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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, April 10, 2008**

**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**

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Thursday, April 10, 2008

• (0910)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning everyone. Welcome to the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

This morning, before we go any further, I want to inform the committee members that, during our next few meetings, we will look at access to justice, and the linguistic competencies of exempted managers.

So, I would ask you to send me your suggestions by April 15 of witnesses to call in our consideration of those two subjects.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Could you repeat that, please?

**The Chair:** I invite you to send me the names of witnesses you would like to have appear in our consideration of the next two subjects on our agenda, access to justice and the linguistic competencies of exempted managers, pursuant to the work plan that we adopted a few weeks ago.

This morning, we have the pleasure of having with us Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Chief Specialist, Language Statistics Section. As you know, Mr. Corbeil has done a study specifically on linguistic minority communities.

Mr. Corbeil, we are pleased to welcome you to our committee once again. We have had the opportunity to resolve a few minor administrative details since your last visit here. That is why this morning we are all ears and ready to hear your presentation.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil (Chief Specialist, Language Statistics Section, Statistics Canada):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, committee members.

I want to thank you for inviting me to appear before you. In my presentation, I will give an overview of the evolving linguistic portrait in Canada. My presentation is based on statistics taken from various censuses, in particular the 2006 census. Then, I will present various results taken from a report entitled "Survey on the Vitality of Official Language Minorities", which was published on December 11.

First I want to talk about the changing number and relative weight of the major linguistic groups in Canada. I invite you to follow along with the information that I have distributed. On page 2 you will find the first slide which deals with trends observed over the past 25 years. In fact those trends increased between 2001 and 2006. In the 2006 census, there are approximately 18 million Canadians with

English as their mother tongue, an increase of 3% since 2001, and there were approximately 6.9 million Canadians having French as their mother tongue, an increase of 1.6%.

Anglophones still represent the majority of the population, obviously. While their numbers continue to grow, their percentage of the Canadian population dropped from 59.1% in 2001 to 57.8% in 2006. The same is true of those with French as a mother tongue. The relative weight of that population dropped from 22.9% in 2001 to 22.1% five years later in 2006.

Obviously given the significant increase in immigration since the middle of the 1980s, essentially comprising individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, the weight of the population known as allophones increased rapidly. It went from 13% in 1986 to 17% in 1996 and 20% in 2006.

Still on page 2, on the second slide, we can see that, in Canada, the use of languages—

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Just a moment please, Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to know if it will be a 20-minute presentation, followed by a question and answer period.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Exactly.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I asked the question because I didn't know if we could interrupt you during your presentation.

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Will the text that Mr. Corbeil is about to read be tabled, Mr. Chair? Could you tell me whether we will be able to get a copy of his presentation afterwards?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Yes, of course. We could distribute it. I just wanted to make it easier to understand the first few slides.

**The Chair:** Just a reminder about our procedure. Usually, we give witnesses about 10 minutes to make their presentations, and then we move to the first round of questions.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Very well.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I move that he take as long as he wants—whether it be 10 or 15 minutes. I have no problem with that. We want to get some information.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** There are actually two topics: the census and the survey. Do you want to ask questions between the two presentations, or wait until I have completed both?

**The Chair:** I think we will give Mr. Corbeil the time he needs to make his presentation. After that, we will carry on.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** So, as I was saying, slide 2 shows that the use of languages other than English or French most often at home is less frequent than their proportion as mother tongue. This is due to the fact that allophones use one of the two official languages at home; these are essentially cases of language transfers.

For example, we know that the number of immigrants whose mother tongue is neither French nor English has increased since the 1980s. In 1981, these allophones accounted for 60% of the immigrants, while in 2006, they accounted for 80% of the immigrants. So there has been a significant growth in this group of immigrants. However, the percentage of francophone immigrants has remained very low, between 2 and 4%.

Almost one allophone of every two speaks French or English most often at home. If we add to that those who speak French or English as well as their mother tongue, the figure is close to 68% of the population. So you can see that English outside Quebec is quite attractive to immigrants.

The slide on page 3 shows the situation of francophones living outside Quebec and we see that the relative weight of French as mother tongue and language spoken at home has decreased steadily for close to half a century. That is the red line on the chart. The green line represents the language most often spoken at home.

In 2006, there were 975,000 people whose mother tongue was French and who were living outside Quebec. That is 4.1% of the population. That is a drop from 2001, when there were 980,000 such individuals. So there has been a drop of 5,000 francophones living outside Quebec.

Because of the anglicization of francophones, only 2.5% of the population speaks French most often at home. Of the 975,000 individuals whose mother tongue is French, only 605,000 of them speak it most often at home. This chart shows that there are far fewer people who speak French at home than there are people with French as a mother tongue.

The census defines mother tongue as the first language learned in childhood that is still understood by the person at the time of the census.

On page 4, there is a chart which shows that francophones outside Quebec—and this will come as a surprise to no one—are an aging population where the number of young people is declining because of the low fertility rate and the incomplete transmission of mother tongue. If you look at the chart, you can see that the yellow lines show the number of francophones in 1971 by age group, and the red lines show the number of francophones in 2006. It is quite clear that the number of young people is almost comparable to the relative weight of people in the 70-to-74 age group. So, as you can see, there has been a significant reduction in the number of young people. We also see that there are 34,000 children under age 5. There are almost three times fewer of them than there are adults in the 45-to-49 age group, of whom there are about 94,000.

This gives you some idea of the trend in the situation facing francophones outside Quebec.

The slide on anglophones in Quebec shows that the percentage with English as their mother tongue who speak English most often at

home remains virtually stable between 2001 and 2006. This is a reversal of the trend that has been in place for a very long time. We know that the proportion of anglophones had steadily gone down from census to census since 1851. Their numbers are on the rise for the first time since 1976. The change observed between 2001 and 2006 can be explained mainly by the drop in net migratory losses of anglophones to the rest of the country. You will see an example of this.

If you look at the chart that shows the situation regarding anglophones who left Quebec, you can see very clearly that between 1976 and 1981, for example, a great many anglophones left the province. This trend was less pronounced later, but we see that beginning in 1986, there was an increase in the number of anglophones who left Quebec. The chart shows clearly that the number of anglophones who left Quebec was at its lowest between 2001 and 2006. There were about 8,000 people who left the province. As I said, this is the lowest loss of anglophones we have seen since the end of the 1960s.

The chart on the next page shows the age structure of anglophones in Quebec and shows that the breakdown by age of anglophones in Quebec was marked by these heavy migration losses that happened between 1971 and 2001. The fact that many anglophones left Quebec between 1971 and 1986, in particular, had an impact on the younger population. We see that the under-40 age cohorts in 1971 were reduced drastically in 35 years.

The chart on the difference between the relative weight of mother tongue and language spoken most often at home shows that the gap widened progressively over the years among allophones in Quebec.

When we look at the red line, which represents the language spoken most often at home, and the blue line, which represents the mother tongue, we see that the percentage of those who speak their mother tongue at home is much higher than the percentage of those for whom this is their mother tongue. That means that historically, in Quebec, English held a very long attraction. This is why English is the language most often spoken at home by allophones. However, as you will see, this trend has been reversed, at least since 1976.

The slide at the top of page 7 shows that language transfers among allophone immigrants—that is those who speak a language other than their mother tongue most often at home—are increasingly toward French. Over 60% of all allophone immigrants spoke French most often at home in 2006, compared to slightly over 25% of this group in 1971. This was the first time in a very long time that French was spoken more often at home than was English, by all allophones, and not just allophone immigrants. In 2006, the percentage was 51%.

Let us now look at the slide at the bottom of page 7. This slide shows that the percentage of allophone immigrants who came to Canada after 1970 and who spoke an official language at home in 2006, and for whom that language was French, was very high. Between 2001 and 2006, close to 75% of allophones spoke French most often at home. We know that one of the important reasons for this has to do with the mother tongue of the immigrants. For 5 or 10 years, Quebec in particular has had a significant percentage of immigrants whose mother tongue is Arabic. And they tend to speak French more at home because they often spoke French even before they came to Quebec.

I also wanted to add some information about the languages that are spoken at work. As you can see from the slide, the bars on the left show that French is predominantly spoken at work by Quebec francophones. However, we also see that there has been an increase in the amount of French spoken at work by allophones and by anglophones. The use of French is on the rise among francophones. The figure went from 92% to 93%, while the percentage of anglophones who speak French at work predominantly went from 22% to 23.4%. There was also an increase among allophones—in other words, the percentage of people who spoke French predominantly increased from 42% to 47%. Outside of Quebec, however, we see that French was spoken predominantly at work almost exclusively by francophones, and 60% of them actually speak English predominantly.

As you know, there was a discussion, particularly in Quebec, regarding the census data published in December and those published in March regarding language of work. The chart shows that while there was a reduction in the percentage of people whose mother tongue was French between 2001 and 2006 and a reduction in French as the language spoken most often at home between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of people who spoke French at work remained relatively stable. Clearly, this is a phenomenon that changes much more slowly and is affected by totally different forces. We are talking here about the language spoken publicly.

The bars at the right side of the chart show that the amount of English spoken at work is higher than the percentage of people whose mother tongue is English. Clearly, this has to do with the importance of English in Quebec. This refers to the amount of English spoken by francophones and allophones.

I wanted to present to you the main points that came out of the census data published in December and March. I would now like to take the opportunity to present the main results that followed the publication last December of the Survey on the Vitality of Official-Language Minorities. Some of you may know that this survey was funded by 10 federal departments. It looked at a significant sample of francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec. From this, we see...

• (0925)

**The Chair:** Mr. Corbeil, it's going very well. However, I have a special request from the interpreters. Could you slow down a little bit? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** As I was saying this is a major survey. It's the first time that such a survey has been undertaken by Statistics Canada. The objective was to cover a lot of ground, meaning to go

beyond what we can get from a census. That is why this survey contains information on early childhood, school attendance and the use of languages in various areas of the public domain as well as access to health care in a minority language. These themes were considered priorities by the minority official languages communities.

The first objective of the survey was, then, to collect information about areas that are top priorities; the second objective was to disseminate information that will assist in policy development and program implementation; and the third objective was to provide a data base that will allow users to investigate issues identified by researchers in government, university and private sectors with regard to official language minorities.

As you can see on page 11 of my presentation, during the December 11, 2007, release of the first analytical report, four main themes were identified: sense of belonging and subjective vitality; use of language in daily activities; use of the minority language during access to health care services; and school attendance.

First, let's look at the main results with regard to sense of belonging and subjective vitality, in other words, perceptions of a community's vitality. On the first slide on page 12, there is a large proportion of adults who reported that they identify with the two language groups equally in all provinces outside Quebec. On the slide, the red represents francophones, since we must remember that this survey took into consideration not only individuals whose mother tongue is French, but also individuals whose first spoken official language is French. So, we take into consideration immigrants or allophones who have adopted French as their first official spoken language.

By looking at the graph, you can see that in almost all the provinces, except for Quebec, the red represents those who identify with both groups. So, this represents approximately 50% of francophones outside Quebec.

When you look at the situation in Quebec, on the slide below in red, you can see that although it is slightly lower, the proportion of English-speakers in Quebec who identify equally with both language groups is also widespread, meaning that slightly more than 40% of English-speakers in Quebec identify with both the francophone and the anglophone groups.

This survey measured the perceived importance of provincial and federal services being provided in French to French-speaking adults outside Quebec. You can see that the proportion of French-speaking adults who said that it was important or very important to have access to provincial and federal government services in French is nearly 85% outside Quebec.

Likewise, in Quebec, the proportion of English-speaking adults who feel that it is important to have access to provincial and federal government services in English exceeds 90%: 93% of the English-speaking population in Quebec believe that it is very important or important that these services be provided in the language of the minority.

I will now move on to page 14. Questions were also asked of respondents about the perception of the vitality of the francophone community in their municipality of residence.

● (0930)

We can see that, outside Quebec, slightly more than 40% of the francophone population believes—

**The Chair:** Mr. Corbeil, your presentation is going very well. However, I can see that there are still a number of slides left. I would therefore invite you to summarize so that we can move on to questions from committee members. I want to point out to my colleagues that we are a page behind the numbers you are giving. We are on page 12, while you are citing page 13.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** It would be easy for me to summarize.

When we look at these things, there seems to be somewhat of a disconnect between individuals' perceptions and their behaviour in their daily lives. On the one hand, they identify with both linguistic groups, and on the other hand, they believe that it is very important to have access to services in the minority language and that community vitality is quite strong. Approximately 40% of the population outside Quebec believes that their community enjoys strong or very strong vitality.

In Quebec, it is interesting to note that the anglophone community seems slightly more pessimistic with regard to the future of their community compared to francophones outside Quebec. This is evidenced by the results.

As you will be able to see in the other slides, the use of English among English-speaking adults in Quebec is quite high, no matter how much of the population of their municipality of residence they make up. Outside Quebec, we see a completely different phenomenon. We know that 42% of French-speaking adults outside Quebec live in their municipalities where they represent less than 10% of the population. However, this situation has a great deal of influence over their behaviour and their perception.

The results demonstrated that the use of French by francophones outside Quebec is directly related to the weight of that population in their municipality. In Quebec, we don't see quite the same situation. No matter what the weight of the anglophone population in their municipality, anglophones use English to a significant extent.

We asked questions about the use of languages with regard to access to health care services. Both francophones and anglophones in Quebec mentioned that it was important for them to have access to health care services in the minority language. In fact, numerous francophones outside Quebec mentioned that it is extremely difficult for them to obtain health care services in their language.

Finally, some significant results of the survey relate to school attendance, a theme that is addressed on page 18. Among the main results, 53% of children where one parent was French-speaking were

enrolled in a French primary school, compared to 44% at the secondary school level. These are people who, under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, have the right to send their children to the minority schools, but they do not do so for a number of reasons. The survey reveals a number of them. We must remember that approximately 44% of parents whose children attend a majority language school, in a regular program, would have liked to send their children to a minority language school.

As you can also see by looking at the report published on December 11, there is a very close connection between parents' linguistic characteristics. Where both parents are francophones, families tend to send their children to a minority language school. Inversely, the proportion of couples made up of one anglophone or one francophone who send their children to a minority language school is much lower.

In Quebec, it is an entirely different story. A large proportion of English-speaking adults whose mother tongue is neither French nor English are not able to send their children to an English language school.

I have presented a lot of information. I hope I have not created too much confusion. I simply want to say that this survey on vitality contains much more detailed information on the situation of official language minorities, compared to what we have seen coming out of the Canadian census.

● (0935)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Corbeil. I would like to thank you for summarizing so much information, first as regards Statistics Canada, generally speaking, and subsequently some more specific information. I am sure that you will be able to further describe the situation in answering committee members' questions. We will start with the official opposition.

You have the floor, Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for appearing before us once again this morning, Mr. Corbeil. I would like to come back to pages 3 and 4 of your presentation. My first question has to do with francophones outside Quebec. If I have any time left over, I may have some questions about anglophones in Quebec.

When we compare the two groups, it is quite clear that there is a constant reduction in the number of francophones and an obvious stability in the number of anglophones in Quebec. There may be many reasons for that. I may be mixing things up a little, but we do know that certain political events occurred in Quebec between 1976 and 1981 that may have given rise to some fears. How else could we explain such a huge exodus of people? A new government had come to power and there was the issue of separation, and these things may have been part of the picture. I do not know whether you have made an in-depth study of the impact this had.

The statistics on francophones living outside Quebec are quite disturbing. I am one myself, I live in New Brunswick. Is this a trend that could be reversed or is this an ongoing trend that means we can expect to see a constant reduction in the number of francophones? There is no doubt that the population of Canada is growing, but not necessarily because of the number of francophones. When we look at the percentages, we might wonder whether it stays the same, but you said there had been a net loss in the number of francophones.

Then this is no longer a question of percentages, because there are really fewer francophones living outside Quebec. From all your analyses, will this trend continue, or can something be done to try to limit it? I know that I could do my part and have more children, but that means that others are not doing their part. Is birth rate the only consideration, or do other factors come into play in this analysis?

● (0940)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Thank you for your question.

When we try to understand trends in language groups in demographics, we take a number of factors into account. You mentioned the birth rate or what is known as the fertility rate. Francophones are not necessarily having fewer children than anglophones. There are other factors that have an impact on the trends we see in language groups. Among francophones outside Quebec, the factor that has a direct impact is interprovincial migration. You may recall that between 1996 and 2001, the number of francophones outside Quebec increased by 10,000, and most of this growth was attributable to the migration of francophones outside Quebec. Most of these francophones went to Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. So interprovincial migration is a significant factor, as it is for anglophones in Quebec.

For a number of years, francophones outside Quebec had been relying on immigration. The thinking is that if the birth rate is not high enough, they will rely more on immigrants from abroad.

We must remember that outside Quebec, approximately 1% of immigrants speak French as their first official language. So, as you can imagine, any attempt to change the situation is a significant challenge. We know that the age structure, language transfers, that is the non-transmission of the language, the fact that English is the language most often spoken at home and inter-generational language transfer, that is,—whether or not French is passed on to children—also result in a reduced number of francophones outside Quebec. A number of factors come into play, but, outside Quebec, the fact that French is not being passed on to children, the fact that few immigrants outside Quebec speak French and the significant mobility of francophones between the provinces account for this trend in large part.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Let us take the example of the francophone who is goes to Alberta. That province is even more anglophone than Ontario. In any case, there are fewer francophones than there are in Ontario. You spoke about “some provinces”. If a francophone leaves one part of the country to go to a more anglophone province and decides to marry and have children there, even with the best will in the world on the part of the parents, there is no doubt that there may be a language switch. It will be harder to get such people to speak French when the language of the community generally is English. We are not necessarily talking about

assimilation, but if these people stay in that province, there is a good chance that the children will marry anglophones. And little by little they lose their French.

Francophones have certain needs, and if they cannot be met, the francophones will have difficulties. If more services were available in the regions, this could reverse the trend.

What do you think about all this?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** From the results we have obtained, from the survey and other sources, we feel that if parents choose to send their children to French-language child care centres, where there is a significant French presence, this has a direct impact on whether the children go to French schools later. That is just one example, but early childhood has often enough been identified as an important area. Clearly, if parents start exposing their children to French at the earliest possible age, this can have a significant impact on the way things turn out.

Going to school in French has an impact on children's attitudes and perceptions, and this may ultimately have an impact on behaviour.

● (0945)

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

We will now go to the Bloc Québécois representative, Mr. Richard Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you, Mr. Blaney.

Good morning, Mr. Corbeil.

I do not find the figures surprising. I have been interested in this issue for a very long time. And yet, some things still surprise me a little. I did not hear you say the word “assimilation” once, but you did use the word “anglicization”. Surely we agree that this is the same thing.

I remember when I worked for the FFHQ, which became the FCFA, we talked about retaining French in minority communities. The retention rate among young people in Saskatchewan was 15%. At one point, it went up to 15.4%. What this means is that the assimilation rate was 84%.

I would like to look at the chart at the bottom of page 3. If I were in charge of a construction site and if 20% of my workers died each year, I would be asking myself some serious questions. The assimilation rates since 1951 have been alarming, and are not getting any better. We are well aware that this situation exists, and the reason it still exists is that there has always been a lack of political will to show the proper respect for francophone minority communities.

Henri Bourassa's favourite old theory regarding Quebec and its satellites, which we have been hearing from the Department of Canadian Heritage for I do not know how long, simply does not work, unless it is used to show how quickly francophones can be assimilated.

Earlier, we were wondering how the assimilation rates could be so high. This is of concern to Mr. D'Amours, who is from "République du Madawaska", the home of the Brayons, which is a very francophone region compared to other places outside Quebec. And you can imagine what the situation is like in places other than Quebec or Acadia.

The provinces are in charge of health care services—after all people are born before they go to school—and they run the school systems and the social services that provide assistance to families and young people who are experiencing difficulties. All these areas come under provincial jurisdiction. Income support is also an area of provincial jurisdiction. And it was the provinces that abolished the school system and services in French. They did not want to set up services in French. They have done so quite recently in an effort to please Quebec, because there is talk about independence there. They did so to please Quebecers, not to please their minority communities. I have experienced this myself. The federal government closes its eyes to the issue, or it tries to apply a plaster cast to wooden legs. That is the situation we face.

Mr. Coderre and Mr. Lemieux find this funny, but I find it extremely sad, and that is why, as a Franco-Ontarian and Fransaskois, I have come to support independence for Quebec. One has only to see what has happened to francophone minority communities in Canada. That is the fact of the matter.

When Statistics Canada produces a table such as the one at the bottom of page 3, do you analyze the reasons for this downward trend line? I know you work with statistics, and that it is not up to you to analyze political will. Do you do any studies of these non-existent services so that this situation is perpetuated? Unfortunately, it all depends on political will, and if the idea really is to cause francophones to disappear from provinces other than Quebec...

Do you go that far? Do you look into issues such as this?

• (0950)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Your question is important. Despite the fact that the Canadian census includes seven questions pertaining to language—Canada is the only country in the world to ask such questions in a census—an inquiry on the vitality of minority groups allows us to delve into this entirely new phenomenon and his entirely novel. We also looked into questions of perception. It is obvious that these involve complex dynamics. It is difficult to determine which comes first, the chicken or the egg. For example, we know that many francophones living outside Quebec, who identify with both groups do not demand services because they feel they are bilingual. Other researchers have provided evidence of this, including Rodrigue Landry from the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.

There's also demographic information, information on the weight of minorities. Studies clearly show that the larger a population in a given municipality is, the more likely they are to demand services, and to pass on their language to their children. Obviously, 40% of francophones living outside of Quebec live in communities where they make up less than 10% of the population. It is certain that this influences not only their behaviour, but their perceptions. Our observations are that people living in these municipalities tend to decide what is important for them. Most of these people feel that it is

very important that their children speak the language of the minority. Nonetheless, in some cases, parents decide to send their children to English-speaking schools because the quality of the curriculum is better, or there is no other school available, or for many other reasons. However, it is clear that the lack of availability of services causes people to make greater rise of the language of the majority.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Corbeil and Mr. Nadeau.

We now move on to Mr. Godin.

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

Firstly, welcome to the committee. You said earlier that francophones are leaving the regions to move to Quebec, and to Alberta. A significant number of francophones have left Acadia and headed to Alberta. This is the result of the economic problems in this country. Some say that there are no economic problems because there are plenty of jobs, and that we even have to bring in immigrants to fill positions, and that still, there seems to be a shortfall. Nonetheless, all of the employment is concentrated in one anglophone province. This cannot be denied. Alberta is an anglophone province.

When the number of francophones in a region falls, in comparison to the number of anglophones, does your study follow up on what happens to those people? They did not all pass away. They have changed the demographic landscape, but where did they go?

Do you have statistics indicating exactly where they are? Are there French schools in the areas these francophones have moved to? What type of community support can these people expect? Do they live in an anglophone area? Do they find themselves alone and tell themselves that it is much easier to use English? As you said earlier, sometimes the English-language schools and programs are the best ones.

Is this information revealed in your study?

• (0955)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Your question is very important. It underscores the importance of research and the importance of having sufficiently solid data bases that contain this type of information.

In the census, people are asked where they lived five years ago, and where they lived one year ago. This allows us to know where they have settled. As for whether or not they received services and access to schools, administrative files allow us to obtain this type of information. Nonetheless, to answer that type of question, we need information, we need data bases, we need research. Otherwise, we find ourselves in a fog, things are vague.

We have a partial understanding of where these people settled, but we are not fully aware of the reasons. You talk about New Brunswick. There has been a significant movement of people from rural regions to more urban areas. We do not have a lot of information to understand the causes of this phenomenon.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Therefore, some data is lacking. You would need to carry out a more in-depth study.



**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** It is clear that a study is necessary to better understand these phenomena. For example, when young people in New Brunswick leave rural regions, infrastructure in those areas become eroded in the long term because the population is aging. There is also the issue of employment and economic infrastructure. It is a matter of trying to understand the links between all of these different elements.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** During our national tour, we spoke of day cares that are housed in French-language schools. By sending children to a day care in a French-language school, parents living in Vancouver or even Edmonton can give their children a chance to speak French starting at a very young age, and to then maintain these language skills later. At home, the children also speak French. With respect to English, this language is learned automatically. One does not live in Alberta or Vancouver without picking up English.

I wonder if in doing your research, you asked francophones why their children end up becoming anglophones. This lies at the heart of the problem. Under the action plan, what should be given priority in order to make sure that francophones in the rest of Canada and anglophones living in Quebec can keep their language?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Some studies have shown that the choice of an English- or French-language school or day care depends a lot on availability. Nonetheless, one significant challenge is that a rather high proportion of francophones living outside of Quebec are married to anglophone spouses.

Studies have shown that in many cases, francophones already become anglicized before entering into a partnership with an anglophone spouse. Sometimes, this makes the choice of school or day care difficult. In fact, once an anglophone spouse is in the picture, the decision becomes automatic. Exogamy and the increase of exogamous couples living outside of Quebec represent a significant challenge.

• (1000)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Our study shows that English-language schools have been shut down because new ones had to be built. On the other hand, these old schools, being unusable, were passed on to francophones. This is not very appealing. In fact, it had been decided that these schools could no longer be used by the English-speaking community because they were lacking in gyms and other facilities.

**The Chair:** Your time is up, Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** In your research, you also talked about the quality of education.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** One of the reasons some francophone parents gave for having chosen English-language schools rather than French-language schools was the quality of programs and available resources.

**The Chair:** Thank you. We'll now move on to the parliamentary secretary, Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Thank you for your presentation and for your slides.

It's obvious when you look at these results that this is a complicated matter. There are several criteria which can help us a lot in evaluating the two official languages throughout Canada.

There is, however, one basic question which needs to be asked. Over the course of our committee meetings, the question has been asked as to what the words "anglophone" and "francophone" actually mean. Occasionally, when a member asks a question of a representative of an organization from a minority official language community, the word "francophone" is troublesome.

Based on the results that have been presented to us today, could you give me a definition that Statistics Canada uses for the words "anglophone" and "francophone"?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Thank you. That's an excellent question. And right now, it is the subject of much debate among researchers. There is no official definition, per se, as to what an anglophone or a francophone actually is.

In the past, Statistics Canada used to base its definition of the word francophone on the criteria of the mother tongue, which is the definition in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in the Official Languages Act. This is the first language learned at home in one's childhood and still understood at the time of the census. However, since 1991—

**The Chair:** Just a moment, please. Out of respect for our witness and so that we can hear what he's saying, I would ask members who want to engage in side discussions to do so outside the room.

Please go ahead, Mr. Corbeil.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Since 1991, the notion of first spoken official language has been used. In fact, this concept was derived from questions which already were part of the census, namely knowledge of the official languages, the mother tongue, and the language spoken at home. The notion of first spoken official language is used by many people in the community because it takes into account those people for whom the mother tongue is neither French nor English.

For example, Canada has taken in over one million new immigrants over the past five years. Now, 80% of these people don't have French or English as their mother tongue. As a rule, the term "allophone" was used to designate those people who spoke another language, however, increasingly, people speak English from a young age. Even though English isn't their mother tongue, they consider themselves anglophones. In the same way, outside Quebec, immigrants from Algeria or Morocco whose mother tongue is Arabic consider themselves francophones because they use French on a daily basis. And that is why Statistics Canada has not imposed any definition of the word "francophone".

I am aware that there is a lot of debate over the criteria used to define francophones. Some people believe that a francophone is someone who speaks French at home, for others it's the mother tongue, and for some it's the first spoken official language.

●(1005)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I noticed in the summary of the results that the figures were quite similar from 2001 to 2006, although there was perhaps an increase of 1, 2 or 3% in one category and a comparable drop in another category. Are these results significant? Is it possible that the confusion over the definition of the terms "francophone" and "anglophone" has led to a variation in the results? Do individuals who fill out the census forms and the information-providing organizations have a clear understanding of these definitions?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** That's an excellent question. In the Canadian census, the words "francophone" and "anglophone" appear nowhere. We ask a question about the language which was first learned. It might be French, English or another language. In a significant number of cases, people have two mother tongues, namely English and French. So someone has to decide, but it is not necessarily us. Some people choose to use this double category; others place people under "French", and yet others under "English". Statistics Canada publishes information based on the census, but nowhere does the census form define what a francophone or an anglophone is.

I will answer the second part of your question. The situation has changed greatly in the past five years. In fact, this is mainly due to the strong increase in immigration. I mentioned that Canada received 1.1 million new immigrants in the last five years. The relative importance of English as mother tongue has decreased, as has the relative importance of French as mother tongue. It is the most significant decrease we have observed in the last few years.

As for whether the number of francophones has increased, if you use the mother tongue criteria, there is definitely a decrease, with regard to both English and French. However, Quebec anglophones identify with the concept of first spoken official language, since approximately 13% of the anglophone population indicates English as being its first official spoken language. However, if you use the criteria of mother tongue, it would be 8.1% of the population.

This is the choice made by people living outside Quebec. Some prefer using the mother tongue to define francophones. In Ontario, some people prefer to use only the criteria of French spoken in the home. That would bring down the number from 500,000 to 300,000 people. That is why Statistics Canada does not provide a definition.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Lemieux.

We will now begin our second round with Mr. Coderre from the official opposition.

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Good morning, Mr. Corbeil.

Listening to you, it's as if you were forecasting the weather: you can say what you want with statistics. I was the Minister of Immigration and I can tell you that Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians are part of the Francophonie, they are very francophone even though they speak Arabic; they nevertheless are francophones. I think it is rather arbitrary to depict the situation in a certain way and to play with the notion of allophone. I don't feel quite comfortable with that.

Please explain your methodology to me. Contrary to my friends Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Beauchemin, who believe that francophones living outside Quebec are "warm corpses", I think we must be vigilant. Whether you agree or not with the services provided or with the philosophy of each political party with regard to the promotion of a language and, consequently of community groups, remains a political issue.

I would like us to examine more closely the notion of allophone, because this data is essential if we are to get an accurate picture of the country. I think that we generally need to see the situation more clearly.

●(1010)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Thank you for your question.

I will pick up where I left off in my response to Mr. Lemieux. Take Quebec, for example. In the last five years, 75% of allophones, that is, people whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, speak French at home more often than not. Among the people who arrived in the last five years and who speak either English or French at home, but not their mother tongue, in 75% of cases, that language is French. Of course, we can call them francophones.

Historically, Statistics Canada distinguished between French, English and other languages, and used the words "francophone", "anglophone" and "allophone"... What is interesting and important is to recognize the transition and the evolution of language patterns. If we called all those who adopted or spoke French most often at home or in their daily lives, but who also speak another language, such as Arabic or Romanian, as their mother tongue—

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** In my view, that is a misinterpretation, with all due respect. In fact, we talk about Maghrebians, who speak Arabic, of course, but who are francophones and not allophones. When we participate in international conferences, we clearly understand that. For the most part, these people ask for simultaneous translation into French, for example. For me, they are francophones.

We worked on immigration not only with Quebec, but I also signed agreements, for example, with New Brunswick or most certainly Manitoba. That enabled me to realize that they were not allophones who had the ability to learn French more easily, and therefore to integrate into the francophone community, but that they were francophones who contributed to the vitality and protection of the French fact.

That is why I am saying that your approach is somewhat subjective. We know that the issue, the definition of the word "allophone" and all the rest is an ongoing debate. I am not sure that I share your premises nor that I agree with the way you classify people.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** The Canadian census does not provide information on francophones, anglophones, or allophones. We know, for example, that a person's mother tongue is French, English or another language. Of course, we use this mother tongue criterion. As you say, we could also as easily use the language spoken at home criterion, as we could use the language spoken at work. However, since there are sometimes significant differences between linguistic behaviour in the home, at work, and in terms of mother tongue, it may become quite hazardous to say that a person is francophone because he uses French on a daily basis. That person may well use Arabic more often in the home.

That is simply to give you an idea. People whose mother tongue is Arabic use Arabic at home, whereas others whose mother tongue is the same use French more often at home. We are not attempting to sidestep this complex aspect, but we must use a term. Perhaps we could change the term over time. Debates are currently underway on how to define someone whose mother tongue is French. Is someone francophone, or should we say that the person is someone who learned French first in childhood and who still understands it? Perhaps we need to find a term? I do nevertheless recognize that immigrants and those that we call allophones often tell us that they are not allophones, but francophones.

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** That's good.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** It is a debate. You are absolutely right to raise it. We are examining the issue in order to try and come up with solutions.

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Coderre.

We will now go back to the government side with Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you.

Thank you for coming today, Mr. Corbeil. A little earlier, you read a text. It is my understanding that you will table it with us, because you covered so many things in it! I made notes, but I could not keep up with you, in some cases. Will you table it with us?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Yes, of course.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you very much. I am going to continue on the question of allophones. I have a problem with the word "allophone". I am an immigrant, I was not born in Quebec. My parents were Belgian, but they came from both linguistic communities, in other words, they were an exogamous couple: one was Flemish, and other Walloon. I learned both languages in the cradle, it is as simple as that. When I went to school, I was also confronted with two languages. When I came to Canada, I joined the francophone community and, naturally, the language spoken outside the home was French. At home, it was both languages.

When we responded to the census... Even today, questions have been modified to make them somewhat easier, but they still complicate our lives. The question of language spoken at home does not provide useful information. I don't know if you understand what I mean. I am trying to get you to understand that we speak both languages at home. Even now, two languages are spoken in our home: English and French. My children are bilingual. So what is their spoken language or their mother tongue? They both are.

I have a problem with the definition of the word "allophone", and I would say the word has pejorative connotations. I feel somewhat excluded because in reality, it is as if I were being excluded from one of the two communities and that I am being asked to make a choice. I speak both languages; I speak four, in some cases. This is a problem when statistics are compiled, because they do not necessarily reflect why I am in Canada.

Immigrants come to Canada primarily for work, perhaps also to change their lives, to have a better life, and so on. When we move and when we arrive in an area, for example that is francophone, if we see... For example, in 1958, when we arrived, Montreal was the metropolis of Canada. Today, it is Toronto. We go where the work is, we move around. We choose a community when we arrive, and often, we don't know what to do because we are in a community, but work draws us to another community.

When you do your censuses, the word "allophone" causes a problem for me; it literally causes a problem for me. I cannot follow your statistics. That is why I would like to get some answers from you.

I would like to ask you a more specific question about the work environment, as that is nevertheless an important aspect. When I work, I work in French. Outside Quebec, the use of French seems to have increased. I am talking about francophones outside Quebec, because that is the specific topic. At least French is being used more now in francophone minority communities. Is that correct? That appears in your document, it seems to me, but I cannot understand it. I would like some further explanation.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** If I may, I will try to answer your first question as simply and clearly as possible. It is clear that the term "allophone"—which originated in Quebec, by the way—has Greek roots. "Allos" means "other," and "phone" means "language." Moreover, sometimes people use "other mother tongue," that is, neither English nor French, but a mother tongue other than English or French. So it can be very technical.

The second part of the question is that, in principle, if both English and French are used equally in the home, people will indicate "French and English" on the census form. If French is used more but English is also used regularly in the home, respondents will indicate "French or English" in response to the second part of the question, which asks whether other languages are spoken regularly in the home.

Although it can be confusing, Statistics Canada collects this information, and people can decide whether someone who uses both languages regularly at home should be defined as bilingual or as someone who is francophone or anglophone. It is quite involved, and people choose option A versus option B. People interested in the situation of francophones outside Quebec will classify those who speak a language other than French in the home as being francophone. If I am interested in the situation of anglophones, I will put them with the anglophones.

So people choose how to use this information, but when you fill out your questionnaire, the question should be clear, in principle. If you indicate both languages, it means that you use them equally. Other people do not decide for you whether you are an anglophone or a francophone.

• (1020)

**The Chair:** Exactly.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** That said, that is one aspect. I have to admit that the task of Statistics Canada or any agency that collects this kind of information is to create a sort of societal map and put people into categories. When this kind of categorization takes place, people clearly do not accept being put into one category rather than another one. It is really up to people to decide whether they belong in one category or another.

**The Chair:** Very good. Thank you.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Concerning your question on the language of work—

**The Chair:** Please be brief, Mr. Corbeil.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Concerning your question about language of work, it turns out that the proportion of francophones outside Quebec who indicate that they use French most often at work has remained stable over the past two censuses. On the other hand, in response to the question you mentioned regarding the use of another language, people often give English as their answer.

So when we ask whether people use another language regularly in the workplace, we find a slight increase in the number of francophones who say that they use French regularly. It also depends on the type of work francophones are doing. We know that francophones tend to work in health care, education and certain industrial sectors. So there may be an increase in the use of French there.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Corbeil.

We will now go to—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I would like to add my name to the list, since I

**The Chair:** Mr. Gravel, we will—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** —did not speak earlier.

**The Chair:** I am adding your name, Mr. Godin. I would ask the clerk to take note of that.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Thank you. You are very kind.

**Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ):** Thank you for coming here today, Mr. Corbeil.

I was surprised when you said in your presentation that anglophones in Quebec were not more pessimistic about their future than francophones outside Quebec. How can people be pessimistic when they are anglophones in Canada, whether they live in Quebec or elsewhere? How can they be pessimistic when they are surrounded by a sea of anglophones? I find that quite strange.

How is it that francophones outside Quebec are not pessimistic about their future, when they represent an ever-shrinking portion of the population?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** That is an interesting paradox, if I can use that term. People were asked about changes in the amount of English used in Quebec and French used outside Quebec. In Quebec, anglophone adults were asked about changes in the use of English in their communities over the past 10 years. Nearly 30% of anglophones in Quebec indicated that less English was used over the previous 10 years. When they were asked about what the trend would be over the next 10 years, approximately the same percentage of people indicated that the amount of English used would continue to decrease. An interesting paradox is that English use has actually increased in Quebec over the past five years.

Outside Quebec, the situation is different. What is the reason for this? What I am going to say is not based on statistics but on perceptions. When people have a lot of rights, resources, institutions, etc. and a slight reduction in these occurs, people perceive a decrease. But when there are not many institutions and there is a slight increase, people are very positive because they see an improvement.

Many people have said that anglophone communities in Quebec have a certain level of resources, institutions, etc. Regardless of how the situation is changing, you know that allophones basically have no choice but to send their children to French school under Bill 101. How is that obligation perceived by anglophones in Quebec? Obviously, it is seen as a very difficult situation. On the other hand, outside Quebec, if there is an increase, even a small one, in the number of children attending French schools—even if it is far below the level among anglophones in Quebec—it is seen as something positive and people feel some optimism.

• (1025)

**Mr. Raymond Gravel:** Do anglophones in Quebec realize that, even though francophones are the majority in Quebec, we need to defend the French language because we are threatened as a result of being entirely surrounded by anglophones? I think that they should understand this.

I want to turn now to the table on page 4, which deals with francophones outside Quebec. Older people have continued to use French but they have not necessarily passed it on to their children, and the younger people do not necessarily speak French. They have been assimilated and anglicized. To [inaudible] Bernard Derome's phrase "if the trend continues," when will the French fact disappear from Canada? Are there specific dates for that? If the use of French continues to decline, it will disappear completely at some point.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** You can understand that I am not able to make that kind of prognosis. All that I can say is that there are clearly people right now who are counting on certain factors, including immigration, to try to reverse the trend. As has already been mentioned, if more children attend minority French schools, it can lead to greater use of French by minority communities.

There is debate over this. Transmission of the language to a younger generation is a major challenge. If that does not happen, it may be difficult to expect immigrants to act differently from the minority communities. There are some major challenges. I could not really say how the situation of French outside Quebec will evolve over the next 30 or 40 years. There seems to be some vitality there, according to the studies that have been done. The dynamism in these communities is quite impressive and it seems to indicate a gap between people's perceptions and their behaviour.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Gravel and Mr. Corbeil.

We will now go back to Mr. Godin.

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

There's a point that I want to raise. I would not want to be in Mr. Nadeau's shoes tonight when he goes home. I am sure that his wife thought that he had chosen her instead of Quebec. When he moved to Quebec, it was because he loved his wife and she was from Quebec. Tonight she will find out that he was actually choosing Quebec.

You are going to get an earful tonight!

**Some honourable members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I will let you know.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You mentioned immigration as a way to increase the number of francophones in Quebec, for example. But the way that the question is asked does not allow immigrants to identify as francophones. For example, you were talking earlier about Morocco, etc., where francophone immigrants might come from.

According to the statistics, if I have this right, is French not spoken more than it used to be in Montreal? Because the question asks whether people are francophones, it might appear that the proportion of francophones has declined, since many have moved to the South Shore. But is not true that more people are speaking French now in Montreal? For example, young anglophones are speaking French much more now than they did 20 or 30 years ago. Is that what the statistics and the data show?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** The issue of the Island of Montreal is a major one for many people. We've seen that recently, in the media among other places. It's quite clear that, for example, the rate of bilingualism among Quebec anglophones has been constantly increasing since at least 1971. We know that in 2001, 66% of anglophones identified themselves as bilingual. Five years later, that percentage was 69%.

It's quite clear that when you ask questions about the use of language at work, Quebec anglophones use French in their daily work lives. In fact, almost 60% of Quebec anglophones state that they use French either most often or at least regularly in the course of their work.

Of course if you only rely on the mother tongue, it's true that it's the first time that the proportion of people whose mother tongue is French has gone under 50% on the Island of Montreal. It's the first time, but if you use criteria other than mother tongue, since you also have to take into account immigrants whose mother tongue may not

be French but who use it in their daily lives or who speak it at home, the picture that emerges is quite different.

I think that knowledge of French is on the increase among those we call "allophones". Perhaps I should say instead those who have a third language as mother tongue. There's also an increase in the use of French among anglophones in Quebec. Therefore, this is a real phenomenon.

• (1030)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Could you elaborate on the fact that the proportion of anglophones was 59% but now it's 57% and that francophones went from 22% to 22.1%. It's a very small increase but it's an increase nevertheless.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** In fact, there was an increase in the number of—I'm almost afraid to use the terms "anglophone", "francophone", "allophone"—people whose mother tongue is French in Quebec. That's clear. However, given that there was a high increase in immigration over the past five years, it's quite clear that the proportion that these people represent has declined. So there's been an increase in number but a reduction in the proportion: it's the same for English outside Quebec. When 80% of new immigrants have neither French nor English as their mother tongue, it is quite clear therefore there is going to be a decrease in the proportion of anglophones in Quebec.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That doesn't mean that they don't speak English nor does it mean that they don't speak French.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Absolutely. You're perfectly right. We know that outside Quebec, the longer people stay here, immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English or French will mainly use English, whereas in Quebec, we've observed the fact that French tends to be adopted more and more by allophones.

**The Chair:** I just want to reassure our witness and tell him that he enjoys parliamentary immunity. Still, you did clearly express that Statistics Canada does not refer to "francophone" or "anglophone" in its survey, but this is the interpretation of the data by those who use it.

We'll now go on to the third round, the last one before we adjourn.

We'll continue immediately with Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm listening to all this with great interest. I'd like to ask you a personal question. I arrived in Canada at the age of eight. I only spoke Spanish until I was eight years old. I learned French at eight years old. I learned English a short time afterwards.

So in what category would I be?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** That's a good question.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** [Editor's note: inaudible] my first language.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** If I took your case, if I managed to use census data and if I had Mr. Rodriguez's information, I could see that your mother tongue is Spanish. For the question on the language that you use most often at home, you might indicate both English and French or just French.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** French.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Perhaps you'd tell me that at work, you mainly use French. I don't know. I would therefore say that you belong to the group whose mother tongue is the third language or that you're an allophone. If we use another criterion, we might also say that you're francophone.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm referring to the statement made by colleague Mr. Coderre. I consider myself francophone.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Yes. I'll give you a very specific example. In December 2008, Statistics Canada will be disseminating a CD-ROM which will contain the profile of all census data in the 6,000 municipalities of Canada. There are two profiles: the mother-tongue profile and the first-official-language-spoken profile, French.

Perhaps you wouldn't want to limit yourself and fall into the allophone category...

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** No, I'm not insecure. It's not really with regard to me personally, but I think that it does distort the debate somewhat when we talk about the situation of French in Canada. I learned French very young. I won literature and composition competitions twice. At home, we only speak French, but I'm not counted among the statistics on francophones. So I make it seem like French is regressing. Do you understand what I mean? I'm not part of those statistics whereas in my opinion, that's not the case at all.

• (1035)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Having said that, you're not making French regress. From the census, I can find out that among those who have Spanish as a mother tongue, how many speak French most often at home.

But I agree with you. In the survey on the vitality of minorities, a question was asked that does not appear in the census and which is quite simple. We asked what the main language was, the one in which the person felt most at ease. So we have a very good estimate of those for whom French is the main language and those for whom English is the main language. One could use one's own definition of what constitutes a francophone or an anglophone. However, I agree that there's a difference between...

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I consider myself francophone but I'm not counted among francophones.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** I fully agree with your viewpoint. There's a gap between the analyses we conduct using census data and the terminology we use to categorize people. I agree with you.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Let's talk a bit about Montreal. What is the exact situation of French in Montreal? There are all kinds of interpretations. Depending on what cause you advocate, you interpret the figures differently. Is it true that the absolute number of francophones has increased but that their proportion has decreased?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** It depends whether you look at the Island of Montreal or Greater Montreal.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm talking about the island. You may tell me that many francophones left the island to settle in the suburbs. Therefore there are more allophones who settle on the island and francophones who leave it.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** What we know is that historically, people whose mother tongue is English and people whose mother

tongue is other than French or English settle mainly in Montreal. The longer they stay, the more they tend to migrate to the suburbs.

Francophones do the same thing. Of course, given the demographic weight of francophones and people whose mother tongue is French on the Island of Montreal, it's quite clear that when all these immigrants arrive and—

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** This is where people are trying to scare us. I'm not targeting anyone, but they tell us that this is terrible. We must do everything to protect French, but at the same time, we don't take into account—

**The Chair:** We have to conclude on this, Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** —people like me, who precisely consider themselves francophones.

I will wrap up quickly. Old stock francophones, born here, leave the island. Others, like me, arrive there very young, learn French, but that doesn't compensate for the francophones who leave, because I'm not considered a francophone. There's a bit of a distortion in this debate. Do you understand?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** I could answer very quickly.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Perhaps French is not doing as badly as they say. I don't know. I want to find out.

**The Chair:** Please be brief.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Let me answer you very quickly. As I mentioned earlier, it's quite clear that if we simply place emphasis on mother tongue, there is of course a reduction. That's normal since there is a high rise in non-francophone and non-anglophone immigration. However, in Montreal, if you examine the use of French at work, you then have a completely different picture because you're talking about a situation of language in the public sphere, which as I said is governed by different mechanisms. Over 270,000 francophones in the suburbs come to the Island of Montreal to work every morning. That changes the picture of the situation on the Island of Montreal. It's very different from Montreal at night. It's also very different if you take into account only the language spoken at home or the mother tongue.

I agree that there is a significant difference between language characteristics and language behaviour.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez and thank you to our witness.

We will now go on to the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Nadeau, you have something to add?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** It's too bad that Denis Coderre has left because I would have referred him to two works from the Fédération des communautés francophone et acadienne, therefore from the francophone minority. In the first instance, it's a series of documents entitled *The Heirs of Lord Durham*. Even in 1971, statistics gave us an idea of what the current situation would be. The same organization published another study entitled *Pour ne plus être... sans pays*. Before throwing barbs around like he did earlier, Denis could have taken into account the context. I think that Denis should avoid being in denial if you'll pardon the pun. The reality is what it is.

Incidentally, this whole debate on definitions is very interesting. These facts are an essential component of the studies, of the data collection. There are very important human factors here that are tangible and even emotional. This does indeed affect us; it's our identity. With the risk of repeating myself, I'd like to get back to what's demonstrated at the bottom of table 3, namely that the tangent that's been observed is extremely unfavourable for Canada's image when it comes to respecting the French fact. I don't have to draw you a picture for you to understand. Faced with that reality, solutions must be found.

Having said that, in the framework of the study on the vitality of official languages communities, I wondered at what point assimilation happened. For example, in a couple, it's possible that French could be the mother tongue and the language spoken by both people, but it's also possible that one of the two partners does not speak French — and one can suppose that that person speaks English since that's generally the case — and that the other is francophone.

At a certain age, we maintain our language because we have reference points and so on. However, the question arises when our first child reaches school age. Then we have to decide if we register our son or daughter in an immersion program, in French school or in English school. One can talk about a school in another language, according to the language the partner speaks. If there's no French school, that's too bad. It's unfortunate that this situation continues to exist today, in 2008. Parents should not have to cover the entire Canadian territory to enrol their children in a French school.

Based on studies or other knowledge, I'd like to know whether you could tell me at what point in this dynamic between parents and children assimilation comes into play and causes the loss of the first language, either by both parents or one of them.

• (1040)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Thank you. In the survey of the vitality of official languages communities, we observed that outside Quebec, 88% of parents whose mother tongue was French chose to send their children to French schools. We noted that in cases where one of the parents' mother tongue was French the other parent's was English, that proportion dropped to 34%. We're talking here about exogamous couples. It's often been said that the phenomenon of exogamy was the trigger that meant that French stopped being transmitted to the children and that English became dominant.

So in the course of this survey, we asked people at what age they'd started to use most often in the home a language other than their mother tongue, and we discovered that 75% of people who live with an anglophone partner today had started using English most often in their daily lives even before they met their partner. In almost 50% of cases, it was before age 15. That shows that when anglicization takes place during youth, among friends, networks and so forth, this eventually influences the choice of partner. The environment in which one lives is also a factor, of course.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Corbeil.

We will now move to the government side.

Mr. Michael Chong.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

I was looking at your slides and statistics, and one of the areas you don't really address is the issue around the number of bilingual Canadians, those who can speak both official languages.

Can you tell us, broadly speaking, what the present statistics are on the number of bilingual Canadians and whether those numbers have been increasing, decreasing, or static over the last 30 to 35 years?

• (1045)

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Thank you for your question.

We've observed that the increase in the proportion of people who report themselves as being bilingual has increased, at least up until 2001. As for anglophones in Quebec, I mentioned the proportion of those who report being able to speak two languages went from 66% in 2001 to 69% in 2006. I mentioned that the proportion of anglophones in Quebec who report being bilingual has been on the rise at least since 1971, and the increase is significant and important.

Outside Quebec it's fairly stable, although I'm talking about anglophones or non-francophones, or those who don't have French as their mother tongue. The proportion of those who report being bilingual went from 7.1% in 2001 to 7.4% in 2006. It's fairly stable at around 7% for anglophones in general and around 5% for those who don't have French or English as their mother tongue.

The problem is that we're not able to explain what happened to francophones. We've observed a decrease in the proportion of francophones reporting themselves as being bilingual, a slight decrease during the last five years.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Is that a slight decrease in the rest of Canada?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Throughout Canada, and even francophones in Quebec. There is a slight decrease. The only explanation we have is that an e-mail circulated one month prior to the census that urged or asked francophones not to report themselves as bilingual because they were afraid they would not receive services in their language. Obviously we had a lot of publicity and media interviews to counteract and to give appropriate information to say that was inaccurate. We suspect it might have had some influence.

The fact that francophones in general reported being less bilingual during the last five years influenced the global rate of bilingualism. In 2001 it was 17.7% and in 2006 it's 17.4%. This decrease is mainly due to francophones reporting themselves as being less bilingual.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** The statistics you stated of 66% in 2001 and 69% in 2006 refer to all people living in Quebec or just anglophones living in Quebec?

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** As I've said, there is an increase in the level of bilingualism for non-francophones in general. It means not only those who have English as a mother tongue but also those who have another language, a third language, or allophones. It's an increase in the proportion of bilingualism for non-francophones.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** In Quebec.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** In Quebec.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

Thank you, Mr. Chong.

That sums up the three rounds. At this moment Mr. Gravel has shown an interest in asking a last question.

Monsieur Petit.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** It's not a question, it's a request.

Mr. Chairman, the witness referred to an email that had been sent one month before the census, according to which francophones outside Quebec were to say they weren't bilingual in order to maintain services. Could we see that email? This is an extremely important item. It's almost propaganda and I'd like to see what we're talking about. It's part of our witness's testimony. Could you ask him to table it so that I can read it, please?

• (1050)

**The Chair:** You're referring to an email that was...

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** It's an email that the witness mentioned.

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Corbeil.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** There is no problem, however the email is full of spelling mistakes. That said, the document released by Statistics Canada on the 4<sup>th</sup> of last December contains a box that refers to this email — without actually including it — and this could have had an influence. Obviously we cannot be sure that the email was at issue but apparently it could have had an influence. This email travelled throughout Canada and even in Europe. I have a copy of it.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Could we ask the witness for it?

**The Chair:** If it can be given to the clerk, then we will distribute it to committee members.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** It will then be sent to committee members.

**The Chair:** Would that be possible, Mr. Corbeil?

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Fine. Thank you very much.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Gravel, then to Mr. Lebel who has not had an opportunity to ask a question yet, and then it will be Mr. St. Denis' turn.

**Mr. Raymond Gravel:** I have a brief question that I did not have time to ask.

Mr. Corbeil, you said that the government was considering immigration as a way of solving the problem of decreasing numbers of francophones outside Quebec.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** Many people consider immigration.

**Mr. Raymond Gravel:** If I were an immigrant coming from Europe or elsewhere and I was going to settle in Alberta, it would be

quite surprising if I were to seek out francophones. I would be more inclined to seek out anglophones. It seems to me that that just makes sense.

**The Chair:** Please be brief, Mr. Corbeil.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** If you had had the opportunity to participate in some discussions within certain groups in Alberta or in Manitoba, where immigrants have become integrated in the francophone community, you would have seen a rather exceptional level of vitality. There are immigrants that settle in those areas.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. Lebel.

**Mr. Denis Lebel (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC):** I just have one comment to make.

Reference was made to the situation in Quebec. Mr. Rodriguez talked about the specific nature of Montreal. Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean is an area that has lost approximately 10% of its population in the past 15 or 20 years: it went from 285,000 people to 260,000. The migration of francophones in Quebec to large centres such as Montreal and Quebec City, adds to that demographic loss.

It is important to consider the context of data in order to be able to draw comparisons. Take all the francophones outside Quebec for example. Is Quebec continuing to « export » its children elsewhere? One has to look at the demographic curbs. It is essential to put information in perspective in order to find solutions as opposed to guilty parties.

I am making that comment simply to point out that resource-rich areas of Quebec have all lost people to Montreal. Families used to have ten children of which five would remain in these regions. Today they have two children and both leave. Neither of them remains. The phenomenon has to be looked at within the broader picture.

I am new to this committee. I can see that we will be talking about the francophonie and francophone reality and I am very pleased about that, however all the information has to be considered and compared in order to have as complete a picture as possible.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil:** In Quebec, this is a significant concern amongst the anglophones in these communities. The communities are emptying out and that applies not only to anglophones but also to all rural communities.

**The Chair:** Fine.

The Honourable Michael Chong has a brief question to ask.

[English]

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just as a point of information, in your second slide you mentioned that the use of languages other than English or French most often at home is less frequent than their portion of the population for allophones. I can tell you the reason for that, in part.



I am a first-generation Canadian. I had a Chinese father and a European mother. And so my father's first language is obviously Chinese and my mother's first language was Dutch. If anything were ever to get done at home, they had to communicate to each other in one of the two official languages. I remember as a kid my father would get mad and say something to my mother in Chinese and she would respond in Dutch, and they'd have no idea what they were saying to each other.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chong.

I would like to thank our witness. This time, we truly took full advantage of the two hours we had at our disposal. Perhaps I can conclude in saying that language is evidently an issue of identity that affects us all personally.

Thank you, Mr. Corbeil.

The meeting is adjourned.

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