



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Official Languages

LANG • NUMBER 012 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

—
Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

•(0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages, this Tuesday, February 25, 2014. This is our 12th meeting. We are here to study the economic situation of Canada's minority linguistic communities.

[English]

In front of us today, for an hour and a half, we have the Quebec Community Groups Network represented by Madam Martin-Laforge and Mr. Thompson.

We'll begin with an opening statement.

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

It's a pleasure to be here. It's been a while since we've come and we're glad to assist you in your study around the economic situation of Canada's linguistic minority communities.

For those of you new to the committee, the QCGN is a not-for-profit representative organization that acts as a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action on the strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of Canada's English linguistic minority communities. We collectively refer to these as the English-speaking community of Quebec.

The QCGN's 41 members are not-for-profit community groups, most of which provide direct services to members of our community across the province. Some members work regionally providing broad-based services while others work in specific sectors: arts and culture, health, etc.

English-speaking Quebec is Canada's largest official language minority community with over 1,000,000 citizens whose first official language spoken is English. Although 84% of our community lives within the Montreal census metropolitan area, more than 210,000 community members live in other Quebec regions.

Bilingualism rates are high in our community compared to other English-speaking Canadian cohorts with an overall rate of 66% reporting knowledge of French and English during the 2011 census. That percentage increases to more than 80% among our English-speaking youth, reflecting the investment our community has made to ensure our children can live and work in French in Quebec.

These numbers also demonstrate that there are more than 360,000 members of our community without a knowledge of French and

20,000 English mother tongue youth between the ages of 18 and 24 without the ability to work in French in Quebec. That's a pretty big number even at 20,000.

The economic and employability impacts of these figures are profound. We urge the committee to invite community-based employability and entrepreneurship sector organizations like Youth Employment Services to provide detailed information on the challenges faced by young English-speaking Quebecers.

YES will also be able to provide evidence regarding the challenges faced by English-speaking youth from outside the province and outside the country who come to Quebec for their education and fervently wish to stay in Quebec to live and raise families, but because of their employment situation they have to go somewhere else.

The Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation, CEDEC, is also a community leader with experience to assist you in this study.

Economic prosperity is one of the six priorities identified by the English-speaking community of Quebec in the 2012 to 2017 community development plan, which we previously presented to committee. Economic development and employability are woven throughout the plan and indeed are central to the vitality of any community.

The Government of Canada has committed significant resources to support our community's economic development, most recently in the road map for 2013-2018. Employment and Social Development Canada's enabling fund, the OLMC literacy and essential skills and social partnership initiatives, and the Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions at \$10.2 million are examples of important investments that are providing direct benefit to members of our community.

The investments being made by the Government of Canada in our community's economic development are being leveraged to enhance our community's vitality. We feel there is some room to make these resources more effective, however, and we'll talk about that in a moment.

We would like to highlight the successes of regionally based community groups like the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders, CAMI, and the Coasters Association living on the lower north shore. These groups have established effective coordination through a cooperative network of partners for the economic development of their communities. The committee is encouraged to invite them to testify for this study and they have best practices to share and exciting stories.

The committee might consider inviting Quebec Essential Learning Alliance that amongst other things is working with public and private partners to qualify aboriginal youth in Quebec's north as commercial pilots. This is a very exciting initiative that demonstrates the direct contribution community groups can make to economic development and employability undertakings.

● (0850)

In January, the QCGN participated in an excellent dialogue session between ESDC and sector leaders from our community. Many topics of interest to the committee's current study were covered, and we would like to highlight a few aspects.

First, the QCGN remains very interested in the evolution of the enabling fund, particularly following the recommendations of the fund's summative evaluative findings regarding program relevance and performance, and the operations of the national committees that govern the resources. Best practices from the ground demonstrate that economic development and employability efforts are most effective when partnered and coordinated with a community's overall efforts. Whereas these links do exist, they are by no means universal. Furthermore, there is room for improvement in the link between the enabling fund and its implementing partner and our community priorities and enabling strategies; we recognize that. For example, public consultation for the Canadian plan for economic development, CPED, for OLMCs—it's alphabet soup, I'm sorry—is now under way. This is a major policy initiative in a critical area of our community's vitality, which could have far-reaching effects on a number of sectors. We must ensure that the link between the CPED and our community development plan is considered during the consultation's planning and implementation.

Second, social financing was championed by the QCGN to this committee during its evaluative study of the previous road map. We were very pleased by the current road map's social partnership initiative, and look forward to partnering with ESDC for the program's implementation in our community. Social financing is a complex yet promising idea that could redefine the relationship between the public partner and the community sector. The committee might consider conducting a study on social financing within OLMCs once we have collectively developed expertise with this idea.

Third, labour market development is topical. We note our strong support for the Canada job grant program being delivered through Service Canada, since this is the only way to guarantee these services will be accessible in English to members of our community in Quebec.

We conclude our remarks by noting that successful economies are linked. The economic situation of our communities cannot be studied without understanding the economies of Quebec and

Canada. When Quebec prospers, we prosper, and the corollary is true. Our community is an integral part of the economies of Canada and Quebec, and we are always seeking research that helps us demonstrate our contribution.

Thank you. We look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam.

[*Translation*]

We have one hour and 20 minutes for questions and comments.

We will begin with Mr. Godin.

● (0855)

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

I welcome Ms. Martin-Laforge, whom I have known for a number of years, and Mr. Thompson.

[*English*]

When the committee decided to do this study I was very pleased about it. The government could say that we did not say no. I think it goes hand in hand. We have minority communities across the country. We talk about culture and all kinds of stuff, and how do you go to school and keep your language, but at the end of the day you want a job. I think this study is important and I want to thank you for appearing in front of this committee so that we could discuss different things.

Where is it at now, for example, in your community? We could say about Montreal that there is a big difference if you look at the anglophones in Montreal compared to those of Rivière-au-Renard, Fox River. I remember when I went to Quebec to Rivière-au-Renard and they were talking about Fox River, and you could see the presence there. But I think you could compare a place like that with a francophone minority in Alberta, for example, or a francophone minority in B.C. or in Nova Scotia.

What do you see that the government could do in those regions to help youth stay in the region and have a job, or to do economic development in the region so the youth can be at ease and have a job and stay at home? Is your group close to them there? Do you find that the government is doing what needs to be done for them?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: First I'd like to say that Stephen Thompson, the director of policy, will be helping with some statistics along the way and in our answers to you.

Unemployment among youth and English-speaking Quebecers generally is high. It's high not only in the regions; it's high in Montreal as well. We often say that Montreal is doing okay, but for youth, when we talk about them, there is a big issue around unemployment and underemployment. We can talk about statistics in a moment.

In the regions in Quebec, they are very interested in retention issues. You know, we can't keep our kids tied to a table in the basement. In Quebec, as in other OLMCs, parents expect their kids to have to go to school elsewhere, to have to go and study elsewhere, and to maybe find jobs elsewhere. The need for people in the region is to come back to jobs. Jobs have to be in the regions. They have to be good jobs, and they have to be jobs that take them somewhere.

I think you will have examples of work being done if you meet with the Coasters. There's a small population of Coasters close to Labrador doing some work in creating jobs. They do things around the berries, and they do innovative things around creating jobs. CAMI is the same thing.

The regions have a different kind of perspective around keeping their youth and their folks there. They know that they have to work with the majority community to create jobs for the region, not just for the anglophones but for the region. They are working together. We have some very good practices in the regions demonstrating how a municipality will be working with the majority community and with the minority community to create jobs. People have to speak French and people have to..... People work it out. In la Beauce they have to speak English as well.

We have a unique situation in Quebec around what we do in our regions around employment, employability, and entrepreneurship. That's one of the big areas that I believe the regions are working on—how to create the jobs through entrepreneurship.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: What tools has the Government of Canada made available to minority groups, such as anglophones in Quebec, to stimulate the economy? Are you aware of any?

• (0900)

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: There is direct project funding available from the Quebec economic development program, \$10.2 million over five years. That's of huge importance to our communities that can get projects. Many of the groups are working on projects as leverage with the provincial government or the municipal government. So the Quebec economic development program is really very important.

In terms of literacy skills, there's some work being done around leveraging there as well. The money that comes into Quebec usually is used to leverage other opportunities with other government money from the province. The key to our success is leveraging with the province. That's locally managed through groups locally. The enabling fund is very important to us as well, because the enabling fund will provide for partnerships. Those kinds of initiatives are important.

What I might say is that when the money comes directly to the community, it's a bit easier for us, rather than flowing it through.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Madam, I want to ask you a question. Before—if you take a look at part II of employment insurance—they took some money from employment insurance, they gave it to the province, and the province was local. It was local, right? The money was there to get a person to learn. It was not a company hiring somebody and giving the training, and then they get \$5,000 from the federal government, from the provincial government, and from the company. It was more like the province, with the federal money, taking somebody off the street, bringing them to get their grade 12 or something like that, getting them the upgrading, and training them in a trade so that they could get a job.

Madam Martin-Laforge, are you not worried now about the direction we're going, where money is pulled out of the province?

You've just said that it works better if it's in the community. But we're going the opposite way right now.

I'd like to hear you on that.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Thompson (Director, Policy, Research and Public Affairs, Quebec Community Groups Network): Our community's position would be that the funding that's delivered directly from the federal government to communities is more effective in terms of access to services in English. English-speaking community groups in Quebec find it challenging to access funds that are transferred from the federal government through the provincial government. I would encourage you to invite an organization like the Riverside School Board that has an excellent adult education program. They can tell you the challenges they have accessing funds from Emploi-Québec to get adult education to get specific training done for anglophones in Quebec. We were pleasantly surprised and very supportive of the Canada job grant being delivered through Service Canada provincially, because for us that means that we're guaranteed access to those services in the official language of our choice.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Over to you, Mr. Gourde.

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

Ms. Martin-Laforge and Mr. Thompson, thank you for being here this morning.

I liked the first part of your speech, when you talked about youth. You talked a great deal about young people who go somewhere else to study and who wish to come back to their communities, but they have a hard time finding jobs, unfortunately. We are probably talking about young graduates and apprentices. The first years are vital for young people like that. If their first job is in another region, far from their communities, they will often settle there. We end up losing a segment of the youth population. When a community loses its young people, it loses its future and even its soul .

How could we strengthen employment and support those young people so that they stay in their communities and settle there for good?

• (0905)

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think Stephen has stats. Generally, as well, our school system and our career guidance system need to ensure that English-speaking youth feel they have a future in Quebec and that they will be a part of Quebec. Of course one part is the job. But also, you have to feel that you are welcome, that you can stay and make a living here and you are recognized as being valuable to the community. It starts early. It starts early in a small community like Thetford Mines where the English-speaking community is a valued member of the majority community, where there is good interaction with the majority and the minority communities, where the school is strong. They have good services, and they have a basketball team where the children can really thrive in their setting.

Of course, if you live in Thetford Mines there's no university there. You have to go closer and programs have to be available. They have to believe that by coming back—I keep using Thetford Mines as we have a small group there called Megantic corporation—and they worry about keeping their kids. Then they say that they won't keep them but we'll have them be so attached to the community and the environment that they will go away but want to come back. Partnerships with the municipalities to have jobs there are important.

Mr. Gourde, it's a collective effort on behalf of communities to be sure that their kids, not only the anglophones but the young francophones, come back to regions.

[Translation]

The regions are emptying. It is important to find ways to ensure that both the anglophones and francophones in those regions do not leave.

[English]

Stephen, did you have something that you wanted to share in terms of statistics?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I think, in terms of the question, there's just not enough time to answer that question; it's very complicated.

Let's look at where anglophones work. Anglophones in Quebec are overweighted in management occupations; business, finance, and administration; natural and applied sciences and related occupations; arts and culture; and sales and service. Those are urban jobs, jobs principally in Montreal. That's where the economic opportunities are.

Where are anglophones under-represented in the workforce? Trade, transport, and equipment operators; natural resources, agriculture, and related production occupations; and occupations in manufacturing and utilities. So in the sort of manufacturing, medium-sized businesses that you're likely to find in the regions, anglophones aren't trained for those jobs. Anglophones are trained for the jobs that are in the cities. Why is that? Part of it is tradition. Also, because of the way funding works in all provinces—in all jurisdictions I know of—the English school system, the minority school system, doesn't get the resources that the majority school system gets to get that type of trades training. It's not equitable.

The third thing—and there's evidence on this—is that there is systemic discrimination against anglophones in the trade union movement in Quebec; we know that. So the places where there are

likely to be unions, there are going to be fewer anglophones. In urban jobs there are going to be more anglophones. How do you keep anglophones in the regions? Train them for the jobs and give them the economic opportunities that are there. I don't really see it as a federal challenge; I really see this as a provincial challenge.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

Ms. Martin-Laforge, you were right to talk about the Thetford area, which is 45 minutes away from my riding. I know a lot of people from my area who have English-speaking families and who were fortunate enough to go to elementary and secondary schools in the Thetford area. That was a real benefit for them.

Today, people from those communities are English teachers in our francophone schools. Some are also farm machinery representatives serving large areas. Since they were relatively good or very good in English, they could easily do their post-secondary training in other provinces, or even in some U.S. states, and then pass on their training to the francophones in Quebec.

There is no denying it: the international market is predominantly English-speaking. Our region needs young people with a strong command of the English language so that they can impart the knowledge they have acquired in other parts of the world.

Mr. Thompson, I appreciate the fact that you brought this up. Our committee takes careful note of how the training must be structured to keep our young people in their regions. These young people are our wealth and our future.

I am very sensitive to the fact that our young people are learning both official languages. I am the father of five children who are all pursuing post-secondary studies right now. It is very interesting to see the life choices our kids make. It is very important to keep them in our regions. They must have access to the best possible tools that will offer them a better quality of life and improve the community life in our regions.

Thank you for your testimony.

I will now give Ms. St-Denis the chance to speak.

• (0910)

The Chair: Ms. St-Denis, the floor is yours.

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Socio-economically speaking, which English-speaking communities in Quebec are worse off than the average Quebecers? Do English-speaking groups have wages well below the average for Quebecers?

[English]

Mr. Stephen Thompson: That's correct. Anglophone Quebecers, English-speaking Quebecers, have a lower median income, to use my words carefully here. There's always controversy around income because of median and mean incomes, but median income, which is the accepted term, is lower among anglophones. Rates of poverty are higher in the anglophone community. It's absolutely true. Anglophones are 5% more likely to be unemployed than francophones.

Having said that, there is perhaps room for hope. Anglophones are 2% more likely to be self-employed. This is probably true in other minority communities generally. Minority communities tend to be very entrepreneurial. Because they don't have equal access to the majority economy, they do things on their own in their own communities and with other ties that they have, to generate their own income. So there is definitely room there to support entrepreneurship.

We have two outstanding organizations that we mention in our brief—YES, the Youth Employment Services in Montreal, and CEDEC, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation—which we recommend the committee invite to testify.

If you'd like further information, Madam St-Denis, we have research that we can send to the analyst about poverty in the English-speaking community.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Do you see poverty among English-speaking communities in Montreal or in the regions? You are talking about a difference of 5%. Is that in Montreal or outside?

[English]

Mr. Stephen Thompson: We can break those numbers out. The 5% I was talking about was province-wide. In general, province-wide, English-speaking Quebecers are more likely to be unemployed than francophones. We can break them down by region, certainly. We can help the analyst do that; we have that data.

There is a general myth, I think, that is addressed in, among other places, the Senate standing committee's report on our community, on the myths and realities of the English-speaking community in Quebec. It's a 2011 report from your colleagues in the Senate that talks about poverty in Montreal. There may be a sense among people who don't know our community very well that anglophones who live in Quebec are well off and well served and wealthy. It's not true. There is a great deal of poverty among our community in Montreal.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I'd like to make another point, if I may. Our community in Montreal has a very high level of immigrants, so that's another consideration in Montreal. There's a high proportion of blacks, and we know of lots of studies around young blacks in Montreal who are underemployed.

We also have—and we can make this available as well—a statistical portrait of the seniors in Quebec. That's really important, because we have a high number of seniors throughout Quebec. The Commissioner of Official Languages in November produced a report, a statistical portrait of seniors, with some very surprising.... Many of the departments told me they were very surprised at some of the results in there. As we know, among seniors there are women who are at a high level...and that poverty level is a consideration.

• (0915)

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: You talked about direct federal investment for the communities. I think Quebec must react.

What is your relationship with the Government of Quebec on that front? There must be some disagreements. The Government of Quebec does not easily accept its work being duplicated, I reckon.

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We work on our relationship with our colleagues in Quebec, and I believe that what we have brought to the table over the years is a better understanding of how the English-speaking community can contribute to the economic prosperity of all Quebecers. There's more work to be done. We need to find ways of working together. For example, there is a service agreement between Quebec and with the provinces and Canada. We need to ensure that a service agreement in Quebec between Canada and the ministries in Quebec is more inclusive of some of the issues that we want to make available.

I'll give you an example here.

We would like to make translation available to our groups for their website translation and also for some of the very important studies they put forward. If our groups are doing a study and they can't afford to translate it, that becomes not very available for the majority community. There are ways that the Province of Quebec could help us. I think we have to be innovative, as we try to be innovative with the federal departments, about how to move money from the federal government to the province. We have to be innovative with our provincial counterparts to accept the money without it being a red flag. I think there's lots of work to be done, but if the federal government recognizes that the English-speaking community needs assistance in leveraging, already that's good. We will use that to go to the province in our communities.

There are great examples. If Gaspé comes to visit, or one of the other regions comes to visit, this stuff is being done on the ground. It isn't always being done with federal-provincial agreements. It's done locally where the province sees that the community is important to them.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Do the federal government and the Commissioner of Official Languages make enough efforts to publicize and defend bilingualism? Does your organization feel that they are making efforts to show that being bilingual is an asset in Canada? Are they making enough efforts to organize activities and training, to create advertisements and so on, in both official languages?

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Having worked with the Commissioner of Official Languages for many years now, I believe the commissioner's office does a great job in putting forward the notion of a linguistic duality, of bilingualism. The commissioner has been very active throughout his mandate in the regions. In that sense, I think from that perspective it's very good.

In general, it's a tough thing. We recognize it's a tough thing for the government to come in and talk about linguistic duality in Quebec where the primacy of French is the rule. So I think more work needs to be done, careful work, because for an English-speaking community we are more and more bilingual. I think for Francophones, and I think Monsieur Gourde spoke of it, the young people are more and more bilingual. It's individual bilingualism.

• (0920)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Madam Bateman.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Thompson, you were on the cusp of saying something, so if you would, and then I'll start my questions.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Thank you, Madam Bateman. I appreciate that.

I wanted to mention, does the government do enough? Under the current President of the Treasury Board the government has implemented linguistic clauses in bilateral agreements, which have been of enormous assistance to us in our dealings with the Government of Quebec. I'll give you a perfect example, the Growing Forward 2 bilateral agreement on agriculture. Before English-speaking farmers in Quebec had difficulty accessing services in English. Through programs paid for by Growing Forward, federal money goes to Quebec to pay for them. The English-speaking farmers now have the ability, in partnership with the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, to access services in English. It's very important, and we think it's a great initiative.

By the way, clauses are included in the current labour market agreement. Right now in every bilateral agreement between the feds and the province these linguistic clauses are being considered, and we can consider that a big step forward.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I'm so glad you had a chance to add that because that builds on the line of questioning I want to pursue with you. Certainly we have two official languages and we want

[Translation]

services to be accessible in both languages across Canada.

[English]

That's so important, so thank you for recognizing that was a positive clause inclusion by our Treasury Board people.

Your comments on your Canada job grant really fascinate me because it tells me that this structure is making it more possible to access. We keep on hearing that we have jobs without the people able to fill them, and people without jobs and without the skills to get those jobs. I am also on the industry, science, and technology committee. Yesterday we heard there are so many.... A huge company in Quebec can't get the people who are trained to do this high-tech work. Could you speak to me about what is positive about the Canada job grant and what can make it more positive, because as you know it's still being pulled together?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The first priority in our community development plan 2012-2017 is access to services in English. You have to understand that we have to preface our comments by saying that we're in a unique space as English-speaking Quebecers.

The whole mechanism around support to linguistic minority communities in Canada and the Official Languages Act is premised on the idea of a partnership with the provinces in a system that has concurrent jurisdiction. As an English-speaking community in Quebec we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't have a

formal relationship with our provincial government. So before, Madame St-Denis talked about the concept of over the head of the provincial government. We don't quite see things that way. We see that we're concurrently governed by the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec. The Government of Canada has an obligation toward our community, under law the Government of Quebec does not, strategically. We don't have that relationship.

So our specific challenge in our community is that when the federal government makes partnerships with provinces, as it should under the Official Languages Act, to support the vitality of linguistic minority communities, it's not possible in Quebec because Quebec doesn't have that relationship with us. So it has to have a more direct relationship with our community. So in our community wherever the federal government can have a direct relationship with us, it's better for us because we can access the support and we can help the vitality of our community. That's why we have the position we do.

● (0925)

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Okay, thank you.

You talked about how 2% of the English-speaking population is more likely to be self-employed and 5% are more likely to be unemployed. What can the federal government do specifically to address this? We want all people employed.

[Translation]

We want job creation and economic growth.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The Canada job grant is an excellent example of where you encourage young Canadians, young English-speaking Canadians in Quebec, who can get the services in English that they need to get the technical training. We've explained the sorts of occupations that anglophones work in. They tend not to be represented in the trades. If you give them the opportunities, they can access employment in their regions, in the province, and they'll stay.

Make no mistake about it, migration is an economic activity. There are other factors that may weigh on a person's decision, but people move looking for other opportunities. There's great research on this that we can certainly share with the analysts. The interesting thing about migration is that when you leave, you tend to do better than not only the people you leave behind but your peers on where you're going. So economic migrants in Canada....

As well, there's an economic penalty for moving back to where you came from, and it doesn't matter where you're from. In general, if you move from Ontario to Alberta, and then back to Ontario, you're statistically more likely to do worse than the people who stuck around. In other words, there's a financial incentive to leave, and there's a financial disincentive to come back. Keeping people there in the first place in terms of the economy is very important—the economy and jobs.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Okay.

I still have a bit of time. Yesterday in the industry committee, there was a discussion. I think it was Pierre Moisan. I think they employ hundreds of people in Quebec City in video gaming industries. This is a huge growth opportunity and it's something that many young people.... You were referring, Madam Martin-Laforge, to the kids in the basement. Well, this is what they're doing in the basement. They're gaming.

I'm curious. There's a huge economic opportunity, yet there's a huge disconnect between the qualified people and the capacity to fill the market. Do you have any ideas?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: You asked what the federal government could do. There are the specific programs, but there's also the notion in Quebec—we talked about it in the opening remarks—of an economic development plan for official language minority communities. In 2008 the QCGN, with major stakeholders, prepared a report on economic development in Quebec. I could make this available for the committee. At that time, we talked about a coordinated approach in Quebec amongst us for economic development in Quebec.

At the time, we called it the “Quebec Economic Development Council”. It was a study. We'll make it available. I think one of the things that's important about what's being tried right now is that there is, with the RDÉE and the CEDEC, an attempt to have a plan for OLMCs. In Quebec, we desperately need an economic development plan for OLMCs that brings the stakeholders together, so that we can tell you better what the federal government could consider as programs and what the province could consider as programs as well. We need to work together.

And you know what? One of our groups, the Voice of English-speaking Québec, in Quebec City, is coming tomorrow to visit the Senate to talk about notions of their newcomer program and the connection to immigrants and migrants. In Quebec City, there are tonnes of people coming in for new jobs in that kind of industry. If they are coming in as English-speaking people from the rest of Canada or from outside of Canada, they want to find a community in Quebec City that can help them and their families establish themselves.

So it's about the jobs, but it's about the support that a community can give for economic development in their region as well. It's a kind of offshoot of what's important and how we can help communities thrive and build jobs by these newcomer programs. It's all connected.

• (0930)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chisu.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much for appearing in front of our committee. It's always a pleasure to talk to you.

I am looking at the economic situation of Canadian minority language communities. When you look at the economic situation, are you aware of any studies we've done regarding the labour market? This is not only in the English-speaking communities but also in the French-speaking minority communities.

This is the first step. You need to find out the causes of the problems in those communities. I'm seeing millions of programs, millions of beautiful dollars going left, right, and centre, but what is the situation there? For example, how does the economic situation for minority language communities compare with that for the majority communities?

So what is the situation there, what is the economic situation, and what can we do to attract businesses, for example, to make these communities be at eventually the same level as the majority communities? But that is if they are under the majority; I don't know that. You cannot make recipes for things when you don't know the causes of the problems.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: It's a superb question, and it's one we ask. The people most likely to have the answer right now would be either YES or CEDEC, which we've mentioned.

Having said that, we just finished a very good consultation with Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, in January. There is a sense in ESDC right now that they are asking exactly the same questions that you just outlined. Why are we doing all of this? Where do we need to work? What's working, what isn't, and how do we do things better?

But they're asking that on a global scale. Here's the difficulty from a policy person's point of view: a lot of the data is not available by language. They'll be able to drill down very well regionally or geographically, but the data isn't broken out by language. We keep asking partners like ESDC...and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is another fount of knowledge and research.

There are all these little places, and big places, in government where all this information is available, but we need it by language. Then we can start answering, because we have the same questions you do.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: I have seen several programs in the past that have also been put forward for the future. What are the measures of success? What have we done up until now? How are we measuring success? We're having different programs, with different allocations of money for a certain pull force, so how are we measuring success? What tools are you using to measure success?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: There is certainly higher employment, less underemployment, less poverty, and all of that, but the attribution of the programs to the success of this is very difficult.

For us to start seeing successes, we believe that if we have a coordinated approach and we have collective action on something, and we decided amongst the English-speaking community of Quebec to do some work, for example on youth, something specific on youth, something specific on entrepreneurship, then we could develop our measures of success.

As government and as citizens, we would like to be able to say we did this, and it gave that. It's pretty difficult. Certainly within the community we don't have the resources to make the direct correlation between we did this, and that happened. But we believe, amongst our 41 groups anyway, that we are starting to see the stories come up that they have done such and such, and the youth are staying.

I'll give you an example. In CASA in the Gaspé region they are very worried about the number of youth who are not identifying themselves with the Gaspesian region. They believe that if you don't identify with the Gaspesian region, you're going to go and find jobs somewhere. You won't even look. You won't prepare for an employment opportunity. You won't make a home and a career or raise a family in that region, so they are working on identity issues. They are working to help the young Gaspesians feel happier, more identified with, and more contributing to their region.

In a way that has nothing to do with economic development, but it does, because they are starting to see more young Gaspesians interested in staying in Quebec, wanting to have jobs in Gaspé, and wanting to start opportunities in Quebec.

A few years ago what they did was they went to see Youth Employment Services, and they asked them to prepare a program. That program is now working in the Gaspé.

• (0935)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We saw the EKOS poll today that showed that one out of every two anglophones or allophones are thinking about leaving the province. I have worries about the jobs grant hastening that exodus of anglophones, but I'm not going to touch on that.

You mentioned YES, and I think the key is more about giving support to key stakeholders like YES. I've been involved with them for quite a few years. I have seen the services they offer to entrepreneurs. From what I've seen of participants in YES workshops, a lot of them are involved in artistic and innovative companies. The thing I know from experience is this. It's not just an urban enterprise. Our village theatre in the village of Hudson is a great economic engine in the village, and that could be repeated throughout the province.

Would you recommend increases in both the enabling fund and cultural funding for linguistic minorities to spur that economic growth in those sectors?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I think our network would speak on behalf of the English-speaking community and say more resources are important, more money is important, but I think our network in our community would say let's do it smart and let's do it efficiently.

For example ELAN, English Language Arts Network, is also working around entrepreneurship in the arts. ELAN and YES work together to put these workshops on. They exchange resources and ideas, so that's a good example about how that can work.

There's an interesting piece of work we did recently that we can make available for the committee as well. It was the beginnings of a study on the creative economy that is seen as very important in Quebec, both by the majority community and the English-speaking community. There's tonnes of money of return on the creative economy. The creative economy is not just about arts and culture. It's about all sorts of things, but certainly arts and culture is a good....

So money is important, yes.

• (0940)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: So it would be a smart investment, in terms of a vision for retention of that committee, to put resources into that sector?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Absolutely.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: The other thing is that a lot of those companies and entrepreneurs are very ecologically minded, so any funding involving ecologically innovative companies would also be helpful to that community. Would you not agree? In terms of the creative economy, that's part and parcel, right?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: The future is there. Absolutely, the future is there.

The youth have that vision and we have to help them put it into effect.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Right, and you recommended direct funding rather than funding through the province, but if we look at a program like *Soutien au travail autonome*, we know that they offer support longer than the federal government does for training entrepreneurs and giving them help, giving them a leg up.

Given that information, don't you think that the province is doing a decent job in offering more support to entrepreneurs to get a start in the province?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Not for our community. In general that may be true, but it does not—

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: What would be the challenge? Are they saying to anglophones they're not going to give them that support, or do anglophones simply not know about the program?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: It would be an excellent question to ask YES if they get invited to this committee. They can tell you about their first-hand experiences trying to access funds from the Government of Quebec, because they were refused funding from the Government of Quebec because they are an English organization.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: In terms of these problems on employment statistics and income, is this a new thing or were the statistics the same prior to 2012?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The statistics I quoted are from the 2011 national household survey.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Okay, so a change in governments provincially hasn't affected those statistics?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I don't know.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: You envision direct project funding. How could we improve the delivery of these funds to support organizations, and what can we do with the enabling fund to improve its outroll?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Generally, in departments, we would like departments to have access perhaps to specific funding for official language minority communities. When we are in competition in the broader scheme for regular programs, we have to have bureaucrats understand that there is an English-speaking community, and there are myths around the English-speaking community. So in a department, when there is not a deep understanding, I would say of the francophone community as well, but certainly we're talking about our community right now, there are myths about our community and when we put a project in,

[Translation]

it does not get through

[English]

because it's not targeted.

I think that the federal government has to consider more targeted funding to official language minority communities, which means, for example, in ESDC, New Horizons is not targeted funded for official language minorities. We get funding but there is no target. But there is an official languages secretariat in ESDC, or some champion.

I think the more the departments understand us, number one, either they get approved specific funding, targeted funding, for official language minority communities, or two, there is a sensitivity within the departments that something special has to be done around the communities.

They're national programs, so it's hard to get in and get a program accepted.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Thank you, chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

I'd like to pursue some of the questions that my colleague, Madam Bateman, had asked earlier about youth and some of the employment issues relating to that. Also tied in with that is the issue about what you called urban jobs versus non-urban jobs.

Is there the infrastructure, like high-speed Internet into some of these remote communities, that would allow people to create software companies, gaming companies, all those sorts of things, and create the work in the places where they want to stay?

• (0945)

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Industry Canada has those exact figures. The figures that I'm aware of from our community come from a crop survey done in 2010. We have a very high level of high-speed Internet access in our community. It's in excess of 93% or 94%—I'm working from memory here—so, yes....

Mr. Joe Daniel: What is preventing many of these people from starting their own businesses in the high-tech sector, in some of these remote places? With high-speed Internet, you really don't have distance.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: You live on the lower north shore. There's little culture in your community of higher education. To go to CEGEP or to post-secondary straight out of high school, you're

going to be going to Quebec City. That's where you're going to learn your skills, but you're going to be away from your community.

I have never started a business myself, but my understanding of entrepreneurship is that small businesses run best in an environment where there are other businesses, where there are other entrepreneurs around. The idea of working in isolation in the lower north shore on a computer in your basement and starting a business is romantic but unrealistic. These young folks who have talent and a particular vocation go get their training and their education and then they move to a technology park like they have in Montreal now, down in Griffintown, or some other place. They're around people who are thinking about the same things and they can support each other. That's where the businesses start.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Changing the subject somewhat, Madam, you used the term “social financing” earlier. Can you define that for me? It's a term that I'm not familiar with. What are the potential outcomes? What is social financing supposed to do?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I don't think there are too many people who come to Ottawa asking for less money. There is a notion that government is the banker. Social financing is an idea that government is a facilitating partner with civil society in achieving a social return on investments. Social financing is the specialty of ESDC. This is certainly a well-developed concept in Great Britain, Australia, and to a certain degree the United States. It's developing in Canada, but it's still in its infancy here. Its regulatory legislative frameworks aren't even close to being in place to implement this.

Having said that, there's \$4.1 million available in the road map over five years for the official language minority communities to work with ESDC on social financing initiatives to see what can be done. It's a big term that means a lot of things. Generally, when we think about investments, we're looking for a monetary return. In social financing, you would fund a project but you're looking for a social return on your investment.

A social financing idea might be if the community group in Thetford Mines, for example, MCDC, expanded their office. If they bought their building, owned their building, and if they expanded their office and rented it out to other community groups, it would become an asset for them. It would turn a profit that they would be able to then turn back into the community. It would be a for-profit operation within a non-profit. That's a social financing idea.

Paying for returns...the question that was asked had to do with how success is measured. Let's say you want to see a decrease of 1% in youth unemployment in a specific region and if you can achieve that, the public partner will give you x amount of dollars. The community sector would go out and work on that. If they reduce it by a certain amount, they will be paid. That's another social financing idea.

We're very excited about the concept. It has worked very well in other jurisdictions. ESDC is the expert.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Perreault, go ahead.

• (0950)

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Good morning. Thank you for joining us.

I will address the two witnesses. I will come back to Mr. Thompson to discuss CEDEC, which he talked about.

For a number of years, francophone and anglophone communities have been trying to show their distinctiveness and their differences in terms of employability. Are the programs of the Government of Canada designed to fully respect those differences?

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I would answer in this way with a couple of examples. We're very happy with the work that the Quebec economic development program does in Quebec because it is worked by project. So when Youth Employment Services asked to have a project with the Gaspé and with the Voice of English-speaking Québec, to work together on the employment of English-speaking communities in those regions, it worked. It is a fabulous success because the projects were conceived and designed and implemented with the money. They were conceived on the ground and really did come from a grassroots' understanding of what needed to be done, both in Quebec City and Gaspé. When you have that kind of design to a program it is excellent.

Where it doesn't work as well is with a more top-down approach with programs, where departments will think that this is the way to go and say, "If you want the program, this is the way it's going to go."

More community involvement in the program is the key to success. I don't know if I've answered your question, but it's excellent money. I think with literacy programs it's the same thing. The partnership at the base working with a department gives us results. I would answer the question that way. When we see too much top-down it doesn't work as well.

In our community a few years ago the Commissioner of Official Languages did a—

[Translation]

Ms. Manon Perreault: So the people on the ground are in the best position to comment on the programs.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Absolutely.

Ms. Manon Perreault: I would like to go back to Mr. Thompson, who talked about CEDEC earlier.

I have read that CEDEC worked with a francophone organization to develop the Canadian plan for economic development of official language minority communities. Is it idealistic to think that the same economic plan can appeal to both francophones and anglophones?

[English]

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The design of the consultation takes into account the needs of the two communities. I think RDÉE is doing the consultation on the francophone side and I think what CEDEC is leading the consultation on the side of the English-speaking community of Quebec. CEDEC and QCGN are talking right now to make sure that the community's overall development plan is tied into the economic development plan that will come.

We're not sure of the mechanism and how that's going to work, but we're talking about it right now. Yes, there will be two plans produced, we understand, one for the ESCQ and one for the francophones outside Quebec.

[Translation]

Ms. Manon Perreault: Okay.

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: As I said earlier,

[Translation]

we have been advocating for a plan in Quebec for a long time, since 2008, according to our study. We have never been able to find a way to bring people together. We have often told the government that we needed a plan. We now hear that there will be a plan. Our mission will be to ensure that this plan applies to the entire community and therefore meets our needs.

Ms. Manon Perreault: In the course of this meeting, we have talked a great deal about the benefits, but such a plan must surely come with disadvantages as well, correct?

• (0955)

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: A plan is the key.

[English]

If we don't have a plan, people do this and do that, and then I come back to the measures question. I come back to try to understand and ask, what is it accomplishing? How can we put our stories together because then we have stories here, there, and wherever, and we can't put them together?

[Translation]

Ms. Manon Perreault: So the plan will make it possible to regulate some things.

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: Absolutely, and in our community development plan that we came out with in March 2012, economic prosperity is one of our priorities—so economic prosperity as a priority, then the plan, and then implementation.

I don't know if that's simple, but...

[Translation]

Ms. Manon Perreault: However, the 2012 plan was targeting economic prosperity for anglophones in Quebec, wasn't it?

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We're asking for a plan for Quebec. Any insertion of resources or expertise into creating a plan for Quebec is important. It can come from anywhere. It could come from the province if we could get them to accept that we need a plan in Quebec. I think now that a plan is on the table and people are talking about a plan, there could be a plan for official language minority communities outside Quebec in each of the regions. I don't know how that would work. But certainly, if somebody is talking about a plan for official language minority communities in Quebec, QCGN is right there wanting to be part of that plan with our groups.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good day. It's been interesting to hear from you. I'm from New Brunswick, which is a bilingual province, and I was struck by your comments on the Canada job grant and the ability of your community to potentially utilize that opportunity because of the direct federal government approach on this. I thought that was interesting, and I wanted to highlight it. I suspect that might benefit other minority-language groups across the country as well. I don't know that, but we'll hear from other witnesses.

Mr. Thompson, could I ask you to, as briefly as you can, put on the record the difference between median and average income?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: There are two warriors in the conversation in Quebec. One is a demographer named Castonguay, and the other is Jack Jedwab. Every time these numbers come out, there's a big fight in the press.

Median income is the income at which 50% of the incomes are above and 50% of the incomes are below. It is a much better indicator of what the average person makes than the mean.

The mean takes the lowest and the highest incomes, subtracts it and divides it by two. So if you have a great deal of economic disparity, a lot of very rich people, it will bring up the mean income and it will give you a false picture. It will make the people in the community look like they have a higher income than they actually do.

So a median is a much more accurate way, from a social science and policy perspective, to measure income in a given cohort.

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you.

Ms. Martin-Laforge, you were saying the goal here is economic opportunity and prosperity. You've talked about program delivery being important. What we've not talked about is the other side of that equation, the importance of the tax regime, the regulatory regime, that impacts communities. Because on the one hand the government can give, but it's very good at taking as well.

Could either of you comment a bit about that approach to job creation opportunities, and if you consider that to be important as well in growth and long-term prosperity?

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: I worked many years ago when there were tax credits. I saw the benefits of tax credits. There are for and againsts around tax credits. One of the things we thought we had been successful with was when we asked the provincial government how they could help the English-speaking community of Quebec, and the Liberals, who were looking to be elected, said they would consider tax credits for English-speaking youth. It doesn't have to be English-speaking, but you know, that's when something happens, when people have incentives. There are good examples of incentives working in target communities. We see specific programs for aboriginals. Tax incentives...for a time, and they have to prove themselves, but I think tax credits could work.

• (1000)

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you.

Mr. Thompson, there was an interesting comment about the makeup of the income. Are we talking family income or individual income? Individual, okay. What factor do new Canadians have on these figures? You're going to have what I'll call the old stock anglophone community, and then you're going to have new Canadians who have arrived in Quebec. Have you considered the impact?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: We could certainly provide those figures. I could do that analysis and provide that analysis. We have those numbers.

Mr. John Williamson: Sure, I'd like that. Can you give any comments just off the top of your head?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: It's funny, we have right here—this is for tomorrow's presentation to your colleagues—a workshop report, "Quebec's English Speaking Immigrants and Poverty: Sharing our analysis and building a research agenda". So we have research on poverty within the English-speaking immigrant population. We also have the data from the NHS. So we have good data on that. They generally do poorer, of course. Immigrants tend not to do as well as indigenous populations.

Mr. John Williamson: In your experience, is that overcome after a generation or two?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The third generation.

Mr. John Williamson: By the third generation.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: It's a long time.

Mr. John Williamson: Yes, it is in fact a complex problem. The language component is one aspect, and then of course there's the influx of new Canadians as well to complicate it.

I have no further questions. Do you have any other comments you want to make on anything else? No.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Williamson.

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Thompson, you said that Quebec was the only place where the anglophone community had no relationship with the province. I must go back to that, because I disagree with you. We must look at the situation of francophones in the rest of Canada. In several places in Canada, that relationship is not there either.

Take Alberta, for example.

[English]

When you have a company that puts a job posting through the federal government and in the request for the language there are four different languages and French is not in it, and then after that they go as far as saying, even if you don't speak French it's okay because you work by group.... I have people down home who go there to work, and they're being told that the name Clément is too French to have a job there. I'm telling you, we have a big problem in this country, not only in Quebec. I just want to correct that.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: If I can respond then, our purpose here is to talk about our community and not about minority communities in other jurisdictions. My specific point on that was in Alberta there's a Francophone Secretariat where the francophone community in Alberta can go to the Francophone Secretariat under the Alberta French language services act and they can talk to the Government of Alberta about the problems that they have receiving services in their official language with the Government of Alberta.

That mechanism does not exist in Quebec for our community. I'm not saying that things are better or worse in other jurisdictions. What I'm saying is that we do not have the mechanism in Quebec for our community to talk to the Government of Quebec. It doesn't exist.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Okay, and I don't want to start to pick a fight over this here, but I just want to get that straight. It looks like it's kind of painting Quebec as not doing...and I'm looking across the country. I'm telling you it's shameful. It's unbelievable. It's discriminatory. It's just unbelievable, and I hope I will prove that one day, because I even had to go to the Commissioner of Official Languages to create a study on it. It's just like they're telling the francophones in Alberta, if you speak French you don't have a job. If the language here you speak is English, you have other people from other countries coming in and they could speak their language on the job, but the francophone is not allowed to do it, and we will prove that one day.

The question that I want to bring up here is about job training, and Mr. Williamson was talking about it. He was happy, but how could we be happy when all the provinces, not just Quebec but all the provinces across the country, are saying the new plan is not good, because the new plan on the training program is to give money, really, to big business, which gets money to train their people. What about the ones in the community we're talking about? What about the one in the basement who would like to have a job, and what about the people in the community who want to create jobs and have the government help to train people in the community, where the small business in the community doesn't have the \$5,000 for the 20 people they want to hire?

I think that's where the program goes wrong when you remove the money from the community, because the federal government doesn't go there. It's not their responsibility to do job training, but somebody has to do it.

• (1005)

Mr. Stephen Thompson: It's an argument, I suppose.

First of all, our understanding is that the \$350 million that we're talking about was money additional to the labour force agreements, and that this is federal money that was put in after to specifically address unemployment challenges after the 2008 crash. They're not taking away long-standing programs. This is extra money they put in and now they are bringing it out.

So, what the federal—

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, they are not. They're removing money. That's why the province is negotiating right now. Minister Kenney has said directly that it's going to be his way or the highway. It finally looked like they were coming to an agreement, but the pressure was put pretty hard on the community and on the province to remove some of the money from the grant they were receiving.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I guess our position would still remain that from our community's perspective this is a good thing because English-speaking businesses and English-speaking job seekers will have easier access to public resources in the official language of their choice.

For us, it's not a matter of cutting it out. It's just a matter of accessing the service. That's our priority. Having the program delivered through Service Canada is more beneficial to our community. That's our position.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Do you believe it will be delivered by the government, or is it just going to be a program where you have to go see the province for \$5,000? That's the program Mr. Williamson was talking about—\$5,000 comes from the federal government, \$5,000 comes from the provincial government, and \$5,000 comes from the business. That's where the \$15,000 comes from.

It's not money coming into the community from the federal government. It's not money coming to them to create these education and training programs so that people can get jobs. Do you understand, that's what the program is?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I do.

Again, the federal partner is still involved. If the federal partner is not involved in the transaction, then we have less chance of accessing the program in the official language of our choice. If the program is delivered by the Government of Quebec, we will not be able to access the program in English.

Mr. Yvon Godin: For the minority, would it not be better to have another kind of program, through official languages, or another program where they would look after the minority to make sure they had something, but at the same time not cut off the other program we had across the country where all provinces said no to it.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: It's an interesting idea.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. John Williamson: Just a point of clarification, when you say interesting, you're really being polite more than agreeing.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: What I mean is that I don't have time to think about it. I'm just hearing about it.

The Chair: Mr. Thompson, did you have a response to Mr. Godin?

No, okay.

Are there any further questions from the committee?

Madame St-Denis, briefly.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis: I would like some information.

You said that you represent between 30 to 40 anglophone organizations in Quebec. What is that as a percentage of all the organizations in Quebec?

[English]

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: There was a study by a group called COCo a couple of years ago. There are hundreds and hundreds of groups in Quebec that work in the English-speaking community, either they are directly involved in the English-speaking community or they are bilingual.

Our 41 members also have members. It would be hard for me to say what the proportion would be. To be fair, QCGN is the only provincial organization that has the breadth and the scope throughout the province. So 41 members across the province from Magdalen Islands to Gatineau, and in all arts, culture, and youth organizations. There are hundreds of organizations in Quebec.

• (1010)

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

Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Given Mr. Godin's comments about the—

The Chair: There is a point of order from Ms. Bateman.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Chair, I've lost track of the line of questioning. Who's turn is it next?

The Chair: If we want to get very technical about this, routine motions state that there is an order of speaking, which you all know is on this list, but that the chair actually has discretion as to who to give the floor to despite the order of members' parties on the list.

In the last two to three minutes, I thought I would be generous and give the floor to members who may have had a question or a point of clarification they wanted to ask of the witnesses at the front. That's why I gave the floor to Madam St-Denis and that's why I gave the floor to Mr. Nicholls. But if people are going to abuse my generosity and—

An hon. member: I don't think that's the case, sir.

The Chair: —get into niggling questions about the order, then we'll just stick strictly to the script and I'll start cutting people off at exactly the time apportioned, whether it's seven minutes for the first round or five minutes for the next round. I'll start cutting witnesses off exactly at the seven-minute mark in their opening statement.

I've used my discretion as chair to try to make this committee work, and I hope that we can all work together to do that. I'd ask members on both sides to make sure that we not get into this game of counting down to the exact second regarding which member has had the floor.

So, if you please, use your time responsibly. I'll give the floor to Mr. Nicholls to ask a brief question.

Mr. Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, it's not a question of checking the time or determining how the committee wants to work. I believe you are right to use your discretion at the end of the evidence, once all questions have been asked and when someone else wants the floor. I understand that. However, the list was made based on a vote. In that sense—

The Chair: In fact, we passed a motion that starts like this: “That, at the discretion of the Chair...”.

[English]

Okay? We generally follow the list in the rounds of time, but toward the end of the meeting, when it doesn't appear that there's a Conservative who wants to ask a question and we have four or five minutes left on the orders of the day before we go into consideration of committee business, I thought I'd give the floor to members who just had one or two quick questions of clarification. But clearly this has caused a great deal of consternation.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think we should talk about this somewhere else.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

Anyway, at any point, this discussion now—

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Chair, could I ask—

The Chair: You can ask a very quick question. You have one minute left.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Regarding Mr. Godin's comments on the jobs grant, don't you think it would be advantageous to roll out this program through the organizations that know the economic needs of the community the best, organizations like YES and ELAN? Wouldn't they be the best place to roll out these job training programs?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nicholls.

Ms. Sylvia Martin-Laforge: We probably don't have a specific opinion on that, because I think that in the parameters of the program what's best for the community should be considered. If the answer to that is yes, then absolutely. We're not knowledgeable enough to figure out exactly if that's the one, but that sounds good to me.

The Chair: Okay, thank you very much.

We'll suspend for five minutes to allow our witnesses to leave before we go in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

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

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

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

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