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Mr. Steven Blaney

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•(0905)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)): Good morning, and welcome to the 27th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is our second meeting dealing with statistics and the evolution as well as the state of bilingualism in the country; we will be hearing three witnesses who are experts in this field.

We will begin with the witnesses, and I would like to welcome them to our meeting this morning. I would ask each witness to introduce him or herself. As is our usual custom, each witness will have between seven to ten minutes to make a presentation, followed by a first round during which each member will have seven minutes to ask questions. During each subsequent round, members will have five minutes each. And we will make adjustment as we go along.

We will start with Mr. Wilfrid Denis, from St. Thomas College. He will be followed by Mr. Thériault, then Mr. Jedwab, if everyone is in agreement. Gentlemen, you have the floor.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis (Professor, St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan): Would you like me to take my full ten minutes now?

The Chair: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I have prepared a text which will be distributed to you later, once it has been translated. Unfortunately, it is 10 pages long, so I will have to move through some parts of it rather quickly.

The title of my presentation is “Official Languages in Canada: Anticipating the 2026 Census”. I will be dealing with three issues: the 2006 census, institutional structures, and an analysis of the present in order to prepare for the future. In view of the quality of the presentation made by Mr. Corbeil two weeks ago, as well as your committee's excellent May 2007 report, “Communities Speak Out: Hear Our Voice” I will not spend too much time dealing with the 2006 census itself, because in my opinion, the trends are fundamental, almost invariable, and they have not changed a great deal in the past 30 to 50 years.

There have been slight changes, but, generally speaking, where there has been an improvement in terms of language, for example in Alberta and in British Columbia, immigration also comes into play. There are still issues relating to assimilation in Alberta and British Columbia, but they are disguised as factors relating to immigration.

There is something else that must be taken into account when analyzing language trends: these trends must be compared to other national demographic data such as the aging population, the drop in the birth rate, urbanization, the rural exodus and an increase in the number of exogamous marriages. These factors apply to all of Canada, but for low density language communities, meaning the communities whose linguistic abilities are weaker, these factors will play an important role.

In the last 30 years we had seen a positive movement developing, namely an increase in bilingualism, particularly among dominant groups. But we must not forget that for many linguists, bilingualism is considered to be a process that weakens the minority language to such an extent that the less dominant language community eventually fades out.

It is possible to have a stable bilingual situation, but as you move away from Quebec, bilingualism is more likely to become watered down rather than increased. Therefore, adding people who speak both languages to the dominant group does not necessarily mean that bilingualism will grow in Canada.

One other factor relating to the census is that each census provides individual data on the entire population and its their components, but provides no information on the roles and responsibilities of various levels of government, particularly with respect to their constitutional obligations. This means that the census provides no information on the institutional foundation of linguistic communities.

We must not confuse government-made bilingualism and its agencies and organizations with individual bilingualism or bilingualism of communities. These are three separate dimensions of bilingualism that must each be considered separately.

We discussed institutional structures, which I call looking into the past. In the light of the census trends that were clearly identified by Mr. Corbeil last week — trends towards assimilation, obviously — we might wonder why the 2006 census outcome was not more promising.

I would put the question in a different way, and ask what institutional changes over the past 20 or 30 years might have led us to expect a better result in 2006.

●(0910)

I could identify a few of these changes, but since I only have 10 minutes, I will skip the ones that I believe are secondary, for example the adoption of the Official Languages Act in 1988. In terms of Canada's institutions, I would say that for francophone communities, the most important gain has been the right to manage their own school boards.

We must not forget, however, that it took 25 years and 32 court cases, four of them before the Supreme Court, in order to establish the case law and set in place the structures, the organization, and the institutional life that were necessary to clarify a few ambiguous sentences in the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, this case law applies to only one rather narrow sector, namely, education.

The development in the health care sector represents a second change that we have seen in the past 20 years, and is possibly due to the challenges surrounding the Montfort Hospital case. The creation of Société Santé in French and 17 regional networks have no doubt been an important factor, even though research and development in these networks is somewhat limited. We can't really say that we now have health institutions. These two development streams, namely health and education, would not have been possible without the Court Challenges Program. Your committee has a report on this issue, so I will leave it at that.

Moreover, the ministerial conference on francophone affairs, which brings together the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the francophonie has, in past years, been an interesting event. However, provincial governments often boast about all of their initiatives to support language communities even though, in many cases, this is only lip service. Rights that have not yet been granted are not really rights at all.

I would have liked to have more time to discuss one final change: the weakening of the Catholic Church as an institutional pillar for francophone communities and the transfer of a number of health and social services responsibilities from the Church to the welfare state, particularly since the Second World War. The government is currently returning some of these responsibilities to the communities, but the Church can no longer provide the institutional capabilities that it had in the 1940s and 50s, and even before then.

I will move on to the third section that deals with analyzing the present in order to prepare for the future. We can agree on a certain number of observations, for example, that assimilation represents a major challenge. I believe that we must take into account the asymmetry between the provinces and even between some regions within the same province. In fact, the advisory committee on health stated that a differential strategy was required to deal with this asymmetry. It is impossible to apply a one-size-fits-all approach that will meet the needs of all of the communities. Each one is very different in terms of its development. As to the third trend, demographics, it confirms the importance of immigration for the entire country as well as for language communities. There is no way around it.

Now that we have all of these facts, what needs are a priority? If I may engage in making a projection, I would say that we need to

develop an institutional base, and adopt a national action plan as soon as possible, as well as find some way to involve the provincial and territorial governments, particularly in areas that involve their jurisdiction and where they can't get a handle on institutional constraints. The action plan must emphasize a strengthening of the institutions. In other words, particularly in areas involving early childhood, health, the integration of immigrants, and maybe even the fight against poverty, these measures must allow institutions to develop so that we can build on what has already been accomplished in the area of school board management. We must not forget that children can often become assimilated before they even start attending school. The years before formal education begins must be connected to the school in some way in order to allow these families and their children to integrate the community.

●(0915)

Other institutional developments should be considered, particularly in under-developed regions or sectors. In some regions we will have to work from the ground up, even in education. One basic aspect—

The Chair: You have about one minute left, Mr. Denis.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: One of the fundamental aspects of this institutional development is what I call the institutional anchoring. School board management is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished when the management rights are granted to francophone communities. Therefore, it is a matter of developing sectors related to early childhood, health, welcoming immigrants and fighting poverty through a network of dedicated institutions, similar to what has been done for education.

In looking to the future, every political leader in Canada should wonder how the 2026 census data might differ from the data that was collected in 2006. We must ask ourselves what we can do differently. If we continue to do the same things, then we will have the same outcome in 2026, except that the trends will be even stronger. If the Canadian government wants to be a national or even international leader in the area of language communities, then it must find some way to encourage the provinces, the municipalities, major institutions such as universities, the media and the private sector to make French a national language.

French must be an official language, but that is not enough. Having a bilingual government and agencies is necessary but that is not enough either. Making bilingualism available to those who speak the dominant language is useful but it is not enough. The French language must be standard practice throughout the country, in other words, it must be "standardized", it must meet certain standards. That is what will make the French language not only an official language but also a national language. The federal government has the choice: it can show national leadership or it can put on the brakes and take civil society back 10 years into the past.

I will spare you my conclusion, which is even more amazing.

The Chair: In any case, committee members will be receiving a copy, Mr. Denis. Because of time constraints, we have to be fair to all of our witnesses. We will now move on to Mr. Joseph-Yvon Thériault.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault (Professor, University of Ottawa): Thank you for inviting me. I am happy to be here. I must tell you, however, that my specialty is not demographics. I am interested in matters relating to identity, language and policy.

I will be brief. I would like to wait for your questions in order to provide more details.

Léon Dion, who was a political scientist at Laval University and who, coincidentally or accidentally, was the father of someone whom you know quite well...

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): I don't think it was an accident.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: Mr. Léon Dion often said that through Canada's bilingualism policy, there had been a diversion away from the recommendations that were made by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, also known as the B & B Commission, during the 1960s.

This commission took great care in making a number of recommendations to enhance the use and development of the French language in Canada, so that it would become more dynamic. In the opinion of the commission, French is the language of one of the two national communities, also known then, and sometimes even now, as one of the two founding peoples, but it had a minority status. For the elder Dion, there was only one minority language in Canada, that is to say, the French language, and it was occurring even in Quebec. French was the minority language in all of Canada.

Instead of adopting a policy to affirm the status of French throughout Canada, the country's linguistic framework, after the B & B Commission, opted for a series of laws recognizing language equality, official bilingualism and, de facto, the recognition that there were two linguistic minorities: francophones in Canada outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec.

This led to what one might call an initial perverse effect, namely, confrontation between two language regimes in Canada: official language bilingualism from coast to coast and, in Quebec, the affirmation of the French language, the will to make French the commonly spoken language in the province.

For the elder Dion, Quebec's policy to promote French as a minority language in Canada and North America was clearly the intention of the B & B Commission. Therefore, the policy to limit it or to constrain it through bilingualism went against what the B & B Commission had brought forward.

How is all of this related to the census? I would start by saying, as Wilfrid Denis stated, that we learn very little from a census in one go. Demographic trends are slow-moving. Modulations take generations before becoming new trends. The 2006 census tells us very little that is new about the evolution of language in Canada, other than to confirm the overwhelming and sometimes century-old trends.

For example, one central dimension in the evolution of language in Canada relates to the fact that languages are territorial, and have been for quite some time. Quebec is becoming more and more French. That has been the case since the 1930s; the trend did slow slightly in the 1960s, with less francization in Quebec because of the

arrival of immigrants after the war. But things stabilized with the language laws in the 1970s. I will come back to that.

Quebec is becoming more and more French and, in the past 50 years, Canada has become more and more English. This trend has been confirmed through the 2006 census data as well as in the post-census review published last December by Statistics Canada. Canada continues to become more English.

This territorialization occurs on a smaller scale over a longer period of time. The northern and eastern part of New Brunswick are becoming more francophone. Moreover, it is the only place outside Quebec where territorialization is advantageous to the French language. Here is a brief statistic. Francophones in New Brunswick represented 17% of the population in 1867 and in 1960 they represented 35%. Within one century, they went from 17% to 35%. That demonstrates the effect of the territorialization of languages in northern and eastern New Brunswick.

How did these two language frameworks, the one in Quebec and the one in Canada, change the way in which these languages have developed?

• (0920)

It would appear that in Quebec, the policy to assert language has stabilized its evolution, particularly as it relates to the teaching of French to immigrant children. This has allowed the territorialization of the French language to continue after it was stopped because of immigration to the anglophone community.

Outside Quebec, the last 40 years of bilingualism have not changed the evolution of the language. It is only in New Brunswick that French has become stronger. Elsewhere, and this has to be said, the situation is much more serious. Numbers are dropping throughout the rest of the country. The francophonie is surviving thanks to the constant stream of immigrants from Quebec and Acadia. Fort McMurray is one example. Alberta is the province that has seen an increase in the number of francophones over the past 10 years, because of the economic downturn in the Atlantic provinces and in rural Quebec.

There is a constant stream of new arrivals to this region, but this new population—and this is also a sign of failure—is having a hard time reproducing beyond the first generation. Something is not working. West of the Ottawa River, francophones are assimilating at the same rate, if not faster than allophone immigrants or the Franco-Americans south of the border. This is happening even though they live in a country where French is an official language, the language of one of the two linguistic communities.

Of course, the major trends to which I referred are occurring, but the language policy examples from Quebec prove that we can in some way affect these trends with a language planning policy.

I have two suggestions for Canada's language policies, something to which we should aspire in order to better reflect the linguistic reality of our country, with a view to influencing the trend to develop the French language, the language with a sociological minority status.

• (0925)

The Chair: You have two minutes, Mr. Thériault.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: First, I would suggest that we move from Canada's legal linguistic framework to a language planning policy. Thirty years of bilingualism in Canada have not resulted in any language planning policy on our territory.

I think we have spent too much time attempting to give legal recognition to both languages, to establish their equality, rather than to plan their use. As an example, I would cite the recent Supreme Court decision on bilingual services that must be provided by the RCMP to the entire province of New Brunswick. In my opinion, that does not provide much of an advantage to New Brunswick's francophone community. It seems to me that it would be better to have a policy to provide French-language legal institutions and to allow French to be used at work rather than to simply recognize that a linguistic duality applies throughout the province.

There is no shortage of examples. I am suggesting a very simple outlook: there should be less emphasis on a Canada-wide recognition of bilingualism and more attention paid to promoting French-language spaces and institutions. In other words, we should emphasize planning over legislation.

This leads me to my second and final point, asymmetry. A legal framework is universal. A policy can be targeted. The B & B Commission had called for bilingual districts. I would prefer to say that it was advocating districts in Canada where the French language could be asserted. The choice was made to have national bilingualism, but that did not prevent the decline of the French language outside Quebec.

With asymmetry we could straighten the existing language comfort zones rather than dilute all of the efforts that are made throughout the country. This would, in my opinion, be better suited to the sociological reality of language territorialization. It would allow for the strengthening of regions where, culturally, there is an easier reproduction of the French language even if economically these regions are in a downturn.

For example, one of the best things that we could do to develop the francophonie outside Quebec would be to declare northern and eastern New Brunswick as priority development zones, a type of Marshall plan for the regions where the francophonie has its roots, regions that are shrinking, not because of assimilation but because of economic underdevelopment.

I will end by saying that we need more language development policies and more asymmetry in the way in which these policies are devised. I am not saying that we should give up on Canada-wide bilingualism. That is an essential component of any binational concept. However, a legal framework is not a language policy. In Canada, we thought that the equality of both languages was a language policy, and no thought was given to developing any type of language planning policy.

• (0930)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Thériault from the University of Ottawa.

We will now hear from the Executive Director of the Association for Canadian Studies, Mr. Jack Jedwab.

Mr. Jack Jedwab, you have the floor.

Mr. Jack Jedwab (Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies): Thank you Mr. Blaney. I am very happy to be here with you this morning.

I will probably be speaking in English and French. That is how I operate at home, because my wife is a francophone. This is what my children do regularly. I apologize. Let me also apologize, first and foremost, to the interpreters, since, as we know, for them the going can sometimes get tough.

The Chair: They are used to it.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I assume that you have already received quite a bit of information, as Joseph-Yvon Thériault has already said. I will emphasize some data, some trends that various policies have had a hard time accommodating.

I will deal with identity because there is a strong relationship between demography or demographic trends as we know them and the categories that we define to measure the progress of linguistic communities and identity. What is identity? It is the way in which people define themselves in terms of their language. It is belonging or not belonging to a community.

What does it mean to be a francophone in Montreal, in Moncton, in Edmonton or in Regina, for example, where there already exists an asymmetry in the reality that the francophone communities experience in different areas? I am also of the opinion that, when it comes to their policies, the federal government practices a type of *de facto*, if not *de jure* asymmetry in their distribution of resources to these communities.

I mentioned trends. One thing that I found striking in the census was the issue of exogamy. There are three elements or three factors that have greatly influenced francophone communities outside Quebec. There is more than one reality when it comes to francophones living outside of Quebec.

One of these trends is exogamy. Exogamy applies to people who, like myself, are married to francophones. In my household, since my wife is a francophone and since women play a greater role in the choice of language that their children will speak, my children's mother tongue is French. When the situation is reversed, when the woman is an anglophone and the man is a francophone, then English is the language that is usually passed on to the children. Naturally, it depends on the part of the country, which does have an impact on language. According to the census, this is often what happens.

[*English*]

Across the country, we see an important link between the levels of outmarriage of francophones to anglophones and the rates of language transfers.

For example, in Newfoundland, about 80% of francophones are married to anglophones. In Nova Scotia, 55% of francophones are married to anglophones. In New Brunswick, it's the opposite—only about 15% are married to anglophones.

Then we go on to places like Winnipeg, where it's about 50-50. In Saskatchewan, some 70% of francophones are married to anglophones; Alberta, 66%; Calgary, about 40%, etc.

So when you look at the results of the census, you can see that there is a relationship between exogamy and francophone adoption of English, wholly or partially.

That's a hard reality for any government to address. It's hard to encourage people to marry within their community, even though there are communities that do such things. But we need to take this into consideration as we think about what can be done from a policy standpoint in a world where there is increasing diversity and duality of identity.

With respect to vitality, immigration is also an important factor in some francophone communities outside Quebec. We have to be realistic about the notion of vitality. If we assume that vitality means substantial growth in numbers, then we risk setting up unrealistic targets in our language policies, since these dual and multiple identities are becoming more common in many parts of the country.

You can see from the StatsCan data that in certain parts of the country—in British Columbia and Toronto, for example—immigration plays an important role in the composition and size of the francophone community. This assumes an inclusive definition of that community, which the StatsCan data support.

In places like British Columbia and Alberta, francophone populations have grown in real numbers, and this growth is largely a function of Quebecers

● (0935)

[*Translation*]

moving to these areas. For example, in British Columbia approximately 50% of the population was born in Quebec. These are Quebecers from British Columbia, if you will. They play an important role.

Over the five years between 2001 and 2006, these gains were less significant because Quebec's economy was more stable and its political situation was more reliable. Fewer francophones left Quebec for these other areas. Paradoxically, you might say that the more instability there is in Quebec, the more francophones will leave for other areas, where the population ends up increasing as a function of that instability. It is somewhat paradoxical.

There is, then, this linguistic duality. A study conducted after the census noted that many francophones outside Quebec called themselves bilingual. In Manitoba, in British Columbia, they called themselves bilingual. It is difficult to measure identity in the census, where people were asked to tick off one box or another. Identity is a word used in the singular, despite the fact that it is possible to declare one's mother tongue to be both French and English. That is surprising because two languages are not taught to very young children at the same time. It is really over the years that their mother tongue is determined.

It is this mix that is important. Causes of this demographic change are also evident. Between 2001 and 2006, there is a decrease in young francophones and an aging of the babyboomers in several areas outside Quebec.

I am now going to talk about bilingualism, because I assume I have about 30 seconds left.

● (0940)

The Chair: You have two minutes left.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: That is extraordinary. That is unusual for me, usually I go over my allotted time.

With respect to bilingualism, for several years now, two approaches have been used at the federal policy level. One approach was to assist minority language groups asymmetrically, to a certain extent, and this involved allocating resources in different ways to different areas, resulting in a “no one size fits all” for communities. Do not think that in Saskatchewan, for example, one should decide that because the community is diminishing, its resources should be reduced. I do not think you should shoot someone who is vulnerable. Having said that, an asymmetrical approach is being used. However, I think that the government has realized over the past five or six years that it is important to make sure that more anglophones speak French because francophones need to have interaction, in some parts of the country, with anglophones who speak a second language. If fewer anglophones speak French then there will be fewer opportunities for francophones to interact in their own language. So I think that is also an approach that should be used.

I also think that when it comes to bilingualism, to teaching French as a second language to anglophones, Canada is not strong enough. We are even behind the United States, where people are learning Spanish as a second language at a much faster rate than what is being done here with respect to teaching French. More pressure should be applied in this area. I do not think, contrary to Joseph-Yvon, for whom I have an enormous amount of respect, that in a situation of cause and effect, bilingualism is the reason why there has been a decrease in the number of francophones outside Quebec. In fact, I think that the more people speak French the stronger the message is that it is important to speak French and the more this is valued in society.

I will conclude with two points. First, I think we need some strong social marketing in Canada in order to communicate the value of French to anglophones. For example, on English CBC, I have never seen any advertising encouraging people to learn French because it is important for their own advancement, for progress, etc. I rarely see this. Yet in the United States, you see that kind of advertising on PBS, where people say: Learning a language opens the mind. I think that if we have that kind of advertising here, people will react by saying that French is being imposed. They do impose French yet there is not enough progress. For anglophones, learning French as a second language is a very slow process. Even here in Ottawa, in two weeks I will be talking about a new study that I am doing on this topic.

Second—and I know that private companies do not like this idea—I think that with respect to federal government contracts, more pressure has to be put on private companies for them to require a greater knowledge of French from their employees. I know that this is difficult, and that businesses do not like having this imposed on them, that they would rather do it voluntarily. However my impression is that despite all the goodwill out there, not enough progress is being made in that regard.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Jedwab. As a result of the last bit, you have in fact exceeded the time allotted, but I must tell you that the committee will shortly be undertaking a study on second language learning in post-secondary institutions.

With no further delay, we will begin the first round of questions. We will start with Mr. Pablo Rodriguez from the official opposition.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to all three of you.

Let's start with Mr. Denis. You said that when a community is in a minority situation, this generally leads to the extinction of the less dominant language. You also spoke about a general trend toward assimilation. This draws a pretty dark picture of the situation.

Let's talk first about francophones outside Quebec. In your opinion, are we headed towards complete assimilation?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: As Mr. Thériault said, there are general trends and changes take at least one generation if not longer. Major changes will be needed in order to reverse the trend.

I am not saying that we are headed for a total disappearance of francophones outside Quebec, but I think that we're going to see the pockets get smaller. Due to other demographic trends, for example urbanization and so forth, we will see the development of francophone pockets in various urban centres. In the west, some places in Alberta where there were no francophones are now starting to ask for institutions to be created.

Some communities will be maintained particularly in urban settings but others will be lost.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I'm not saying whether you are right or wrong but it is a bleak picture. This contradicts what we were told here by the leaders of various communities. I can understand them, because they're fighting and they do so with a great deal of courage and determination. They feel like their situation is moving forward, in general, and that they are successful. It's a bit discouraging to hear such a message. I'm not shooting the messenger in saying that.

I'm speaking to all three of you. Are there examples in the world where people have managed to reverse the assimilation of minority communities?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: I couldn't speak for minority communities as such, but rather for national languages. For example, in Ireland and Israel, there are very general trends. Yet, people have managed to reverse the trend in the case of languages that were in danger of becoming extinct. Obviously, investments have been made in resources in various sectors in a way that is different from the strategies developed in Canada.

I want to come back to the thrust of your question and give you an example of a general trend. We won the right to school management in Saskatchewan in 1988. In order to determine which communities would get francophone schools, the provincial government identified 14 communities. Yet, because of the legal quagmires we referred to and the fact that implementing school governance took nearly 10 years, only eight schools were opened. We lost nearly half of the rural communities that could have asked for or demanded schools. In the time it took to set up the school governance, we lost them. We

have never been able to go back to those communities and set up schools there.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Just out of curiosity, have you considered the impact Quebec sovereignty would have on francophone communities outside Quebec? I feel that if Quebec were to separate, the rest of Canada could say that it no longer had that obligation. There would no longer be that feeling of belonging, or that connection. I think that this would accelerate the assimilation of francophones outside Quebec.

• (0945)

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: It would depend on the way in which Quebec would separate, because, geographically, Quebec is not going anywhere. Trade relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada would need to be defined. If it were a clear and concrete separation...

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: There has been no detailed consideration of the ties with the communities, and so forth.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: There are actually one million francophones outside Quebec. There's a risk.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: There's a risk.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: Obviously, francophones outside Quebec, individuals from these communities and political spokespersons, etc., cannot view Quebec's sovereignty as something that would be to their advantage. Quebec's sovereignty would certainly reduce the political and symbolic place that French occupies throughout Canada and in the long run it would have very harmful effects.

That said, Wilfrid raised an interesting point. The way you put the question appears to indicate that sovereignty would be absolute and that there would be no association between Quebec and Canada that would define a new direction. Therefore, that might modify...

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: We don't know because this is purely academic.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: However, from a strictly sociological perspective, some say that nothing much would change because things are going badly. We have to say that that is somewhat true west of the Ottawa Valley. What is striking—this is linked to the value attached to French in the Canadian public domain—is that francophones outside Quebec west of the Ottawa Valley coming from Acadia, for example, become assimilated at the same rate as immigrants and Franco-Americans. In other words, the symbolic status of the language does not slow down this immigration.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: No one has referred to the anglophone community in Quebec. There are several members of the anglophone community in my Quebec riding. I sense concern, for example, over some important areas such as access to justice and health. I met some townshippers in the Eastern Townships on Friday night when they were meeting to discuss the challenges they face. In my opinion, the anglophone community in Quebec is facing several challenges, particularly outside Montreal.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: That is true and I refer to this in my text. Provincial data, averages and so on give us a false picture, especially in Quebec where the Montreal area is so unique. The tendency to maintain English and for immigrants to turn to the English language in Montreal is so strong that it ends up masking what could be happening in more remote areas such as the Gaspé and the Eastern Townships.

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

We have three witnesses and several questions. We are nearing the end of our meeting. We will have to try to stick to our schedule as much as possible.

We will now move to the Bloc Québécois, with Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We met with Mr. Corbeil who provided us with statistics from the most recent census. At one point, my words were paraphrased and they were compared to those of other individuals who foresee the end of francophone communities. However I don't think we should be in denial. The reality exists and you're saying that the trend is a strong one.

When I was with Ms. Jeannine Séguin, with the Fédération des francophones hors Québec, and previously with Mr. Hubert Gauthier, a document entitled *Les héritiers de Lord Durham* had just been published. In that document, the 1971 census showed that minority communities were not doing well from an ethno-linguistic perspective. Things aren't much better today. Statistics Canada's graphs—not mine—show that things are not going very well at all.

Why is this trend pointing down rather than up? What solutions should we be proposing? Before proposing anything we need to consider Quebec's place. This province has been part of the Canadian federation since 1867 and that has not slowed down this trend. Quebec can only act within its own territory, within its constitutional prerogatives. It can't build French schools or hospitals elsewhere. Other provinces, for example, have abolished French schools and wanted to close the Montfort Hospital. That's a rather ugly picture.

Brian Mulroney's government did something that was rather extraordinary. He established Canada-community agreements and invested money in communities, something that no other government had done before. When Jean Chrétien's government came into power, it slashed that funding in half. You're saying, however, that support has to be provided beyond legal funding. If we respect francophone minorities, then we have to make extremely significant language accommodations.

The trend remains a strong one. You're familiar with the historical context. Where is the downward pressure coming from? Shall we use science fiction and just say that federal and provincial jurisdictions don't exist? Otherwise this downward trend will continue.

I would like to hear your comments on this, Mr. Denis and Mr. Thériault.

• (0950)

Mr. Jack Jedwab: Your forgot me.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I'm sorry. Mr. Jedwab as well.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: You did not have an opportunity to speak earlier, Mr. Jedwab.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I'm assuming that you'd like me to speak about anglophones in Quebec. I do not want to delve too deeply into that because I do not think we have enough time today. I could send you information on that.

I understood, rightly or wrongly, that I had been asked to speak about francophones outside Quebec. I'll read my emails to check this but that is how I understood my invitation.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: We only have seven minutes. I know that I don't have much time left, because your answers count as part as of my time.

Where is the downward pressure coming from and what can we do to resolve this?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: First, one has to be realistic about what is possible. It is unrealistic to think that we can avoid this and bring about a significant increase in the real number of francophones in some areas outside Quebec.

There have been many historical changes. Some of the more significant ones have involved contact between and mixing of francophones and anglophones. I think that this has been the most significant trend or phenomenon in several areas in Canada. Before 1960, when those trends were different and when the church played a more dominant role, there was less contact between...

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Jedwab, I'm talking about the government, the state. What should it do? The state was there as well as the church in 1960, when French schools were closed. The churches didn't do that.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: Yes. Fortunately that was changed, historical action was taken to reaffirm the right of minority francophones to their institutions. From an historical perspective, that was a very good step that was taken to improve the situation of francophones.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Thériault, would you continue, please?

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: I did not say that bilingualism was the cause of the assimilation of francophones; I said that bilingualism did not slow down the assimilation of francophones. That's something else. It shows that in fact something is not working.

My position is that it is not working, but one shouldn't be in denial. There is still assimilation, and it has been going on since... There's a big difference between anglophones in Quebec and francophones: the anglophones in Quebec are not being assimilated. The 80-20 trend in Quebec has been the same for 30 or 40 years. Quebec bilingualism shows a positive trend, but this trend is negative outside Quebec because of the minority situation of the French language.

I'm saying that all is not well, but it is not all bad everywhere. If you look closely at the census data, you see that in northern New Brunswick the linguistic reproduction rates are the same as those of French Quebec. If they are lower at certain points in time it is not because of assimilation but because of people leaving. That is why I am saying that something can be done.

In the older more established areas of French Canada, Acadia, Baie Sainte-Marie, northern and eastern Ontario, the smaller rural areas of Manitoba, assimilation isn't as pronounced. Assimilation is the result of immigration toward cities where people haven't learned how to rebuild their societies in that environment.

That is why I'm suggesting that there be less legal recognition from coast to coast and more of a focus on those areas where there is that critical live presence. You can't give a hospital to Caraquet under the Official Languages Act but you can give it that hospital in order to save a francophone region. It's not the same.

The source of renewal for the francophonie outside Quebec lies in the older francophone communities. That is where people speak French in their homes, where they work in French, etc.

The data is somewhat exaggerated because what we see is the exodus. It is because of Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton that we see 70%. However, in the Acadian Peninsula, in northern New Brunswick and eastern Ontario, the data is not exactly the same.

• (0955)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Thériault.

Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

We will now continue with Mr. Godin, from the New Democratic Party.

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

Welcome to you all. Before I begin, I would like to personally thank Mr. Denis for having acknowledged that the report of the Standing Committee of Official Languages was important. People rarely do that. That report contained 38 very important recommendations.

No money was allocated to the action plan in the Conservative government's most recent budget. I feel that this is an insult to official languages. After two years in power, the government tables a budget. However the money for communities will come later. It is now mid-April and there is still no action plan. Bernard Lord's report is two months late. That is a lack of respect for official languages. I wanted to take a minute to get this off my chest.

I do not quite agree with Mr. Thériault when he says that on the legal level we should be focusing on creating institutions. From the outset, if we cannot respect people, then I think we're missing the boat. We won on the legal level. Without legal recourse we wouldn't have had the Montfort Hospital here in Ottawa, and the RCMP would still be answering: "I don't speak French". Indeed, as of Friday, francophones will no longer have to wait on the side of the road for 20 minutes for a francophone officer to come to speak to them. People feel that it's not worth trying to preserve their language when they can't even get respect from their own governments. I think that both components are necessary and that they go hand in hand.

On the other hand, I agree with you, Mr. Thériault, when you talk about the people who have moved. This comes back to the issue of institutions. When we travelled throughout the country, from Newfoundland to Vancouver, people told us everywhere that they needed good schools, with daycares, so that parents would be

encouraged to register their children early rather than hire caregivers who spoke another language, thereby running the risk that their children would no longer speak French by the time they got to school. Those are the kinds of things we learned throughout our travels.

With respect to people leaving the peninsula in order to work in Calgary, I think that if the schools could take in their children, they could manage. I never thought I would see in 2008, in New Brunswick, 350 anglophones demonstrating in the street in front of Fredericton's Legislative Assembly. They made a lot of noise to protest the withdrawal of early immersion and the decision to start immersion as late as in grade 5. I never thought I would receive letters from anglophone parents in my area asking me for help on this.

In many cases, parents are in exogamous relationships and want their children to master both languages. Even those couples made up of two anglophones say that they would like their children to learn French. However, in this case, it's the government who's throwing a monkey wrench into the works and refusing to meet their requests. The only officially bilingual province in Canada has insulted the public to that degree. That is what Shawn Graham's government has just done, with no prior consultations, and based on false data.

Is it not during early childhood that one can start learning another language? I would like to hear Mr. Jedwab on this, because he has known both situations.

• (1000)

Mr. Jack Jedwab: My children are in an immersion program in Quebec. I think that they have made very good progress in learning a second language. Naturally contact is also important, in other words it is not enough to learn a language in a classroom, you also have to interact with people from that other language group.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Is it better to begin immersion in grade one or wait until grade five?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: It is better to do it as early as possible. I sent my children to French day care.

Mr. Yvon Godin: What do you think, Mr. Thériault?

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: I am not a psycholinguistics expert, but...

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, but you are a professor. You have experience in this area. You can't fool me this morning, Mr. Thériault.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: Indeed the studies I have seen show that it is preferable to start learning a second language at an early age—bilingualism being cumulative if one can call it that—and to follow those kinds of immersion programs.

There may be no psychological barriers to learning a minority language at 8 years old, but there may be at 16 years old.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Someone stated earlier that there should perhaps be more television advertising to promote learning another language. The timing is right for this because people are now open to this idea.

It is the governments, however, that are preventing them for doing it. I just received a letter from the administration at Calvin Christian School in Hamilton. Because of federal government budget cuts, that school's administration had to cut classes that were being given in French, where students were learning French. The principal of this school has sent us letters requesting our assistance because he wants the children to learn French.

There is a fundamental problem and that is a lack of will on the part of governments. Canadians are willing to recognize both official languages and they want to make them their own. However, it is the governments that are putting up barriers.

The Chair: Please be brief.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: With respect to the legal issue, I agree that legal recognition of both languages in Canada allows for a language policy. Both languages have been recognized but there has been no move to the next step which is developing a true language policy.

As you know, the issue of schools cannot be solved by the courts. You can't make anglophones go to an immersion school. However, I think that something can be done in terms of a language policy, and that is what has not been determined yet.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir.

We will now end our first round with Mr. Pierre Lemieux, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC): Thank you, gentlemen, for coming this morning and for your presentations.

As you told us, immigration is an important demographic factor, especially in minority official language communities. This is an issue that is of great interest to our government. A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of announcing on behalf of the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration more than \$7 million in core funding to support francophone immigrants in Ontario. That funding was for areas such as health, education and economic development.

My perception is that the main linguistic challenge for language minorities lies in the retention and integration of immigrants into our communities. We also need strong institutions that will encourage as complete a community life as possible.

I would like to know how you view the contribution of immigration to minority official language communities.

Perhaps we could begin with you, Mr. Jedwab.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I believe that immigration can play an important role in improving the demographic situation of francophones in minority communities. To do this, we need to look quite closely at the destinations of immigrants.

According to the most recent census, most francophone immigrants who decided to settle outside Quebec chose Toronto and Ottawa. The majority—over 50%, based on figures I saw recently—picked one of these two cities as their destination.

That said, Manitoba is experiencing problems with regard to sponsorship. For example, we're trying to attract francophones from

the Maghreb region to our communities. We are trying to do this elsewhere too.

I remember having done a study, in 2000, for the Office of the Official Languages Commissioner on the contribution of francophone immigration to the development of minority-language communities in British Columbia. When I called places in British Columbia, I asked where I could find francophone immigrants and I was told there weren't any. And yet, according to the census, there are rather a lot of them. I was quite surprised then by this reaction.

There is also the whole issue of integrating francophones. This relates back to what I said earlier with regard to the question of identity and inclusion. Who is francophone? In order to ensure this contribution, we have to ensure that our definition of francophone is inclusive. However, we must also be realistic. In Toronto, and elsewhere, it's also important for francophone immigrants to learn English, as do many francophones outside Quebec in their place of work. In fact, there are very few workplaces where French is the only language spoken, outside New Brunswick and Quebec. Even here in the National Capital Region, people need to be bilingual, except perhaps in some areas of Gatineau. So we must also take that reality into consideration.

• (1005)

[English]

You have to be realistic about what the expectations are. We're going to encounter in cities like Toronto the phenomenon of multiple identities, dual identities. Given this evolution we're headed toward, I don't think the debates we're having today are going to be the same in 20 to 30 years.

We'll have to address more of this mixing and this duality, and the census will be struggling with those things. We'll be struggling with issues of identity, as is the case not only here but in many other pluralistic countries throughout the world. That's what we need to think about, even in terms of the contribution of immigrants who are French-speaking in places outside of Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Mr. Denis, Mr. Jedwab talked about a critical factor, that is where immigrants move to. Yet, there is a real difference between the rural and urban regions. My riding is located just beside Ottawa, but it is quite rural. The challenges are different.

Could you share your opinion on the different immigration challenges for rural and urban regions?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: With regard to the linguistic communities, immigration can play a very significant role, but the challenge is the lack of coordination between policies and federal programs. The federal government and the provinces are ultimately responsible for recruiting immigrants. If the provinces do not conclude federal-provincial agreements on immigration in order to take an active role in recruiting immigrants, this creates a problem right from the start. Furthermore, there must be a partnership with the language communities. In fact, if the provinces reach federal-provincial agreements on immigration, but they fail to include the official languages, this will not help the francophone communities outside Quebec.

However, even if we attract francophone immigrants, but we don't have any reception structures in the communities, be they rural or urban, immigrants from francophone countries will turn to English for health care services and early childhood services or access to employment services, as well as for English as a second language courses. Once they've developed their network in English, it's extremely difficult to bring them back to French.

Therefore, the reception structures must be available from the moment they get off the plane. We need to provide them with a range of services, both in rural regions and urban ones. That is why coordination between rural and urban francophone communities is essential. We must work together because, as is often the case in a region, a population is too small to have duplicate institutions. The federal government really needs to consider the linguistic communities as active partners and put pressure on the provincial governments to include...

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: That exists. During our trips across Canada, we met with individuals working in bilingual service centres, in Toronto and other places too. They were welcoming francophones and helping them to integrate into existing networks. There are networks. As I said, I just announced \$700 million for immigrants coming to Ontario. The goal is to help them better integrate our official language minority communities.

• (1010)

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: That is for Ontario. The question is, though, how are we going to help francophones coming to Manitoba?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: There are other agreements.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lemieux.

We will now begin our second round with Mr. Coderre.

Hon. Denis Coderre: I'm happy to see that we have a rich friend here. He gave \$7 million.

I was the Minister of Immigration. What you have said, we have heard. Personally, and with all due respect, Mr. Denis, I don't share your pessimism. We signed agreements with each province in Canada. We made sure, because it was necessary, that those agreements included a clause on bilingualism. To repeat respectfully the words of my friend Jack Jedwab, I will say that demographics are also essential. The reality in the provinces is such that a whole array of programs, such as equalization, have an impact on demographics. We are taking in immigrants to help the francophone communities develop. But the situation is becoming much more complex.

I think that, in this regard, the situation of Manitoba is unique. During the federal-provincial-territorial conference, we focused on this issue, exactly the way you have raised it. In Canada, 87% of newcomers go to Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. Some 60% of the population of Toronto was not born in Canada. That is a reality.

I don't want to start talking science fiction or making extremist comments like Yves Beauchemin, according to whom the francophones outside Quebec are the walking dead. However, I would like to address three issues, the first being the legal reality. I fully agree with my colleague Mr. Godin when he says that we need tools in order to keep our entitlements or protect our rights.

Second, I would like you to talk to us about the institutional impact. The Dion plan focused a great deal on early childhood. We knew that, in fact, we had to act while children were young. Furthermore, there is a new reality related to immigration.

My third point concerns the objective of responding to an economic reality while planning for development. I'm not talking about survival. In fact, we have been talking about assimilation for years and years. There's no need to hide our heads in the sand, but we must nevertheless salute the extraordinary contribution of francophones outside Quebec and of Acadians, throughout the country. They have more than a survival instinct. There is something quite exceptional there in this regard. In short, I would like you to talk to me about the economic aspect. There are more population movements due to the economic boom, particularly in Alberta and Saskatchewan. There are also examples of what is called out-sourcing, such as at the Hibernia project.

In light of these factors, do you think that the economic criterion is also a way to assist the development of francophone communities?

We can come back to this if I have more time.

The Chair: You have approximately three and a half minutes left.

Hon. Denis Coderre: That's wonderful. You'll have all the time you need to answer.

The Chair: Pardon me: this is a five-minute round.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: I think that the institutional impact is significant. I will put on my professor hat for a few seconds by referring to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who said that the general will, which is the legal dimension, is what remains once all the differences in a society have been eliminated. The will of all citizens is expressed once we have negotiated the differences and policies have been made. In his opinion, one governs with the will of all citizens and not with general will. That's the distinction I make between the legal framework and the political framework. The legal framework may very well be the one in which we operate. I agree that the Dion plan was a step in that direction, but it didn't go far enough. It focused a great deal on immersion programs. That was the focus rather than community institutionalization.

We should remember that the Dion plan made no reference to the culture of francophones outside Quebec, that it made no reference to cultural institutions. That's why I am saying that we need to institutionalize francophone communities. I think that the economic criteria are extremely important, particularly in regions with a strong francophone population. That is where we see problems of economic under-development. In Canada, even in the 1960s and 70s, we never wanted to associate economic development programs with the cultural enhancement of languages. Yet, language is an essential part of the definition itself of Canada. The idea has always been that economic development was a separate occurrence.

• (1015)

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Denis.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: I fully agree with regard to the legal basis, the constitutional basis for the recognition of rights. The problem, with regard to the legal basis, is that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, recognizes that francophones outside Quebec have rights, particularly in the area of education. However, that took us 25 years and I don't know how many hundreds or millions of dollars it took to obtain those rights. So, if we include a second sector, this could mean another 25 years of legal battles to clarify what we want. How many communities will we have lost in the meantime? We need to find another way to extend the constitutional legal basis without it taking another 25 years to do so.

I agree with my colleague Mr. Thériault when he talks about economic criteria for the underprivileged regions. However, I come from a region where there is economic development, but the problem is the lack of institutional development. As people come to us, we are incapable of integrating them, because we don't have the institutions we need to do so. Many people are looking for the magic bullet; but we need a multi-pronged approach to enhance the francophone language and culture throughout Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

We will now move on to Mr. Chong.

[English]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): *Merci, monsieur le président.*

There were a couple of comments I thought were interesting. One was from Mr. Thériault, who said that official bilingualism is essential but not sufficient. I think that's a very good way of putting things. Also, Mr. Jedwab said exogamy is an integral part of how French is carried from one generation to the next, and that households with francophone mothers and anglophone fathers tend to see the francophone language carried through to the next generation. I've seen that in many cases myself, anecdotally speaking.

One of the things that is clear in the statistics is that we have seen a decline in the number of mother-tongue francophones in this country over the last 30 to 40 years. That trend is clear. It's inescapable when you look at the statistics. The other trend that I think is unmistakable is the increase in the number of Canadians who are recent arrivals or minorities in this country. I think those two changing realities are related to each other, and many would say are colliding.

I think there might be a way to address both of those concerns in a way that's beneficial for both communities. I'm talking about a possible solution that would adopt a more European style of education system in which we would require students, especially students bound for college or university, to know three languages, two of which would be French and English and the third would be the student's choice. It would be a sort of two-plus-one approach to language policy. The federal government could use its spending power to do this by setting up a federal fund of let's say \$1,000 per student per year. There are 2.4 million students in the primary and secondary education system in Canada, and this fund would be available to provinces that wanted to utilize it to adopt this policy. I think you would address a number of issues at once. The first is obviously the issue of concern to francophones in this country,

which is their declining numbers with respect to the larger population.

Secondly, you'd address the diversity element for newer Canadians who want to retain their mother tongue. You'd address the trade and commerce aspect. I don't think we're taking advantage of the large expatriate populations here, especially with respect to international trade and commerce. I don't think we're leveraging those human assets here in ways that we could in order to be the Phoenicians of the modern world. I think you open yourself up to the other. You open yourself up to a different culture, because language, in my view, is the carrier of culture.

In the context of those statistics, I'm interested to hear what the three panellists think about an idea like that and whether or not this is a potential solution to these demographic trends.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: I want to talk about the issue of exogamy. Once again, studies show that 80% to 88% of families where both parents are francophone enrol their children in a school where French is the first language, if such a school is accessible. In exogamous households, that percentage drops to 30% to 35%. Instead of asking whether it's normal for 70% not to enrol their child in a French school, we should be asking which factors are driving 35% to enrol their children in programs to which they are entitled, and whether we can use those factors to increase that percentage.

In my opinion, it's a question of institutional anchors. If there are day cares and preschools, and we can integrate the children early enough into the system, in addition to enhancing the French language on a national level and showing that there is added value in this for exogamous households, we will be able to increase the number of exogamous couples enrolling their children in a francophone school.

Mr. Rodrigue Landry published a study on the hidden potential of exogamy. In that study he indicates how it's possible to increase the enrolment of children in rights-holder schools by exogamous households, by identifying the factors that can encourage them to do so.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Denis. Thank you, Mr. Chong.

We will now move on to Mr. Gravel.

Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ): Good day. Thank you for being here. I have learned a lot this morning from listening to the three of you. It was really interesting.

I'm going to ask some questions and I want to know your conclusion, Mr. Denis.

Do Quebecers or francophones from New Brunswick who are currently going to work in Alberta integrate the francophone community, or do they tend to become anglicized?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: Here again, it depends on the structures in the host city. People have no wish to settle in areas like Fort McMurray, for example, where everything needs to be built from the ground up and where workers see themselves as temporary—they're only there for a few weeks and then they go home. Often, it's only once families have moved and are seeking a school for their kids that they start to take concrete action.

In Edmonton, organizations for francophone African immigrants and Acadians are integrated into the francophone community. In my opinion, when reception structures do exist, it's possible to go out and seek them.

Mr. Raymond Gravel: We will see this a little later, since this is fairly recent.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: In two generations.

Mr. Raymond Gravel: In two generations? My God, that's a long time away.

Mr. Denis, earlier, you talked about the weakening of the Catholic Church. Mr. Jedwab also referred to this. Has the Catholic Church protected the country's francophones?

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: It has not solely protected francophones. The institutions on which francophones in Canada relied up until the 1960s were essentially church-based, be it the parish, convents, hospitals and so forth. We should remember that the Montfort Hospital was created by nuns 50 years ago. The state took it over less than 20 years after the nuns on the farm were expropriated.

Institutions led by the clergy were francophone, they weren't bilingual and they belonged to the community. There was a major change. That said, the church no longer has the strength nor the capacity to manage institutions today.

• (1025)

Mr. Raymond Gravel: I'd like to hear your conclusion, Mr. Denis.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: The Catholic Church also excluded people. Some non-Catholic francophones were excluded from our communities because those institutions were Catholic. Over the years, there have been problems with non-Catholic francophone immigrants.

In conclusion, we must recognize that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, played a fundamental role, legally speaking, but that role is limited. We should look at what's been done elsewhere in the world with regard to rights since 1982. I think that, for example, the European Union has recognized the underdevelopment of some regions by including in its basic principles rights on institutional catch-up.

We should also look at how we might extend the framework of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In particular, we need to recognize that the notion of citizenship has not been set out in the charter once and for all. It's possible that, by 2026 or 2040, our definition of citizenship will be much broader, flexible and different than what is set out in the charter. It's possible that we might hold governments responsible not only for their actions, but also for acts of omission. It's possible that francophone linguistic communities will take the government to court for damages or redress for delays or refusals by those governments to act. It's the same as with the

residential schools to which aboriginals were sent. In that case, they're being judged not based on the goodwill of the individuals who set up those schools between 1860 and 1940 and who thought they were doing good, but rather based on today's criteria.

In 2026 and 2046, will we judge our governments based on different standards of social justice and different definitions of citizenship than those we have today?

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

We will continue with Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Some anglophones were frustrated by the fact that they couldn't send their children to French school for a better education due to regulations forcing them to send them to an immersion program. Anglophones wonder if people really want them to learn French. They wonder why francophones feel the need to say that they absolutely have to have schools that are francophone or anglophone.

For example, in New Brunswick, francophones can go to English school. The francophones in Beresford go to a French school from grade one to grade eight, and then an English school from grade nine to grade 12. They graduate from high school completely bilingual; they don't even know whether they're francophone or anglophone when they speak.

What do you think?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: This goes back to what Mr. Thériault said about linguistic regimes. It's important that the dominant group learn the language of the minority. In order to do that, we need immersion programs and training courses for public servants to ensure that they're bilingual. At the same time, we need to have a linguistic regime that recognizes the uniqueness or the cultural dimension of those linguistic communities. What factors form the basis for a francophone community's identity and culture? The institutions need to be managed by the community in order to ensure that they meet that community's needs.

The problem is when we look at systems that are competing with each other. We must recognize that the needs are different and find ways to cooperate on shared aspects. For example, in Saskatchewan, the Francofièvre event is a day during which immersion students and Franco-Saskatchewanian students are invited to celebrate the French language with music, workshops, etc.

There are ways to promote the French language and see it as an important aspect of Canadian society, but we also need to have comfort zones, meaning institutions that belong to the communities, so that young people can develop their identity and culture there.

• (1030)

Mr. Yvon Godin: During our trip, wasn't it in Saskatchewan that we were told—and this is another subject that I want to talk about—that new schools had been built for anglophones and that then the francophones had inherited the old anglophone schools?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: I would not want to suggest that Saskatchewan's example be followed in every area.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Nevertheless, the idea of sending your children to a school that has already been closed is surely quite discouraging for parents.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: This speaks to a purely practical problem. The anglophones who want to send their kids to an immersion program want their kids to have an additional tool, meaning for them to learn another language. But the goal is not to assimilate their children into French culture. We're not talking about francophone schools where French is the mother tongue, but rather schools where the majority of students don't speak French and so the curriculum is designed to help students learn the language. In this case, the francophone parents are saying that they want a school where they could develop as a linguistic community.

In a place like Caraquet or even Bathurst, if 10% of the students in a francophone school are anglophone children, there are no problems with regard to teaching them. These students will assimilate into the francophone group. However, if we try to develop a francophone identity project in a French school in Calgary, for example where 90% of the students speak English as their mother tongue, this wouldn't work. That kind of project could be done in Chicoutimi or Caraquet, but not in Toronto. Those people wouldn't be interested, since their goal is not to develop a francophone identity but rather to learn a language as an additional tool, to broaden their horizon on the world.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

We are now into round three. However, as you know, committee members, there is a motion we would like to debate. We could do a full five-minute round, but that wouldn't leave us much time at the end. Perhaps we could keep it to three or four minutes each. You could ask your questions and I could stop you once your four minutes were up. Are you okay with that?

Mr. St. Denis, you have the floor.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank our witnesses and ask two questions.

Mr. Jedwab, I'm an example of a child from a family with one francophone parent and the other an anglophone.

You gave us statistics on the percentage of marriages between anglophones and francophones. Could you tell us the proportion of couples in which it's the mother who's anglophone, as was the case in my family? It was difficult for a child like me and it's difficult for children who are in that situation.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I will provide you with a study that has data on that. In any event, the region a person lives in is a major factor. Indeed, it has a strong influence on language choices. The territorial concentration of a given group is a factor, but more often than not, if the mother is francophone—but once again, it depends on the region—the child's first language will in general be French, except in regions where there are virtually no francophones. In those cases, English may be the language that is transmitted. The mother is the one with the greatest influence, but that situation could change in the years to come, given that the trend is strongly related to traditional roles for women and men in the workplace. Those roles are currently evolving, and this means that the trend could also change in the future. Basically, the census still suggests that the mother plays a greater role.

That said, we find that some young people see themselves as having a dual identity in terms of language and culture. That's the case even in Quebec. Not much was said about it, but according to the post-census study referred to earlier, 40% of anglophones describe themselves as being both anglophone and francophone.

Outside Montreal, that phenomenon is quite widespread. For example, in Quebec City and in regions like Trois-Rivières or the Eastern Townships, you see more of this kind of dual identification. Personally, I identify as anglophone, francophone and allophone all at once. I divide myself three ways.

• (1035)

Mr. Brent St. Denis: I'm also trying to discover my roots.

The Chair: There are also DNA tests, Mr. St. Denis.

Mr. Brent St. Denis: Please, no tests.

That's all, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Denis, you spoke earlier about a practical aspect that I find really interesting. It has to do with programs that were offered to the communities. You used the expression "one size fits all" to say that these programs enable development up to a point.

I have a very specific example to give you. The Association culturelle franco-canadienne, the ACFC, which used to represent all Franco-Saskatchewanians, became, if I'm not mistaken, the Association communautaire fransaskoise. All organizations were represented at the ACFC. Now, no organization is represented at the ACF. Instead, individuals are elected throughout the province. Since those individuals are not necessarily connected to any organizations, in my view, the connection has been severed, something is broken.

Am I mistaken? Can you give us an example where things should have been done differently to help the communities, given that we now have some experience?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: You are absolutely right about the transition from the Association culturelle franco-canadienne, the ACFC, to the ACF.

Within the ACFC, the sectoral bodies, including those dealing with culture and economic development, as well as artists, had the biggest budgets and had a lot of resource people. As a result, they dominated discussions and debates, as well as the distribution of resources within the provincial community. That was the problem the Franco-Saskatchewanian community tried to fix.

The sectoral bodies have a connection problem. The ACF recognizes that and wants to fix it.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Thériault, could you give us some examples of proposed models that were inadequate? We have to be constructive and mindful of not getting stuck in the same old ruts that have caused problems.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: I understand that the example you just gave is problematic. We cannot avoid francophone communities being represented by their institutions.

The opposite problem was raised. Organizations funded by Canadian Heritage have a budget and have become representative organizations. However, that causes a major problem. All of a sudden, the community defines itself by the budgets of officials from Canadian Heritage. We academics are not funded by Canadian Heritage. We do not participate in community discussions.

However, as soon as the organizations decided to include health, they got funding. That is problematic for all communities currently. People say we need to come up with governance mechanisms that are not just based on functionality, but that reflect community reality. When a community plan is established, funded organizations are invited to the table. Since fishers are not funded, they are not there.

• (1040)

The Chair: Quickly, Mr. Thériault.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: There are other policies. Belgium is never a good example, but in that country, 70,000 German-speakers have their own little government. They do not assimilate, those German-speakers.

The Chair: Thank, Mr. Thériault.

We now going to go to Mr. Lebel.

Mr. Denis Lebel (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. Your comments will surely move our thinking along.

Mr. Jedwab referred earlier to being realistic about possible results. That is always very important. You also talked about that, gentlemen. We can decide as people are getting off the plane that French is the language they are going to speak in Canada, but you have to be realistic and consider those people's choices. It is not always easy.

Where I am from, in the Lac-Saint-Jean area, schools are also being closed, Mr. Godin, but it is because there are no students left to fill them. When they are used, it is for other purposes, to accommodate other people. There is a whole economic reality behind school-closure decisions. I am talking about schools that have been closed, but subsequently turned over to other people. In any event, I do not know the details of all that.

My question is about exogamous families. I believe Mr. Jedwab is well aware of the situation of anglophones in Quebec. Do you think more anglophones in Quebec are now speaking French? Are they more bilingual than before?

As for exogamous families, I know that you focus more on the sociological aspect. When it comes to statistics, mother tongue can lead us off the right track. In addition to the factual aspect, shouldn't we also consider the subjective side of statistics?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: Yes, we have seen extraordinary progress among anglophones in the past 30 years when it comes to bilingualism. That's for sure. I'm talking here about French as a second language. Around 85% of young anglophones say they can speak French. I'm not talking about the quality of the French they speak, but the fact that they can communicate in French.

In my opinion, the willingness of anglophones to learn French is quite substantial. In the school where my daughters are in immersion, the demand was so high among anglophones that we

had to wait for 36 hours to enrol. I think the willingness is there and it's largely due to Bill 101. Apart from its coercive dimension toward immigrants, which we aren't necessarily going to get into now, it lets Quebec anglophones know they are expected to speak French, and that it's important to speak French in order to live in Quebec.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: Mr. Jedwab mentioned earlier an 80% exogamy rate, because in some regions, it was 50%, 55% or 70% and it was 15% just for New Brunswick. I don't think we can ask francophones outside Quebec to be any more open. Any more open than that and you're a goner.

When over 80% of people in one community marry people from another community, you don't ask them to be more open to that other community, but you do ask whether they truly constitute a community. If it were random, you would probably more often marry within your own community. People usually get married to people they know.

The effort that needs to be made, in terms of this openness that is so valued by all today, has to do with finding a way of maintaining an identity boundary. In 80% of cases, Franco-Ontarians marry anglophones. They cannot be asked to be any more open to anglophones, but under the circumstances, how do we rebuild places of solidarity?

• (1045)

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

Mr. Godin, you have three minutes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Lebel talked about school closures, but what I was talking about was federal cuts to school programs. That's what happened at Calvin Christian School in Hamilton. Moneys were transferred to the province in order for courses to be provided. The letter is quite clear on that. It indicates that the criteria apply from now on only to secondary schools. Primary schools lost their programs.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: That's what happened in New Brunswick. Is that how the Government of New Brunswick also justifies the cancellation of immersion?

Mr. Yvon Godin: The government didn't say that was why. That's not what we heard.

A bit earlier, you were talking about television, about CBC or Radio-Canada. You said that the public television channels could promote our languages.

Could you tell us quickly, Mr. Jedwab, whether the CBC made a mistake when it didn't want to televise Claude Dubois' performance? Do you think anglophones would have changed the channel if they had heard Claude Dubois? The vice-president of the CBC said that if CBC Television broadcast a francophone singer, they would lose their entire audience. Do you agree?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: No.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Good, I want answers. We have only three minutes.

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: Radio-Canada said the same thing about an Acadian.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I mentioned that. It's not Radio-Canada, it's "Radio-Montreal".

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: I think we have to take this further than that one incident. The larger issue is about having a program to value linguistic duality year-round, and that should be broadcast by anglophone media, not just the CBC but also the private sector. When do we hear songs in French in the English-speaking media, except for maybe one or two a day, to let the rest of Canada know...?

Mr. Yvon Godin: We never would have known that. That's what I said last week.

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In your opinion, did CBC make a mistake?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: Yes, in my opinion it made a mistake.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you.

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

On that note, I want to thank the witnesses who have given us a greater understanding, with regard to subjects as diverse as bilingualism, the national language, institutional tools, territorialization, service delivery by institutions and social marketing. You have really contributed to our discussion and our understanding. All this will help us in doing our work. We want to thank you very much for coming to meet with us.

Mr. Petit, you have the floor.

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Point of order. A little earlier, Mr. Denis shared with us his conclusions. Could we have those conclusions in writing? Have they already been prepared?

Mr. Wilfrid Denis: I have a written document, but it is only in French. It will have to be translated into English in order to be distributed to the committee.

Mr. Daniel Petit: Mr. Thériault, could you also send us your proposals?

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: I do not have a text; I have written notes.

Mr. Daniel Petit: Could you send them to the committee?

Prof. Joseph-Yvon Thériault: I could use them to prepare a written document that I could send to you.

Mr. Daniel Petit: Could Mr. Jedwab do likewise?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I have something in PowerPoint.

Mr. Daniel Petit: Great, thank you.

The Chair: I will conclude. The witnesses are going to send the documents to the clerk so that they may be distributed to committee members. I want to thank them for this.

Mr. Godin, you may have the floor.

Mr. Yvon Godin: If the document is in French, it can be sent to the clerk and we can do the translation here.

The Chair: Fine, that's in keeping with what I have understood. You may submit your document to us in either official language; we will undertake to have it translated in the other language.

Thank you. We have some business to take care of. Since we have little time left, we will get to it immediately. Thank you to our witnesses for coming.

We have a motion from Mr. Coderre. Mr. Coderre, you have the floor.

• (1050)

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Petit is not pleased that Belgium was mentioned.

Mr. Chair, I would like to talk about the events surrounding the incident with the *Acadian II* which recently occurred in the Magdalen Islands. I don't want to interfere in an investigation by the Canadian Coast Guard, the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board or the RCMP, but I have heard about a rather intolerable situation. Some families tried to obtain services in their language, be it only a summary of the situation regarding their son. Not only did they not receive the service they requested because they were only able to speak to an answering machine, but they were unable to obtain services in French.

I think that we should use the situation and try to find out what really happened. Asking the Canadian Coast Guard to come and speak with us and give us an overview of bilingualism within that organization is consistent with the role of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. This is a territorial situation because we are talking about the Halifax office. This incident concerns sealers, but there are also fishermen telling us that quite often they have to wait or go through three or four other boats, because someone speaks English.

I think that it would be entirely appropriate for our committee to call those in charge at the Canadian Coast Guard here to find out what happened. I think it is a little sad for people to always be told that someone from Quebec city will call. There are no second-class citizens. In my opinion, it is entirely appropriate to ask that organization to report to us on what is happening with regard to the official languages.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coderre.

I'm prepared to hear comments on the motion.

Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I want to support the motion. The same thing happened in New Brunswick. The federal legislation is clear, services must be provided in both official languages.

In New Brunswick, when someone was pulled over by the RCMP, they had to wait 20 or 30 minutes on the roadside for a police officer who could speak French to come and talk to them. So, they became second-class citizens. Because we're francophones, we had to sit on the roadside and wait. It made no sense. The Supreme Court decision on this was quite clear.

With regard to the coast guard, we need only recall the case of the *Apollo* vessel, where a man had applied for a job and he was told that he wasn't bilingual enough to get it, although it was a fishing boat from Shippagan. The coast guard refused to give him a job because he couldn't speak English well enough. Yet, he had done that job for six years.

At the time, we allowed people from Halifax do the same job without being bilingual and yet we're talking about a boat from Shippagan, a place that is 99.99% francophone. But that individual could not have that job. They told him that it was because he needed to be bilingual.

In that instance, the individual cannot have access to services in his or her language. I want to know the coast guard policy. How does it provide services to the public? This is a federal responsibility.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Petit.

Mr. Daniel Petit: My comments are in keeping with Mr. Godin's. I want to tell you right away that I'm not very familiar with the coast guard. Could we ask our researchers to provide us with some background information on the official languages regulations and the coast guard? Perhaps there is a law or something else. We need to have this in advance, before we call witnesses. Is it a question of relationships between private boats, as someone said? They didn't

get an answer in French, and so on. I find this unacceptable, but I want to know to what extent I can ask questions. I am not familiar at all with the system. That's what I want to know.

The Chair: Our analyst can answer your questions in part. However, given the time, perhaps he could get back to this at a future meeting, prior to having the witnesses appear, if the motion is passed?

Mr. Daniel Petit: Yes, that would be perfect.

The Chair: If there are no other comments, let's vote on the motion.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I just want to know the agenda for the next two meetings.

The Chair: First, as you know, next week is a break week. During our next two meetings, we will be discussing the Canada-community agreements and the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

● (1055)

Hon. Denis Coderre: Have we any news from Radio-Canada?

The Chair: I need to talk to you about that.

Thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

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