter before he ever made it to Quebec. For us, it is an important place for both Canadian communities.

I would just like you to speak about the Acadian presence in New Brunswick, the way in which it has changed in the last 10 or 20 years and the sharing between Acadians and anglophones. It comes as no surprise that the north is French-speaking and Acadian and the south is mostly English-speaking. But there are places like Moncton and even Fredericton where both linguistic communities are found. I would like to hear your ideas about that.

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: The Société nationale de l'Acadie represents Acadians from the four Atlantic provinces. So I will refer to Atlantic Acadia.

We often hear about the country as a whole being made up of Quebec and English-speaking Canada. But nothing could be further from the truth than talking about Quebec as French-speaking and the rest of Canada as English-speaking. Every francophone in the country knows that. So do Acadians.

The same goes for the Atlantic region. People often think that Acadia is in New Brunswick. But Acadia can be found in all four provinces. It has a strong presence, even in my province, Newfoundland and Labrador, where we represent less than 0.5% of the population. The population is extremely active, with its schools, its school/community centres and its organizations, some of which have spoken to you from around this very table.

More remarkable is the fact that, approximately since the 1970s, we are no longer talking about survival, even though we are still dealing with issues related to assimilation or migration; we are talking about a boom. I feel that this is a significant stage. We should also mention our relationship with the provinces and the acceptance in all provinces that francophone communities must have their place—even though three are not officially bilingual, as is New Brunswick. This is the case even in my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I feel that major improvements have been made in this area.

So before you today is a young Acadia that stands proudly facing the future. No longer are we the Acadia of the past, with a cap in our hand, a chip on our shoulder and tears in our eyes. This is an Acadia that wants to take, and is taking, its proud place in Canada and that wants to move forward, as everyone does.

I also have to tell you that Acadia votes for all three parties. So the Société nationale de l'Acadie is not—I repeat not—a political representative of our people. Our people vote as they choose.

•(1030)

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you.

Mr. Doucet, do you have comments too? You are from New Brunswick, aren't you?

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet: I certainly am.

I support Ms. Enguehard's comments. It is particularly the case in New Brunswick, where 33% of the population is said to be French-speaking. It is spread all over the province. You mentioned

Fredericton and Moncton, but I can assure you that Saint John also has a very vibrant community, like a crossroads.

I think that the school/community centre, one of the innovations that New Brunswick has introduced over the years, has really made a contribution and is being used as a model elsewhere. They have been established in the big cities where Acadians are in the minority. These centres that bring together under one roof schools, libraries, community radio stations and a host of services, have become the development focus not only for the community, but also for Acadians and other French-speakers. The centres allow them to establish links and get involved in all kinds of causes.

That is a quick answer to the question. Thank you.

[English]

Mr. John Williamson: Let me turn to the English within Quebec. I studied in Montreal, so I'm familiar with it, although it's been a number of years now.

Actually, this is a follow-up to a question Mr. Bélanger asked a couple of weeks ago. A couple of weeks ago the cover of *L'actualité* magazine said "*Montréal: la tentation anglaise*". Remember that magazine? Did any of you from Quebec read that article? What did you think of that?

Mr. Noel Gates: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, who is the question directed to?

The Chair: I think it's directed to the three anglophone groups from Quebec.

Mr. Noel Gates: All right. Maybe without presumption I can just make a comment on that.

Yes, I have seen this article. I'll go so far as to use a word I don't use very often, and that is that I was rather shocked. I am not an expert on conducting scientific sample surveys, but my understanding is that CROP is one of the respected practitioners of this particular art. I think perhaps the politest thing I can say about this article is that it fell considerably below the standard I would expect of them or of any other of our well-known organizations. There were questions in it that were loaded, and I think it's one thing that you don't do in a survey. Unless you really want to twist it in a certain direction, you don't ask loaded questions.

Furthermore, I will say I was entertained to some extent, in a rather sardonic way, by the well-known gentleman who apparently took a part in planning this particular survey. I'm referring, of course, to Mr. Jean-François Lisée, who presents himself as a friend of the anglophone community and answers that he is shocked by the results of this survey. Well, I would merely remark that it seems to me that Mr. Lisée probably got the results out of this survey that he wanted, and I would certainly join with one of the commentators in Montreal, who remarked "With friends like that, who needs enemies?"

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gates.

Madame O'Donnell, do you have a brief comment?

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: I think the reply was ably handled by Jack Jedwab, who is one of the people I've worked with on several projects. But I would simply like to add that it unfortunately gave what I would call an impression that I think statistics show otherwise, which is that the English-speaking population of Quebec is very largely bilingual, integrated, and very committed to the future of the province. I don't think that was the message that emanated from that article.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Buck, did you have a brief comment on this question?

Mr. John Buck: I would simply suggest that among the partners we have, the majority in Quebec are likely French-speaking organizations that are out there. Our track record and our success is largely built on the fact that the relationships with the majority community are incredibly strong.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: The floor is yours, Mr. Jacob.

Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question goes to Ms. Enguehard and Mr. Doucet, from the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

Is your organization feeling the effects of the recent budget cuts at Radio-Canada or elsewhere? Are you concerned by those cuts?

• (1035)

Ms. Françoise Enguehard: Yes, we are concerned by the Radio-Canada budget cuts because the corporation has an important community mandate to broadcast in regions where it is not economically viable. That is true in Acadia and in the four Atlantic provinces. There are also a lot of cuts in local production. It all concerns us a lot.

The reduction in staff in various departments is also clearly a concern for us in terms of delivering services and programs. Here is something I can tell you at the moment. It is about a situation that we at the Société nationale de l'Acadie have already experienced. Some cuts, for example, were made a long time ago and had very serious repercussions. That was the case when the open democracy program at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was abolished and all our work at international level was put into jeopardy. So it is a situation that we have often experienced.

Mr. Pierre Jacob: Thank you.

Do you want to add anything, Mr. Doucet?

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet: No. I think that Ms. Enguehard covered it well.

Mr. Pierre Jacob: My second question goes to Mr. Graham and Ms. O'Donnell, from Concordia University.

I thank all the witnesses who have come to provide us with their comments. But I have to point out that the first university I went to was Sir George Williams, in Montreal, now known as Concordia. After that, I made the rounds of all the universities in greater Montreal.

I represent the riding of Brome—Missisquoi, in the Eastern Townships, where the anglophone community is very active, I must

say. I also want to stress that it lives in harmony with the francophone community. The two communities share the same values: protecting the environment, respecting our architectural heritage, volunteering at the BMP hospital in Cowansville, arts and culture. The first library dates from 1893; perhaps you know it—the Pettes Memorial Library in Knowlton. It is an architectural jewel, but it is also a source of cultural vitality, both for the anglophone and francophone communities. Still in Knowlton, a small village, you can find a campus of Bishop's University that specializes in the arts. They have the Tour des arts, they have community radio, and so on. They are very committed people, you can see.

Could you tell me if Concordia University, or any other anglophone university, is doing any studies on that extraordinary community? In particular, are they identifying needs? Earlier, you mentioned myths. Have you found any? You talked about poverty and wealth. What have you come across in your research on that community?

I took part in a seminar in my constituency in Brome—Missisquoi. It was about what could be done to keep the young people in the area. They go away to study at places like McGill, Concordia, Champlain College, John Abbott College, Macdonald College and so on. But how can we make sure that they come home again so that the people there can benefit from what they have learned? Have your researchers looked at that question?

Mr. David Graham: Sir, with your permission, I would like to say a few words before we move to Ms. O'Donnell.

Let me first say that I very much appreciate your question. John Graham, my first Canadian ancestor, was from Scotland. He settled in the Eastern Townships more than 200 years ago. So our roots go deep. From what I know about them, the students at Concordia and young anglophones in Quebec—and I go back to something Ms. O'Donnell said—are anything but unilingual. They are as bilingual as they come. The great majority of them know French as well as they know English. Talking about an anglophone minority does not represent our current reality, and far from it.

Ms. O'Donnell probably has things to add about the other part of your question.

• (1040)

Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell: I work closely with a number of researchers from Bishop's University, specifically with those in the Eastern Townships Resource Centre. They are doing a lot of research into topics specific to the Eastern Townships. I could mention a Townshippers' Association project. That is a case where there are myths. There is an image of a deeply-rooted English-speaking community, if I can put it that way. But you also find immigrants and people coming from elsewhere. The Townshippers' Association welcomes those migrants and helps them become integrated into the majority. I know that Michèle Vatz Laaroussi, from the University of Sherbrooke, is doing research into that program.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Jacob.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

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

My question is for John Buck, from CEDEC.

Has your organization had the opportunity to work with the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec on various projects?

Mr. John Buck: Thank you for the question, Mr. Gourde.

I will reply in English because the notes I have with me are in English and they contain the details.

[English]

If we look at the regions, as you're well aware, and particularly in your area, for example, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions operates in such a way that they make decisions about investments in a very local way, so respond very directly to the different needs. With an organization with that presence throughout the province, we have the privilege of being able to deal with many of the offices associated with Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. In fact, in the briefing notes that we'll share with you, we've probably done about \$1.67 million worth of business with Canada Economic Development over the past year or so.

One of the largest initiatives that we've undertaken is the CEDEC small business support network, which is actually a multi-region initiative with a presence in all parts of the province, working to enhance vitality, in particular working on the area of small and medium enterprise creation and expansion of those businesses. That's probably been the largest area of direct work that we've pursued with Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: The Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec has about 14 points of service in different regions. In which regions do you mainly conduct your activities?

[English]

Mr. John Buck: When we look at our precise area, we have nine office locations, predominantly in areas where we would see a significant pocket of English speakers, so of course in some of the major urban areas, like Montreal, like Sherbrooke, like Quebec City. Of course, some of the ones that are perhaps a little less evident

would be in areas like Blanc-Sablon, in the lower north shore, or perhaps Shawville, for example, in the Outaouais is a good example of this. We are very much in touch with where we would see the English-speaking communities. In fact, if we do a comparison of our different points of service with where the 990,000 English speakers are located, we are able to be within relatively close proximity to virtually 100% of the linguistic minority communities.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Does your organization pay particular attention to developing an entrepreneurial spirit in the younger generation? In Quebec, with both anglophones and francophones, that entrepreneurial spirit is weaker than in the rest of Canada. We have to make particularly sure to develop that spirit in our young people who want to enter the business world.

[English]

Mr. John Buck: I'm very pleased that you asked that question because I think so frequently the notion of entrepreneurship gets immediately tagged to small business owners or business creation. In fact, one of our principles, one of our values, is to talk about entrepreneurial culture and those entrepreneurial attitudes that will enable communities ultimately to be sustainable and to thrive. One thing we do, for example, with young people across the province is we support something called National Entrepreneurship Day. We do that in partnership with various CLDs throughout the province, with the Province of Quebec—largely with the Province of Quebec in fact for that particular initiative. That's something that is part of National Entrepreneurship Week, which happens across Canada.

So there's a large effort to introduce these notions of entrepreneurial culture at an early stage and then support it throughout one's life, including for mature workers, where we do a tremendous amount of work in the area of entrepreneurial development as well.

•(1045)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Buck and Monsieur Gourde.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for appearing and for your testimony today. It's been helpful. Thank you very much.

Without further adieu, this meeting is adjourned.

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