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Chair

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez

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• (0905)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.)): Good morning everyone.

[English]

Welcome to all of you.

[Translation]

Today's meeting deals exclusively with future business. As you know, we spent a considerable amount of time on Bill S-3 which we finally approved last week. We now need to decide how we will spend the coming weeks.

Certain requests were put forward by committee members before we began our consideration of Bill S-3. I would just like to point out that Bill S-3 was tabled last Friday, as planned. It included a small error. I signed the amendment and the new corrected copy. Therefore we do not have to table it again, that is been taking care of. The bill is number 18 on the list of private members bills at report stage. We are not sure what that means in terms of timing, but I think it will move forward quite quickly.

[English]

We're here to discuss future business. We've talked in the past about this trip across Canada to meet with communities. We had discussed possible dates. One of those dates—perhaps not realistic as of today—was the week of November 14. The other was the week following, the week of November 21.

[Translation]

We have discussed another point. There was also a request—and this should perhaps be our priority—that the Official Languages Commissioner appear before the committee to speak about her annual report. As you know, Ms. Adam formally tables a yearly report before Parliament. She recently tabled this year. The last time she tabled a report, we had a fairly brief meeting with her. The decision is in your hands, but I think we should meet with her soon to discuss the latest report's content.

The clerk is reminding me that we adopted a motion to the effect that:

It is agreed,—That the Official Languages Commissioner be invited to appear before the Committee on Official Languages on the matter of her annual report once the committee has concluded consideration of Bill S-3.

[English]

This seems to be pretty clear. We can change our minds, but we have decided to see Madam Adam as soon as we have finished with Bill S-3.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Chairman, we have now concluded our consideration of Bill S-3. We have a notice of meeting and she could be here...

The Chair: She could come Thursday.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Then we should go ahead with it.

The Chair: She is available and she has accepted. We could have her come before the committee the day after tomorrow.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Then that's what we should do. You also have a similar motion calling for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to appear before the committee on the matter of CBC/Radio-Canada.

The Chair: You took the words right out of my mouth. You are quicker than I am this morning.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I get up early.

The Chair: So do I, sometimes too early. The other motion that we adopted is, surprise, surprise:

That the Minister of Canadian Heritage be invited to appear before the Committee on Official Languages in order to answer committee members' questions on the matter of the impact of the CBC/Radio-Canada conflict on minority official language communities and on the matter of the mandate of the CBC/Radio-Canada regarding official languages.

We will have to check her availability, because she was not available before some time soon in November. I don't have a problem with that because I am extremely interested in this matter.

We had also planned on having the minister for official languages appear on the matter of accountability under the Official Languages Action Plan.

Correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Godbout. You are more familiar than I am with the tabling of mid-term reports on the implementation of the Action Plan for Official Languages. Does anyone know when that happens?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): It should happen this week.

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): On Wednesday, October 26, between 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

The Chair: Therefore tomorrow, when we will be here.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Then there will be the Thursday brunch from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

The Chair: This is a very important moment for the committee because the government has invested approximately \$750 million over a five-year period into the Action Plan for Official Languages. We are now at the half way point and, on Thursday, Minister Bélanger will be bringing us up to date on the implementation of the action plan. We might consider inviting him here to provide us with an analysis of the situation, and talk to us about the impact of the action plan and whether or not any adjustments need to be made.

The last suggestion—and we can add more if we wish—is also important because it involves the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Bill Graham, appearing before the committee. This would be on the matter of the department's performance in terms of official languages. I believe it was Mr. Godin who raised this and provided some examples. We discussed the possibility of the minister appearing and almost all committee members supported the idea. In fact, if there's one department where there seem to be some serious shortcomings in terms of official languages—and I say that perfectly objectively—it is the Department of National Defence.

That's our list. There is of course an issue that may change all this, depending on what the committee decides, and that is the possibility of travelling to communities to visit francophones outside Quebec as well as anglophones in Quebec. This would involve going into communities in order to observe the actual impact of the action plan on these communities. The trip was organized twice and twice it was cancelled. The purpose of the trip was to meet those who are benefiting from the plan rather than those who are responsible for allocating the funds, in this case the program managers. We would see what is happening and how the implementation of the action plan is affecting people's quality of life and that of their children.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chairman, I agree with asking the Minister of National Defence to appear. However, the committee did agree to take this trip. I think it is important that we make it a priority. We said that the trip would take place after consideration of Bill S-3. Perhaps we should be considering November 14. We had suggested dividing the groups in two. That way we wouldn't have to be gone for two weeks. We could perhaps do it in one week. I think going into communities would provide us with a little boost that will help in our work when we return.

We all knew that fall would come, that there would be spring and that everything would continue. However there was a motion to undertake that trip. We don't have any choice: the decision was made. We simply have to set a date.

The Chair: I don't think there is a motion as such, Mr. Godin. I believe it was just a wish expressed by the committee.

• (0910)

Mr. Yvon Godin: It was not just a wish. We had a budget that we presented to the House leaders. Our request was accepted and the trip was planned. We simply have to pick the date.

The Chair: You are correct on that. However the dates of November 21st and November 14th were simply options. In terms of the trip itself, the committee did in fact decide to travel.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes, but we can't travel in 2006, after the election.

The Chair: I did in fact go before the liaison committee twice to support our budget. It was approved in its entirety. The House leaders also approved it. So that is taken care of.

When I spoke about the committee's wish—and I'm correcting what I said earlier—I was referring to the possibility of travelling in November. We are currently looking at this. The discussion is open. We can now consider travel dates.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's where I disagree with you, Mr. Chairman. We're not talking about a wish. We had said that this trip would take place once consideration of Bill S-3 was finished. That's what had been decided.

The Chair: The clerk has indicated to me that the order of reference mentions October. That is what had been anticipated for a long time now. We should therefore make a change to specify that it is indeed November we're talking about.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's correct.

This should be sent to the board again...

The Chair: Does anyone wish to add something on this?

Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): The week of the 14th doesn't suit me.

Moreover, we were supposed to meet with people who receive the services. Has a list of these people been drafted?

The Chair: We had identified several and submitted their names to the committee. There were additions; you probably have them. You yourself had suggested someone whose name is on this list.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: That's right.

The Chair: That was done. Having said that, these are people who could receive us at that time. I presume they're still prepared to do so, because they're certainly interested in having us. Of course, the clerk has to check with them.

Before we move onto anything else, does the committee want to travel in November? Do we keep the month of November?

• (0915)

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'm flexible. I'm not available during the week of November 14th, but I am available the week of November 21st.

Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): We had talked about the week of November 14th.

The Chair: I think that we had discussed both, Mr. Godbout.

Mr. Simard, you have the floor.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I may have one concern. I know that the Standing Committee on Finance is travelling right now. It was in Winnipeg last week and there was only one person from our party travelling.

With everything that is going on right now, I don't know if we will be limited to that, Yvon. I know that this was approved by the House leaders, but I don't know if there are any restrictions within our respective parties. If only two people can go, that might not be the best thing to do. I don't know if there's some way to check this.

The Chair: I would also remind you that opposition days begin on November 14th. There will be eight until Christmas, but that's true for all committees.

Mr. Côté, it's your turn.

Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): If we agree on a specific period, we can check later with our respective whips.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: That's right.

Mr. Guy Côté: Then we'll get back to the committee. It won't take that long.

The Chair: Can we choose the week of November 21st?

[English]

Would the week of the 21st be all right? Of course, we have to check with our whips.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: We'll check.

The Chair: It should be quick for the NDP. Have you consulted yourself, Mr. Godin?

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'll consult myself. Okay.

[English]

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): That's our push-pencil date.

[Translation]

The Chair: Yes.

[English]

I would remind you that the committee expressed the wish to travel while the House is sitting so that we can all be in the ridings when the House is recessed.

[Translation]

Do we all agree to check with our respective parties to make sure that the week of November 21st is suitable?

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Yes.

The Chair: That's fine. You will still begin to do the exploratory work, but we don't need to go back to the liaison committee, correct?

The Clerk of the Committee: No.

The Chair: Everything is done.

Mr. Lauzon, your turn.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I would like to talk about Champlain College. The resource person is Danielle Côté. She must be the administrator or...

The Chair: That must be right.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Are we going to talk to her or to the students? Having discussions with the directors will not be productive. They're not the clientele. I'd much rather talk to the students, to know

whether this is a francophone college and whether anglophones receive the services they're entitled to.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Because, Mr. Chair...

The Chair: Yes?

Hon. Raymond Simard: I think that we must be careful. We have to speak to our clientele, but who are our clients? It is true that students are users, but students don't know whether funding comes from the province, nor how much comes from Heritage Canada.

We have to speak with people who receive federal funding in order to find out whether or not it is received in a timely manner, and if the \$750 million is well invested. We have to speak to people who receive the funds, in order to assess efficiency. If we speak to a student, he will say that things are going well. However, where is the money coming from? That is where the danger lies. We have to speak to people who are receiving federal funding.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I think that it is the opposite. Directors are the ones saying that everything is fine. They were the ones who spent the money, and the entire sum was well spent.

Hon. Raymond Simard: I can assure you that if we speak to representatives of the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, they would not say that everything is going well. They will say that there have been setbacks and frustration because they have to deal with the province. Therefore, we have to speak to them. They are the ones who could really tell us where the Dion plan is going.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Perhaps we can speak with both students and directors.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Perhaps we can speak with both.

The Chair: In any case, I believe that we have to meet with both groups. If we visit a child care centre, we would certainly want to meet with the people who work there, in addition to parents, families, and the community in order to understand the impact of taking these children to a school.

Mr. Marc Godbout: We would have to consult the babies.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Yes.

The Chair: Consulting the babies is also an excellent suggestion, Mr. Godbout. I can see that every one is wide awake.

Mr. D'Amours, you have the floor.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chair, I think we can continue talking about it for another 50 years. nonetheless, if we refer to meeting transcripts, we will probably discover that we have already discussed this topic four times. Each time we lose time; the same discussion starts over again. Yet, we have already agreed on how we wanted to proceed.

Can we continue working as agreed upon and cease coming back to the same discussions? We have already come to an agreement. It has been said at least four times. I am certain that many colleagues share my opinion.

It would be preferable to continue and make progress rather than take one step ahead and two steps back.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

Therefore, we will check with our respective parties, and you will begin work on the week of the 21st of November. Enough said with respect to the trip.

Let us turn to the topic of the Commissioner for Official Languages.

● (0920)

[English]

Madam Adam will be with us on Thursday morning from 9 to 11. That will be two days from now.

Oui.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: If we meet with Ms. Adam on Thursday, there will be a scheduling conflict. Will Ms. Adam appear at 9 o'clock or only à 10 o'clock? If not, we will not be able to attend the implementation of the official languages action plan on Thursday at 10 o'clock.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Ms. Adam should only be here for only one hour.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: We would have to meet with Ms. Adam for one hour only, between 9 and 10 a.m., and then attend the tabling of the report.

The Chair: We have to be there, there isn't any other choice.

Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Is there anything else on your shopping list?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In that case, I will wait. I do not want to get ahead of you.

The Chair: We have agreed to meet with Ms. Adam from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.. Then, we'll go to the House for the tabling of the report.

The last three meetings will be with the Minister of Canadian Heritage regarding CBC/Radio-Canada, the Minister responsible for Official Languages on accountability in the action plan, and finally, National Defence.

Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chairman, it is ridiculous to have machine translation for positions posted in Canada, and I'd like your support on this point, because I find it completely unacceptable. It may have seem like a joke when I discuss it in committee, but I would be remiss not to congratulate the Minister of the Public Works. I sent a letter to Scott Bryson to that effect, and he replied that the system had been set aside.

However, there a media report according to which the Minister for Human Resources and Skill Development continues to use this system. We should therefore call Minister Stronach before the committee to explain why she had job descriptions posted in Canada translated by an automated system.

The Chair: Are you suggesting we summon the minister or...

Hon. Raymond Simard: We should write to her, Mr. Chairman.

I don't think we should necessarily summon the minister for that. We could simply write her a letter stating that we've seen cases that were absolutely...

Mr. Yvon Godin: I personally filed a complaint with the Commissioner for Official Languages. However, the minister continues to use the system.

Hon. Raymond Simard: I think we should send her a unanimous letter from the committee stating that the system should not be used because it is ineffective. I think however it would be excessive to call the minister to appear for one hour on this issue.

The Chair: Could we start by setting out our other meetings, then sent a letter to the minister and, based on her reaction, summon her then?

Mr. Yvon Godin: All right.

I don't object to the system being used, as long as someone checks the translation. The final product is what matters.

The Chair: Mr. Ménard has agreed to write the letter, because he knows exactly what this is about. It will allow us to get a first reaction. Then, we could question her on the issue.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Okay.

The Chair: So the week of the 24th is full.

There's nothing planned for next week, the first week of November.

Out of what I mentioned, is there anything you would like to deal with as a priority? Would you like us to deal with the three subjects based on availability? I'm referring to the three ministers. We have to find a way to hear from these three ministers during the weeks of October 31st and November 14th, based on their availability.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Could you repeat the three subjects?

The Chair: Of course.

First, the Minister for Canadian Heritage, Ms. Frulla, will appear to discuss the CBC/Radio-Canada lockout. The matter is broader than that because, even though it was settled, there may to be a fundamental problem, and we are specifically interested in CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate when it comes to minorities. What is its role and what means does it have to reach its goals?

Then, Minister Bélanger will come to discuss accountability under the action plan. So, we can ask him questions—which we may not be able to do on Thursday—on the mid-term report, the impact of the action plan, and we can take stock of where things stand and where they're going.

Mr. Godbout.

Mr. Marc Godbout: Personally, I'd like to hear from the president of CBC/Radio-Canada. Because we will be focussing on CBC's mandate, I would like to hear what he has to say on what we should expect when it comes to services for francophones and the Acadian communities.

● (0925)

The Chair: Mr. Ménard would like to speak.

Mr. Marion Ménard (Committee Researcher): It may be useful for you to know, just as a bit of background, that I sent out a document regarding CBC/Radio-Canada's obligations with respect to linguistic duality and minority communities. These obligations stem from the Broadcasting Act, and they are partly sent out in the CRTC's conditions of licence when these licences are renewed, in other words, every seven years. The most recent licence, renewed in 2000, will expire in 2007. CBC's official language minority obligations will be set out in the document.

On this issue, we do indeed need to consider the Heritage Minister, but also the CRTC, amongst others.

The Chair: And what about the president, according to you?

Mr. Marion Ménard: Obviously, the president is concerned as well.

There is a risk, with respect to the Minister for Heritage, that she may say it is part of her portfolio and that, therefore, she cannot directly intervene in the internal workings of CBC/Radio-Canada.

Mr. Marc Godbout: It would be interesting to hear from the president at the same time.

The Chair: At the same time? That may be more complicated.

Mr. Simard.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Am I mistaken in saying that the president's mandate will be expiring in a couple of months?

The Chair: He was reappointed.

Hon. Raymond Simard: For a year.

The Chair: For three years.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Really?

The Chair: Normally, it would be for five years. He completed his five years, and the government then offered him one more year. He refused, saying that he actually wanted to stay three more years. Approximately one year has already passed. I think he has two years remaining.

Does someone want to comment on our possibly inviting the president?

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I think it would be very interesting to hear from Mr. Rabinovitch.

Regarding the two points you raised, it seems to me we should deal with accountability under the action plan at our next meeting. It will still be fresh in our minds, because we should be discussing the matter next Thursday.

The Chair: You're suggesting we do that first?

Ms. Paule Brunelle: It seems logical to me.

The Chair: I agree. So, our priority is to invite the ministers. Next week, in other words Tuesday, we will have Mr. Bélanger.

And what about choosing between the president and Ms. Frulla, do we agree?

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I personally would start with the president, to see what he has in mind. There has been some criticism, but we should see...

The Chair: So we would hear for Mr. Rabinovitch rather than Ms. Frulla.

Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: This is just an idea, but if we invite Mr. Rabinovitch, we could also invite the francophone representative who was just appointed.

The Chair: The francophone vice-president?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Who replaced...

The Chair: Daniel Gourd?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Gourd was not replaced.

The Chair: Yes. His replacement was appointed, but I don't know if the process has been completed. Mr. Gourd had announced his departure several months head of time. I don't know if his replacement—and I think it would be Mr. Lafrance— already holds office.

So would it be Mr. Rabinovitch and Mr. Lafrance?

Mr. Yvon Godin: I tell you frankly, as far as I'm concerned, I've already heard Mr. Rabinovitch in committee. All he does is repeat that the government isn't giving him enough money. If we're dealing with programming, it would be interesting to know what a newcomer may think. Perhaps we could have them appear separately.

The Chair: One of the issues—and I'm sure you're going to raise it Mr. Godin—will be Radio-Canada's presence in the regions and the fact that regional production has been set aside.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I personally would refer to local and regional production.

The Chair: I think that is also a very interesting matter.

So, we agree on the idea of inviting Mr. Rabinovitch and CBC's new vice-president for French services, as soon as possible.

With respect to the Minister of Defence, Mr. Graham, he's very busy. I would suggest then that we look into the first available date for his appearance. Does that suit you?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Would it be possible, when the Official Languages Commissioner appears, to have the camera-ready room? With all due respect, I must say that under Mauril, the Official Languages Committee always met in a room that had cameras. It would be important, especially given the fact the commissioner is coming to discuss her report. I think it would be good for Canadians to see her.

The Chair: It's an availability issue. We have held several televised meetings.

● (0930)

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'd like to know if it's possible.

Usually, when a minister appears before a committee, every possible effort is made for the meeting to be televised. The same thing should apply to the Official Languages Commissioner, because Canadians should see her and hear what she has to say.

The Chair: Absolutely. In the case of several ministers, we managed to get a room. There are three rooms, is that right?

The Clerk: Yes, but there are several committees.

The Chair: We will try to manage it, except that it would be difficult for the day after tomorrow. It's a good idea. I think every time we summon a minister, we should try to have a televised debate, if you agree.

So, that completes our list of subjects raised by the committee. We may conclude now or we could take five minutes to explore other possibilities.

Mr. Simard.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that there was also the issue of judicial appointments on the list, but I haven't heard anything of that effect.

The Chair: Judicial appointments...

Hon. Raymond Simard: Yes.

The Chair: ...for minorities.

Hon. Raymond Simard: I recall that at first we had set out a priority list, and it seems to me we are short of subjects. I wonder whether the clerk could look in to it.

The Chair: Yes, indeed, there were the Olympic Games.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Yes, the Olympic Games.

The Chair: Could you get that list?

With respect with the Olympic Games, they will be held in both languages, but we wanted to ensure that the process leading up to the games reflects our linguistic reality.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Nonetheless, there are some subjects missing, I believe.

The Chair: We have thought that those going to Vancouver would broach the issue. I see Mr. Côté has a wide smile.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to get back to the issue of judges, that my colleague Raymond raised earlier.

I had discussed appointments of some judges for employment insurance and CPP courts. Sometimes it can take a while for people to get a court date because of the limited availability of judges who understand their language. So, people are sometimes forced to travel outside their region to access services.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think you have to wait at least a year to get a court date.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: That's why I raised the point, so that an attempt can be made to find some short-term solutions.

The Chair: If you don't mind, I would like to extend the meeting. We are not going to have one meeting on appointments and another on the court process for minorities.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: But it's not the issue of appointments, it's about making sure that when a judge is appointed, that appointment accurately reflects the situation.

It's certainly always easier when you can get bilingual people, who can provide a service to both anglophone and francophone communities, when necessary.

The Chair: I agree. However, what I meant to say was that I'm not sure we want to spend two hours just discussing judicial appointments in minority settings. In order to be efficient and save

time, we could spend an hour on each topic, since there's a direct connection between the two.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I did not take part in the debate, but I take it that we want to make sure there's a critical mass of judges, enough so that cases can be heard a bit more expeditiously. Is that the problem?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: So that's the subject of the debate: finding out how to go about that.

The Chair: Especially for the francophone community outside Quebec.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I'd like to add a point about sports federations. We have often had complaints and problems involving sports federations, to the effect that it was impossible for an athlete to train in French. So there are some significant difficulties on that level.

The Chair: That's a good point.

Can we first agree on holding a meeting on the whole judicial appointment process, and consequently, on availability, etc.?

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure we can do that in one meeting. I think we will have to consult the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and speak to francophone lawyers. We could even call witnesses to hear their concerns.

I'm not sure we can do that in one hour, or in an hour and a half. In addition, Jean-Claude just raised another point. I'm talking about Manitoba courts and francophones who can't get a hearing because there are no judges who understand French, but he's talking about employment insurance and CPP courts, which is completely different.

• (0935)

The Chair: They are administrative tribunals.

Hon. Raymond Simard: They are people who are usually government-appointed.

The Chair: Yes, they are administrative tribunals.

Hon. Raymond Simard: It's two different things, so we should agree on our objective. If it takes two or three meetings, then so be it.

The Chair: I'm going to discuss it, but I'm not specifically... The research assistant tells me that Mr. Cotler, according to him, gave evidence about that last spring. He dealt with that, but with other things too.

Can we get his evidence?

Mr. Marion Ménard: Yes.

The Chair: I would like committee members to be given a copy of Mr. Cotler's evidence. I will take note of your suggestions and then we will follow our priorities.

Are there any other suggestions?

Mr. Marc Godbout: Yes, I have one. I do not know if it comes under Treasury Board or Privy Council, but there is a directive stating that boards of government agencies and commissions, etc., should be representative of the Canadian population. We are seeing that, more and more, boards of directors, like the one at CBC and the CRTC, no longer have any francophone representatives from outside Quebec. I do not know who should answer to that. I do know that government agencies come under Treasury Board; so it would be Mr. Alcock. That perhaps goes a bit further if we talk about commissions. It would be interesting for our researcher to also look at the commissions and tell us how many members for these commissions come from francophone and Acadian communities. The same is also true for ethnic communities. There is a problem with representation.

The committee deals with official languages, but it would be interesting to see if... If no one is representing the communities on the CRTC, certain decisions may not necessarily reflect the values...

The Chair: You talked about board of directors and commissions. I would like some clarification.

Mr. Marc Godbout: I am talking about the CRTC, for example.

Hon. Raymond Simard: It could be Radio-Canada or CBC.

Mr. Marion Ménard: We could talk about the Canada Council for the Arts.

Hon. Raymond Simard: It could be the Canada Council for the Arts.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Marc, are you saying that there are no francophones from outside Quebec?

Mr. Marc Godbout: The directives state that the make up of the board should be representative...

Mr. Guy Lauzon: ...of the country.

Mr. Marc Godbout: Precisely. In the past, there have always been representatives for francophone communities...

Mr. Guy Lauzon: ...outside Quebec.

Mr. Marc Godbout: I do not like the expression "outside Quebec". I prefer saying "official language minority communities".

That is very important, because those people make decisions that affect all of Canada. It would be interesting to see if there are any checks and balances at that level.

The Chair: We would have to see what the directives are, how they are applied, and who is accountable for implementing them.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You are saying that there are enough francophones.

Mr. Marc Godbout: There are not enough.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Oh, there are not enough.

The Chair: No, and that does not necessarily reflect the landscape of Canada or the country's diversity.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I see.

Mr. Marc Godbout: Unless I am mistaken, I do not believe that there are any more francophones at CBC, but there used to be.

Hon. Raymond Simard: I do not think that there are any representatives of francophone minority communities on the Radio-Canada/CBC board.

The Chair: That is possible.

To our researcher, can we get the list of these corporations or organizations—I have trouble calling them all corporations. Can we also find out where their board members come from. Do not call anyone for the time being. We could start there and find out who is accountable...

Hon. Raymond Simard: Yes, that would be perfect.

The Chair: Thank you, that is a very good point, Mr. Godbout.

The Clerk: The sports federations...

The Chair: Let's talk about the sports federations. Without wanting to interpret Ms. Brunelle's remarks, if I understand correctly, we have seen in the past that it was very difficult for francophone athletes to train in their own language. They must often fit into the pancanadian mould and train strictly in English.

You may want to clarify your thoughts.

● (0940)

Ms. Paule Brunelle: That is exactly what the media has shown us. We saw that athletes were really having trouble in almost every sport. They could neither train nor have a trainer or relations. They often seemed to be sidelined. Some said that it was because of language. I do not know to what extent that is accurate, because it has not necessarily been verified. It would be interesting to see to what extent sports federations are bilingual.

The Chair: That is a good point, indeed. Sport Canada distributes funding to the various federations. What happens with the Canadian Olympic Committee?

Mr. Marion Ménard: That is different.

The Chair: But we could meet with the people from the Canadian Olympic Committee as part of preparation for Vancouver 2010.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Yes.

The Chair: And that way it would be sport. Who is the minister?

Mr. Marion Ménard: Mr. Owen.

The Chair: Stephen Owen, yes.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: It would also be interesting to know if, in light of Vancouver 2010, the representation of francophones on the teams for the various disciplines seems normal. Is it proportionate and representative?

The Chair: That is more difficult.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Yes, that depends on who succeeds in the sport.

The Chair: That's right. Moreover, there are sports where, traditionally, francophones do better, whereas they don't do as well in another disciplines. There are sports that are dominated by francophones.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Yes.

The Chair: However, we could focus on their opportunities to develop, train, compete and be part of a team using their language, as much as possible.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: We would have to identify when the athlete complained. We would have a better understanding of the complaint based on language. That is not fresh in my memory.

The Chair: Perfect.

We could also see if there is a code of silence that makes athletes afraid of being excluded if they comment on the topic. I am not saying that exists!

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Yah.

The Chair: There may be a certain culture...

Mr. Marion Ménard: I am going to delve into that.

The Chair: Mr. Ménard will delve into that, to use his words.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Ménard has a lot of work to do.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I see.

The Chair: That is why he makes big bucks.

Mr. Yvon Godin: He will not be twiddling his thumbs.

The Chair: Mr. Godbout.

Mr. Marc Godbout: The former committee had raised the issue of staff in embassies.

I think that our researcher looked into that a few years ago. Many staff members in embassies are hired locally, and it appears that these people are not subject to the Official Languages Act. The problem was highlighted in an APF report that I saw. It may not be a priority, but there was a problem, and I would like to know if it has been resolved or if it is ongoing.

Mr. Marion Ménard: The problem was also raised by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Mr. Marc Godbout: Okay.

The Chair: Other subjects may flow from Ms. Adam's report.

Ms. Brunelle.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: On embassies, a colleague told me that often—another member of Parliament also talked to me about this—there are no documents in French in the display cases. Often, only documents in English are available in Canadian embassies. It would be interesting to look into that.

The Chair: Indeed.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I have heard that too. You can find French in the embassies where Quebec is present, because of immigration. Apart from that, there are not many. In fact, there was not much in the countries I visited. Normally, when we visit a country, we go to the embassy.

Mr. Godbout is right, we have already discussed this issue, and witnesses have appeared before the committee.

The Chair: All right.

We are taking on a great deal of work.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: So we are!

The Chair: We will have to get to work.

Hon. Raymond Simard: We'll be busy until the elections.

The Chair: So let me finalize the list at this time.

Hon. Raymond Simard: We have enough work.

The Chair: We will also receive the list of subjects we discussed a few months ago, before studying Bill S-3. That will also fuel our deliberations.

We agree. Now let me summarize: Ms. Adam will appear on Thursday, the day after tomorrow, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Afterwards, we will wait for Mr. Bélanger to table his mid-term report.

We hope to see Mr. Bélanger soon, as Ms. Brunelles suggested, especially as he will have just tabled his report.

We want to see Mr. Rabinovitch as soon as possible as well as the recently appointed francophone vice-president, and the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Ménard will send a letter to the Honourable Minister Stronach regarding the translation of documents in the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development. Depending on how she responds, if the department continues along that path, we should be able to ask the minister to appear very soon.

We will analyze the process for appointing judges in minority settings. However, we will not invite anyone before you have received the said document. We can discuss it in other meetings about future work. In any case, we will be busy from now until then.

We will invite the Honourable Minister Stephen Owen to discuss the issue of sports federations. We want to know what he is basing it on and, of course, whether the nation's linguistic duality is taken into account.

Mr. Ménard will do some research to find out who is in charge of the management of various government agencies, to find out how the various management boards are made up and if this is done in consideration of Canada's linguistic duality and how various regions are represented.

Eventually, we will look at the personnel and the availability of material distributed in embassies, as well as the people who go there.

Is this clear to you, and are you giving me the mandate to go ahead with the priorities depending on the ministers' availability?

• (0945)

Hon. Raymond Simard: I need some clarification, Mr. Chairman. The person accompanying Mr. Rabinovitch should be the one in charge of regional programming. I do not know whether it is the same person, but it is important to us.

The Chair: Not quite. However, the francophone vice-president is in charge of the entire francophone content at Société Radio-Canada.

Hon. Raymond Simard: For the whole country?

The Chair: Yes.

Hon. Raymond Simard: This is what I meant. Obviously, he is not only in charge of Quebec.

The Chair: No.

Hon. Raymond Simard: All right.

Mr. Yvon Godin: If that is the case, then this is not what we want.

Hon. Raymond Simard: No.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We want the one in charge of francophone programming in Canada.

The Chair: Yes, indeed. But that includes Quebec: my Canada includes Quebec.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mine does too!

Mr. Yvon Godin: I said “in Canada”.

The Chair: Is there anything else?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: I presume that everyone agrees with the working plan. So we do have a mandate to do this?

Hon. Raymond Simard: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you for your collaboration. We will see you Thursday morning when the Official Languages Commissioner will appear.

The meeting is adjourned.

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