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**Tuesday, March 24, 2009**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**

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Tuesday, March 24, 2009

• (0900)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning, and welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

This morning, for the first hour of our meeting, it is our pleasure to have the honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, with us. With him is Ms. Judith LaRocque, Deputy Minister, and Mr. Hubert Lussier, who often appears before us. He is the Director General of the Official Languages Support Programs. Mr. Robinson, the Director General of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Federal Secretariat, is also with us.

Welcome everyone.

Without any further ado, I'd like to give the minister the floor.

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Colleagues, I am pleased to be here to talk to you about the activities coming up in the next few months in the official languages portfolio and to lay the foundations of a very productive working relationship. Yesterday, I testified before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages. Today, I am with you, and I hope that together we will be able to examine the issues that are of importance to us.

First of all, I want to tell you how honoured I was that the Prime Minister entrusted the official languages portfolio to me, first as Secretary of State and then as Minister. It is a portfolio of the utmost importance to me.

French had an important place in my own family. Thirty years ago, my parents enrolled my two sisters and me in a French immersion school starting in kindergarten. Today, I am more grateful to them than ever. I am very proud to be one of the growing number of Canadians who speak French. There are 9.6 million francophones and francophiles in the country.

[English]

My ability to speak French and English is a true asset for me. I'm able to do my best to understand my constituents and Canadians, my responsibilities, and the hopes and aspirations, I hope, of Canadians in anglophone and francophone communities throughout the country.

[Translation]

Since last July, I have met with a number of official-language communities, in all parts of Canada, including the members of the organizing committee for the next World Acadian Congress. To date, we have invested over \$4 million in this congress.

I also took part in round table discussions bringing together community leaders in Vancouver, Moncton and Edmonton. Last August, I attended the opening of the Jeux de la francophonie canadienne in Edmonton. I also attended Francoforce, first in Quebec City, and then in Dieppe. There I discovered the next generation of francophones, who are talented, daring, and proud of their roots. I also had the opportunity to talk with young people who are learning their second official language, and with others who are pursuing their university studies in French in a minority official language community.

You know, I consider the needs of official language communities in all my decisions. For example, when I created the Canada Media Fund, I ensured that there was an envelope set aside for these communities. For 2009-2010, the communities will retain the 10-million-dollar envelope set aside for them by the Canadian Television Fund.

On a smaller scale, in early March, I had the opportunity to announce the allocation of funding to the 20<sup>th</sup> Festival du Bois de Maillardville. This community, which I am very well acquainted with, is celebrating its centennial. It is the oldest francophone community west of the Rockies.

Obviously, this is not the only important anniversary in the country in 2009.

• (0905)

[English]

As you know, the Official Languages Act turns 40 this year. This anniversary is a real milestone, as the Official Languages Act was an excellent initiative for asserting Canadians' rights and opening up new opportunities to them. The recognition of our two official languages and our history has always been a part of my life and my country. Our linguistic duality is a treasure, and we want to take every advantage of this opportunity to make Canadians more aware of the benefits of having two world-class languages in our country.

[*Translation*]

The year 2009 will be crucial for those working in the area of official languages. The commitments made by our government last June when the Roadmap to Canada's Linguistic Duality was announced are continuing to take tangible form.

A great deal of work has gone into developing the Roadmap. We took the opinions of our tremendous number of stakeholders into account. We drew inspiration from the committee work and reports from the Commissioner of Official Languages. We also considered the recommendations in Bernard Lord's report, as well as the findings of the Sommet des communautés francophones et acadiennes.

The Roadmap is a document of great scope and tremendous significance. It defines the Government of Canada's overall approach in the area of official languages while also presenting our objectives and strategies.

I have said this often, and I will repeat it today: our government is determined to keep its commitment and deliver to Canadians all the initiatives announced in the Roadmap.

Thirteen departments and federal agencies have contributed a great deal of work since the beginning. And I am happy to add that another department—Indian and Northern Affairs Canada—has joined the group to meet the needs of communities in the territories. So, that makes 14 departments now participating in the implementation of the Roadmap.

Our investment is unprecedented: \$1.1 billion over five years. For 2008-2009, we plan to pay out over \$180 million in addition to the \$15 million set aside in the 2007 budget for official language community activities.

[*English*]

As a matter of fact, the Roadmap funding announcements have started in sectors that we consider to be priorities: health, justice, immigration, and economic development, as well as arts and culture. I assure you that the implementation work is proceeding very smoothly.

The economic action plan presented in budget 2009, recently passed by the House and Senate, clearly demonstrates our government's commitment to arts, culture, and heritage. The plan sets aside an unprecedented \$540 million to provide support and sound economic return on our investment.

[*Translation*]

Culture is also an important new component of the Roadmap. Four days ago, as part of the Rendez-vous de la Francophonie in Vancouver, I had the opportunity to announce the implementation of the Cultural Development Fund.

Thanks to this fund, we are responding to some of the requests expressed by the communities.

This fund will benefit from a 14-million-dollar budget over four years. It will support and strengthen the arts, culture, and heritage in minority anglophone and francophone communities. It will foster an enhanced sense of identity and belonging within these communities.

And it will enable Canadians everywhere to become better acquainted with the diversity and vitality of the cultural scene in these communities, from Whitehorse to Moncton, by way of Saint-Boniface and Lennoxville.

I recently had the pleasure of announcing the National Translation Program for Book Publishing. Starting April 1, our government will invest \$5 million over four years to help Canadian publishers translate literary works by Canadian authors into French and English. With this program, we want to give the greatest possible number of Canadians access to our country's immense cultural and literary wealth.

In the health sector, I want to point out that yesterday, Colin Carrie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, announced over \$4 million in additional support for the Consortium national de formation en santé. This funding will assist francophone students in pursuing post-secondary studies in this field.

I also wanted to discuss education since it is a major component of the Roadmap. The government has been working on education with its partners for a long time. In fact, for some 40 years now, the Government of Canada has offered support to the provinces and the territories with a view to helping them meet their responsibilities in matters of minority-language instruction.

Investments in education for the last full year rose to \$288 million. These funds go to education in the minority official language and second-language instruction.

The services and education agreements between our government and the 13 provinces and territories must be renewed this year. This will enable us to continue working together while also fulfilling our commitment to ensure that the Roadmap is implemented taking the special characteristics of each region into account.

The education agreements are certainly one of the main means of supporting education in the minority official language and second-language learning at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

It is important for Canadians to have the opportunity to improve their proficiency in French and English throughout their education, from primary school through the post-secondary level.

My mother was a French teacher in the 1970s, and today one of my sisters is an immersion teacher in British Columbia. In my opinion, education is a very important thing, and these subsidies are just as important.

This is what we are aiming at in our work with the provincial governments, so that projects for enlarging school community centres benefit our youngest. I am particularly thinking about the Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne in Fredericton. Our government supported its expansion with a total contribution of over \$6.6 million.

In addition, Canadian universities are key government representatives when the time comes to talk about post-secondary education for francophones and francophiles alike.

In January, our government gave a one-year extension to the Canada—British Columbia Subsidiary Agreement on Minority-Language Education and second-language instruction at Simon Fraser University. Our government thereby made a commitment to help British Columbia with the costs related to official languages, up to \$1.2 million.

Thanks to this agreement, francophones and francophiles in this part of the country do much more than pursue their post-secondary education in French. They stay in the province. They assert their attachment to the French language and francophone culture. And, above all, they continue to contribute in numerous ways to the vitality of their community.

I have every intention of continuing to work with all stakeholders, communities, and the provincial and territorial governments in the interests of Canadians across the country.

• (0910)

[English]

We are committed to implementing the Roadmap along with the renewal of the agreement and the establishment of the program to support linguistic rights. We are less than a year away from the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver. Since planning the games began, respect and promotion of our two official languages have been priorities for our government and this project.

[Translation]

The study presented by the Commissioner of Official Languages last December clearly shows that the 2010 Games are an opportunity for Canada to showcase its linguistic duality. I assure you that our government and all our partners are working diligently to ensure that the 2010 Games are games for all Canadians, in both official languages.

As you know, my responsibilities also include coordinating government action in official languages. Given the growing number of departments involved, this is an important role. I encourage my fellow ministers to take official languages into account in their departments' activities, at every stage.

I would like to take advantage of our discussion today to assure you that I will continue to support my colleagues and cooperate with them in implementing the Roadmap.

To conclude, I'd like to state that we are going to continue on this path. Our government will continue to support the development of French and English official language minority communities and promote full recognition of the use of French and English in our society. As Minister responsible for Official Languages, I have the good fortune to be able to count on a parliamentary secretary for official languages who is fully committed to this portfolio. As you know, Shelly Glover proudly represents me at various activities. I am happy to be able to count on both her understanding of the official language communities' situations and her desire to promote our linguistic duality.

Today, I would like to call upon your skills to help the government explore courses of action to enable us to encourage more Canadians to become proficient in both official languages and to use them on a regular basis. I hope to work effectively with you and all our

partners, in the government and outside the government, so that Canada's linguistic duality continues to benefit all Canadians.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am ready to answer your questions.

• (0915)

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

We will begin with Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours.

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

I would like to thank the minister for appearing before us this morning to discuss the importance of our official languages.

I would first like to talk about the radio and television services of the CBC/Radio-Canada. Given the precarious state of today's economy, Radio-Canada, like other news services, is experiencing rather difficult times.

As you know, I come from New Brunswick. The people in our rural areas need to be able to access news information. Radio-Canada's radio and television services provide such information to francophones living outside major centres. Rural news information is essential in that it allows francophones outside Quebec to live and work as francophones within Canada.

Announcements are expected shortly that will have a detrimental effect, especially on Radio-Canada's radio and television news services. Today, I would like to know whether you are willing to assure us that the people on the ground who provide us with news information and help to ensure the vitality of Canada's francophone communities outside Quebec will continue to play their part and not be subject to budget cuts. Moreover, I would like to know whether you will provide Radio-Canada with the tools needed to weather the storm. This is a key crown corporation for we francophones living outside Quebec, as well as other Canadians across the country.

What are your views on these two issues?

**Hon. James Moore:** Radio-Canada is a very important organization for francophone communities outside Quebec. I am in complete agreement with you. The corporation broadcasts information in both official languages from coast to coast to coast, and is also crucial for Quebec culture.

As I already mentioned, I understand the situation you are facing in New Brunswick. I indicated in my opening remarks that Maillardville is the largest francophone municipality west of Manitoba. There are 10,000 francophones living in my community. For them, Radio-Canada is a major source of information broadcast in French, their mother tongue. Without Radio-Canada, they would have no French-language programming. This is a priority for our government. As you know, this year we are investing \$1.1 billion, an unprecedented amount, in Radio-Canada. The government provides the corporation with two-thirds of its annual funding, with the remainder made up of advertising revenue. The corporation is facing the same kinds of challenges as those in the private broadcasting sector. I have had a number of meetings with Hubert Lacroix, the President and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada. In passing, I have full confidence in his leadership abilities and trust that he can offer French- and English-language services across Canada, according to the needs of Canadians.

• (0920)

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Minister, services are already offered across the country. I again refer to the flooding that occurred on Highway 40, in the Montreal area. Everyone was wondering why Montreal sewers could not drain the water. People hear about that all day long, and the news from the Atlantic is completely shut off.

It is easy to say that Canadians across the country can watch Radio-Canada, but can you assure us that the people who represent our rural regions will continue to provide us with local information? Having a national broadcaster and offering information is simply not enough.

**Hon. James Moore:** I can assure you that our government will continue to make unprecedented investments in Radio-Canada and work with the corporation to help make it through this global economic crisis. We are not involved in their everyday decision-making, but I am convinced that, after having spoken with them, Mr. Lacroix and the corporation's executives will be able to deliver the level of services that all Canadians living in minority situations have come to expect.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Will you provide them with the tools needed to offer those services?

**Hon. James Moore:** We have already invested \$1.1 billion...

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** But what about the other services that might be needed?

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

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We will move on to Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Minister, and welcome to your colleagues from Canadian Heritage and the Official Languages Secretariat.

Mr. Minister, I would like to begin with the Language Rights Support Program that is, from what has been said, the watered-down or insipid successor of the former program.

Under this new program, will people who initiated proceedings prior to the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program be entitled to new intervenors?

**Hon. James Moore:** Are you talking about the new Language Rights Support Program?

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes.

**Hon. James Moore:** It is being implemented. In fact, we launched a call for tenders yesterday in order to find the organizations responsible for delivering the new program. We have done our homework. Last year, my predecessor, Ms. Verner, announced an agreement to that effect.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Minister, perhaps I did not make myself clear. In order to ensure that the cases underway better meet the needs of the communities that made use of the former program and are now applying under the new one, will the new key witnesses called on by the communities receive funding as was the case in the past?

**Hon. James Moore:** The Court Challenges Program came to an end in 2006. The existing intervenors will continue to receive funding, but not the new ones.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** If proceedings launched before 2006 are still underway and require new witnesses, will they be accepted?

**Hon. James Moore:** We will accept witnesses, but not necessarily the intervenors. The cases will be allowed to proceed.

• (0925)

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Very well, you will accept the intervenors.

**Hon. James Moore:** We will continue to support the intervenors, but will not accept any new ones.

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

As the new program was being conceived, your predecessor said that she met with stakeholders. You are now the minister responsible for the program. Are the national language rights organizations, whether they be Franco-Canadian or Acadian, in the best position to inform you and guide you in your decision-making?

**Hon. James Moore:** Yes, they play a very important role. I believe that the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada as well as other stakeholders are supporting me today. During the round tables that I organized across Canada, the issue was identified as a priority, as you well know. This is very important for the organizations on the ground. We are continuing to dialogue with those people. We have launched our call for tenders. At each step of the way, we will consult on the best way to offer the new program.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Are you saying that, in the case of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, for example, you are making amends by responding to their requests for a meeting with you?

**Hon. James Moore:** We have already had a meeting and I am sure that we will have another one very shortly.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Is follow-up action being taken? That is not what I have been hearing, Mr. Minister. Apparently, some organizations have sent specific requests to your office, but absolutely nothing was done. I am thinking of people from Alberta who are requesting assistance but are turned away at the minister's door. I would ask you to look into that, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. James Moore:** Honestly, you're not in a position to tell me what my schedule is and with whom I hold meetings. It's not true that the requests go unanswered. I've had several meetings with several organizations and I'm going to continue to do so. I can assure you that I'm meeting my responsibilities.

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

We'll now turn to Mr. Godin.

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

I'd like to thank the minister for being here this morning.

You are different from your predecessor who did not want to appear before this committee. The issues affecting Canada's minorities are hugely important. And that's why I was disappointed to hear that this appearance would only last an hour. We weren't given any forewarning of this.

I would suggest that the minister be invited to come back.

As far as the court challenges are concerned, the folks from the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta asked to be present in court, but this request was denied. You're saying that there are no new participants. I don't know their names—and perhaps you can check this with your experts or researchers—but there are groups which were accepted at a later stage. Let's take the FCFA, for example. As part of the agreement on the new court challenges, I mean the new program, when a case ends, others could be added on. We didn't get the sense that we had to stick 100% to what was there, that half a court would be appointed rather than a complete court.

**Hon. James Moore:** In 2006, our government made an unambiguous decision to put an end to the Court Challenges Program. We did indicate that parties would continue to receive funding for existing cases, but that that would not be the case for new parties.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It is clear that in 2006 the Court Challenges Program was wrapped up, but that in 2008, according to the FCFA, a new agreement was reached in order to complete the cases that started under the old program. I wanted you to know that.

Mr. Moore, you spoke of your mother who was a French teacher, and I trust that was the case. But actually, I don't know if I should have confidence; you're the one who's going to show us whether we can have confidence in your new department, in your responsibilities and so on. The fact is that you learned French. But how can you accept that under your government we may lose from 600 to 1,200 jobs at Société Radio-Canada and CBC? And yet, you say your government supports minorities and the francophonie. You're going to get rid of the cameraman or the producer at Caraquet? Who's going to lose his job at Radio-Canada? The janitor? What are the 600 jobs? Is it going to affect Radio-Canada in Montreal or every community throughout the country? In some communities, the person holding the video camera is also the one asking the questions. If you get rid of that job, the whole office disappears. Which positions are going to be done away with in Manitoba, in Saint-Boniface? We're talking about public television and radio which are important for our country's unity, and yet the first thing we hear is that there are going to be cutbacks. You're talking about \$1.1 billion, which is an unprecedented amount. I can't understand how the

government can talk about an unprecedented level of investment when we're going to lose 600 to 1,200 jobs.

Explain these figures to me because I don't understand them.

• (0930)

**Hon. James Moore:** That is because one-third of the CBC's funding comes from advertising. As you know, broadcasters are currently having great difficulty selling ads. This is the case for both the CBC and private broadcasters.

However, I have had several meetings with president Hubert Lacroix. He assured me that he is absolutely confident that the services Canadians expect of the CBC, in your riding in New Brunswick and in all regions, will continue to be offered.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, this is not what we have heard. There is concern at Radio-Canada and at the CBC. How can Mr. Lacroix guarantee you that? I would like him to appear here in order to guarantee to all Canadians that there will be no problem. This is not what we are hearing. There is a problem. If certain private sector Canadian companies are in difficulty, like GM, Ford and Chrysler, the government says it will come to their assistance. One-third of the CBC's budget comes from the private sector, and the government says that it is not responsible for those problems. Really!

**Hon. James Moore:** We will continue to work with the CBC—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Working with them is not enough. The CBC needs money.

**Hon. James Moore:** Do you want an answer or do you just want to ask a question?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You say that you are going to work with them. What do you intend to do?

**Hon. James Moore:** We will work together to ensure that the unprecedented subsidies provided by our government will be maintained and that the CBC has the support of our government. Mr. Godin, let's be clear. The 2004-2005 budget increased the CBC's funding. The NDP voted against it. The 2005-2006 budget increased the CBC's funding, and the NDP once again voted against it. The 2006-2007 budget—

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, let us be clear.

**Hon. James Moore:** —increased the CBC's budget, and the NDP voted against it. The 2007-2008 budget increased the CBC's funding

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman—

**Hon. James Moore:** —and the NDP voted against it.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chairman, let me be clear. Are we living in a democracy or are we doing everything that Stephen Harper wants?

**The Chair:** Mr. Godin, we must have some order please. I would ask you to allow the other members of the committee to do their work. As you said, our time is precious.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That is why—

**The Chair:** I will now ask Ms. Glover to carry on.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to welcome everyone. As a new member of Parliament, it is an honour for me to speak to you all. Mr. Minister, you have just spoken about the increases. As a new member, I am very proud to see the amounts of money that have been invested.

Is it true that your Roadmap is the most ambitious commitment in the history of our country, of our government?

**Hon. James Moore:** I will try to answer that very difficult question. It is important, as you know, because you are the member for Saint-Boniface and approximately one quarter of your constituents are francophones. If I may, I would like to point out the details of the Roadmap and the existing investments. It really is without precedent.

There is an increase of 20% over five years in the budget for official language communities across Canada. I am emphasizing the key investments, in my opinion.

In the case of the Canada Public Service Agency, this is very important—I know that Mr. Nadeau of the Bloc Québécois shared his concerns in this regard—\$17 million had been allocated to its centre of excellence. As for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, we intend to invest \$16.2 million in two programs, the economic development initiative, and francophone immigration support for New Brunswick.

We will invest \$20 million in Citizenship and Immigration Canada. We have contributed \$2 million for a development initiative to the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the regions of Quebec.

Justice Canada will receive \$93 million for the Implementation Fund of the Contraventions Act, for access to justice in both official languages and for the accountability and coordination framework.

Heritage Canada will receive \$611 million in investments. As regards Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, there are \$94 million for the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities, for the child care pilot project, for literacy and to enhance the means that NGOs have for early childhood development. One hundred and seventy-four million has been earmarked for Health Canada. These are key investments in the various areas of responsibility of the Canadian government. I believe that Canadians will see the true benefits of these investments.

● (0935)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I agree with you, Minister. I am pleased to celebrate our achievements. I just wanted to talk a bit about the Olympics. We await them with great enthusiasm.

For those who wish to watch the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games in French, on television, what steps has our government taken to ensure that our linguistic duality and francophone heritage will be reflected in all aspects of the Olympic Games?

**Hon. James Moore:** The people of Quebec and those outside have raised several concerns on the subject of the broadcasting of the 2010 Olympic Games. It is very important that all Canadians see the games, celebrate them and have the feeling that they are Canada's games. I often say to my colleagues from the Bloc and to those who come from Quebec that two thirds of the athletes will come from that province and that three quarters of them will be francophones. Their

families in the regions should be able to see and celebrate the games. Those responsible for programming from CTVglobemedia, TQS, RDS and from RIS made several presentation to us. I believe that the deputy minister could provide you with more detail.

**Mrs. Judith LaRocque (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage):** Ms. Glover, had we appeared before the committee two years ago, we would have been a little more anxious as far as the media coverage is concerned. Now, I can tell you that CTV and its partners have worked hard to ensure there will be good francophone media coverage. We are talking about the highest number of hours of coverage ever. The committee has already thought of inviting them; this may be the right time to do so. On Friday, they told me that they are covering 96% of the country. There is the possibility of offering three months of free service so that people can have either cable or satellite for the Olympic Games. We hope that the vast majority of the people who wish to have access to the media coverage of the Olympic Games in the language of their choice will have it.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Glover.

We are indeed planning to meet with people from the Olympic Committee in April.

We'll now go on to the second round of questions.

Mr. Rodriguez.

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

Minister Moore, I would first like to congratulate you on the efforts you and your family have made to learn French and keep it up over the years. It's remarkable and should be pointed out. I would also like to thank you for your presence here, which is quite different from the attitude of your predecessor. I won't get into that, because Mr. Godin has already done so. The committee members felt somewhat insulted in the past. The minister refused to testify during our discussions of the Court Challenges Program. I want to ask you a question on that and then I will go on to another subject.

In light of everything we have seen, do you think that the abolition of the Court Challenges Program was a mistake?

**Hon. James Moore:** Are you asking me whether I think it was a mistake?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Looking back, and given the outcry across the country, was abolishing the program a mistake?

**Hon. James Moore:** I voted in favour and I believe that was—  
● (0940)

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** We can admit our mistakes, on occasion.

**Hon. James Moore:** Mr. Godin does not agree with my vote. This program was abolished and replaced by the new Language Rights Support Program. Our government made that decision in 2006 when it was re-elected. I believe Canadians agreed with our decision.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Maybe some of them did, but others didn't.

**Hon. James Moore:** Pardon?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Maybe some of them did, but others didn't. I don't think that you were re-elected because you abolished the—

**Hon. James Moore:** In a democracy there is always debate.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I'm going to quickly go on to another subject.

The Roadmap is a major feature that we've been waiting a long time. First, there was the Lord tour, which went on and on, then there were pre-consultations and then consultations. Next, Mr. Lord crisscrossed the country again, and then the file was submitted to the minister. In the end, what was adopted was basically the Dion plan for five years, with some minor additions. That's all that I can see.

**Hon. James Moore:** Two hundred and forty million dollars is a minor addition?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** But we don't see those details. We see what was in the Dion plan and what was extended, but there is nothing concrete with regard to cultural innovation, for example. I get the impression that you don't really know where you're heading, even though consultations were carried out for a very long time. You want to get somewhere, but it's dragging on and on.

**Hon. James Moore:** This is a five-year plan, as you know. The plan put forward by Mr. Dion, the minister at the time was a good one, which is why we renewed it. However, we improved it through new investments. We increased the budget by 20% and included arts and culture in our plan. This is important for me as minister, and we will continue along this path. We also added economic development, health and immigration. These are important new avenues.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** It is important, and we recognize that. What I'm saying is that most programs are simply an extension of current funding. It seems like there's an awful lot of grandstanding. It's a good thing that this program is being renewed. In fact, it would have been a disaster if it had been cut. In my opinion, we should commend the initiative of Mr. Dion and the Liberal Party of the era in that regard.

I'm going to come back to the subject of CBC. Minister Moore, the solution is in your hands. I am in contact with CBC representatives, just as you are. CBC cannot borrow money from the bank like private broadcasters can. CBC has not requested money, merely a loan. So you could solve this problem.

CBC is calling for bridge funding. It is requesting a loan or a margin of borrowing power to tide it over while advertising revenues are down. Once things improve, CBC will repay the loan. It won't cost you a single cent. But you are refusing, even though the solution is right in front of you. Why are you refusing to authorize it to borrow funds?

**Hon. James Moore:** This is a problem that may arise again in future. If CBC was authorized to borrow funds from the government or the private sector... If advertising revenue continues to decline, perhaps things will never be the same. As you know, private broadcasters say that the industry is in crisis and will never bounce back, that the system is broken and that we can't go back to the time when advertising guaranteed a return on our investment.

There may be a problem. If CBC continues to count on advertising for one-third of its revenue and the taxpayers' share represents two-

thirds of its spending, what will happen in 24 or 36 months if advertising revenue continues to plummet? CBC is already having problems with advertising that does not guarantee value for the private monies invested, and in addition it would have to repay any funds borrowed from banks.

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

**Hon. James Moore:** Then CBC would have a real crisis on its hands with regard to its services. As I told Mr. Godin, I have spoken with Mr. Lacroix on several occasions, and he told me that he is confident that CBC will be able to continue offering the services that Canadians expect of it.

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

We will now go on to Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good day, Mr. Moore. I had the opportunity to watch you last weekend during your appearance on the show *Tout le monde en parle*, and you made a valiant effort.

I have some concerns. Back home, we hear a lot about the budget cuts that affected the Court Challenges Program. We haven't heard anything new since 2006. Two years later, we still haven't heard anything new and we're still waiting to see what will happen. You promise us things but you don't know exactly what. You conduct studies. I would like to obtain a clear answer.

What will replace the Court Challenges Program? When? How? Who will be entitled to use it? Who will have access to the program?

● (0945)

**Hon. James Moore:** The Language Rights Support Program will be set up and operational by the end of 2009. We issued a call for tenders yesterday. I encourage you to read it to see how we want this program to be directed by a group that is at arm's length from the government. We're encouraging organizations that want to get involved to participate. It will be set up before the end of 2009.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I have another very important concern. It is unacceptable that we have Supreme Court justices who are not bilingual. All of the Supreme Court justices should be bilingual. Having ambassadors who are not bilingual is just as unacceptable. All of Canada's ambassadors should be bilingual. Bilingualism should also be mandatory for deputy ministers. Thirty-four per cent of federal public servants are unilingual English; they are not bilingual.

What has to happen before you change this, Mr. Minister? I know that you alone are not responsible for the situation, because there were other people in the position before you, but it was your party that was in power. Nothing is happening. Why not take action? I would like some real answers to these questions.

**Hon. James Moore:** I answered every question. What can we do? As I said, we can invest in official languages at the Public Service Agency. Our Roadmap talks about an investment of \$17 million to help people learn French.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** That does not do anything more to force them to learn French.

**Hon. James Moore:** Yes.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** No. We need really strict rules in order to make them learn French.

**Hon. James Moore:** That's why we are investing in the schools and we are ensuring that, in the public service, more people are able to speak both official languages. This is very important to us.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** What are you going to do about the judges?

**Hon. James Moore:** I think—

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Judges, ambassadors, deputy ministers, all of those who are not bilingual—

**Hon. James Moore:** Yes—

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Do not talk to me about money. Do not tell me that you are going to invest in order to try to convince the justices that they should be bilingual. What are you going to do? You have the authority to take action.

**Hon. James Moore:** Yes, I know. You have asked me the question three times and I tried to answer you.

I believe that it is very important to be able to speak both official languages, but I also feel that the best candidate with the best qualifications should be appointed judge. If this person is fully bilingual, all the better, but that should not be the only criterion. Other criteria are important as well: judgment, work ethic, communication. Excellence in judicial matters is also essential. Deciding that a unilingual person is not qualified to sit on the Supreme Court of Canada would not be serving the interests of Canadians.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I wasn't talking about competence. When you hire a deputy minister or you appoint a judge, why not ensure that this person learns French or the other official language? This person must speak both languages.

**Hon. James Moore:** As you know—

**Ms. Monique Guay:** They have to be bilingual. However, they are not. Right now, there is no obligation regarding this matter.

**Hon. James Moore:** People become deputy ministers after years of service in the public service, sometimes after they have reached their 40s or 50s. It is more difficult for these individuals to learn French.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Get serious!

**Hon. James Moore:** That is true. My deputy minister can talk a bit about her experience. This is an important matter.

**The Chair:** This will have to be very brief. We are quickly running out of time.

**Mrs. Judith LaRocque:** I will simply talk about my personal experience. As a Franco-Ontarian, I studied in French at primary and secondary school. I then chose to study in English at Carleton University and elsewhere so that I would be able to express myself in the other official language. Most of my colleagues can express themselves in both languages.

Ms. Guay, you said that many public servants are not bilingual. However, some geographic regions in this country are not designated bilingual. As such, some individuals don't have the same obligations, that is true. However, in geographic regions that have been designated bilingual, very important criteria must be met by the

public servants. We strongly encourage them to do so. In a department such as Heritage Canada—

• (0950)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** When I referred to the 34% of our positions, I was referring to bilingual positions held by unilingual English people.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Guay.

We will now give the floor to Mr. Michael Chong.

[English]

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

I'd like to ask a question regarding education. The government is now on the second action plan for official languages, which allocates over \$1 billion over the next five years, including a couple of hundred million dollars for second-language education over that five-year period between 2008 and 2013.

One of the targets contained in the first action plan that Monsieur Dion introduced was to double the number of Canadian youths between 15 and 19 with a working knowledge of both official languages. It's also a key initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage, as outlined in its departmental performance report of last year.

But if you look at the statistics from Statistics Canada, you see that the number of bilingual youths in Canada between 15 and 19 years of age has actually declined over the last 12 or 13 years. In 1996 it was 24.5%. In 2001 it was 23.9%. In 2006 it was 22.3%. Doubling the proportion of bilingual Canadians between 15 and 19 years of age by 2013, which is only four years from now, seems unrealistic.

I have two questions. First, are you retaining this objective to double the number of bilingual high school students in Canada as part of the second action plan? Second, since the federal and provincial second-language learning agreements are the government's main tool in achieving this objective, what can we do and what is the department doing to achieve better results by 2013?

**Hon. James Moore:** To the first part of your question, the answer is no. It's a noble goal and it's a good thing. We have the experience in the city of Vancouver, for example, where the mayor of Vancouver says he wants to end homelessness by 2015. Setting these kinds of goals and just putting a date on them and assuming it can be done is, I think, setting expectations that may be unrealistic.

Obviously we want to have more Canadians, especially young Canadians, learning Canada's official languages, and that requires investment in programs like we have investments in education. But I think even more than that—

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Just to clarify, is it not the department's goal any more to double the number of bilingual high school students?

**Hon. James Moore:** We want to increase it, but I wouldn't peg it at a specific number. Let's put it that way.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Okay.

**Hon. James Moore:** We have these investments and we want to make sure the programs are established.

I have to say that this is an example where the government can set up programs and the government can make investments, but I think what's most important—and this is where the role of the politicians comes in—is to tell the story about the importance of Canada's official languages and to encourage people in this country to enrol their kids in education.

I've told this story a few times, and I have to bite my lip sometimes when I tell it, but I have to say that my dad agreed with Pierre Trudeau on a couple of things. One of them was—and I still hold this view—that the government doesn't have any business getting involved in the personal lives of people, to the extent most possible. That's number one. Number two was the idea that Canadians becoming bilingual was good for the country and good for the individual, so he enrolled us.

Having leadership and encouraging people to learn both of Canada's official languages is good for Canada. I want to do this as best I can, and you can do that, and we can all do that in our own way. When I was studying political science as an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia, a new university established in 1992, you could learn German and Spanish, but there were no French courses.

As a person studying political science in British Columbia at a university that is well thought of and gets good scores in the *Maclean's* surveys and so on, as a person studying political science but not being able to study it and listen to the speeches of René Lévesque, of Bouchard, and of Chrétien in 1995 in their own language, it meant not being able to listen to those debates, not being able to understand the passion, and not being able to understand the people in French as they were discussing the future of this country, the future of Quebec, the history of this country, and what that meant to people in regard to their sense of identity. In not being able to do that, you lose a sense of what this debate has always been about in this country.

So we want to make those kinds of investments, but we want to encourage families and kids to get involved and to learn both official languages.

On the provincial side, to go to your next question, of course we have agreements on K-to-12 education. The reality in New Brunswick is that New Brunswick has their own education formula. They announced it in September of last year, I think, so they have their own reality. Obviously the Province of Quebec has its own reality. Different provinces have their own focuses. So when we do these agreements, we obviously do them with an open mind, respecting provincial jurisdiction and respecting the fact that provinces are tackling their own budgetary and demographic concerns. But we want to sign agreements that have this view to the future of having as many kids as possible speaking both of Canada's official languages.

• (0955)

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

Thank you, Minister. Your comments will certainly be useful for our study on post-secondary education.

[*Translation*]

We will now conclude the second round of our meeting with our minister by giving the floor to Mr. Godin.

You can continue where you left off earlier.

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

Mr. Moore, I liked how you explained to Mr. Chong how it was important for you to be able to listen to Mr. René Lévesque speaking in his own language and to be able to understand the passion that drove him. You will agree with me that this is what you said.

Do you prefer to listen to me directly and understand my language or do you prefer to go through translation? Is it better to listen to me directly? Yes? So, at the Supreme Court, would it not be important that the lawyer who is arguing his case before the judge be able to present it to someone who understands him, who sees his passion and understands how he is presenting his case? Pleading before the Supreme Court is an art! So, Mr....

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** As far as I'm concerned, I have never been able to speak and listen at the same time, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. James Moore:** I can walk and chew gum at the same time as well.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** You are a special case. You have learned French as well. You are aware that the laws of our country are written—and it is we, in Parliament, who write our laws—in French and in English. They are not translated. Yesterday, when I introduced my Bill C-232, I went to see the interpreter to hand her my speech. She was able to read it ahead of time or as I was introducing it. She thanked me a great deal because I am perhaps an individual that the interpreters, with all due respect that I have for them, sometimes find difficult to follow, given the speed at which I speak and my desire to do everything well.

The Supreme Court of Canada is the final court in the land. The federal judges, in the provinces, for instance, are bilingual. They are able to speak both official languages. There may be—I don't know the exact number—50, 100 federal court judges. When an individual appears before this court, he or she is entitled to a trial in one of the official languages, and the judges speak this language. It's different with the Supreme Court. There are only nine justices.

With respect to their skills, whether they be legal or otherwise, would you not agree with me that understanding the person speaking should be a very important aspect? I do not want to have a judge who is bilingual but does not understand the law. We are not talking about that. We do not want to go down that path. We want the person to be competent A to Z. Would you agree with me?

**Hon. James Moore:** Justices are appointed based on merit and excellence in legal matters. If you think that someone must be absolutely perfectly bilingual in his or her written and verbal skills in order to sit on the Supreme Court of Canada and be a justice in this country, well I hope that you are going to talk the talk and walk the walk, as we say in English...

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** And I will not be chewing gum, that I can guarantee.

**Hon. James Moore:** ... and you will write a letter to each of the Supreme Court justices requesting that they resign if they cannot speak French.

• (1000)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chair, it's important—

**Hon. James Moore:** I hope that you will, because this would allow an answer to your question.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Chair, I would like to raise a question. Is the court not there for individual citizens? Is it not the individual citizens who are important? Is it not the place where one can be heard with passion, as you said earlier? You said it yourself. It's better to hear from the individuals themselves, in their language, as they speak with passion and so forth. Now, you are telling me to write a letter to the Supreme Court justices. I am not the one appointing the Supreme Court justices.

Do you agree with me that it is preferable to hear individuals directly rather than through the interpretation? The court's decision hinges on that. Why not have, at the Supreme Court, justices who will respect—and I'm talking about the appointment process—both official languages of our country?

**Hon. James Moore:** It is important, but it should not be the only criteria.

Let's be clear. It is clear that Mr. Godin wants Ms. McLachlin to step down.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** No, this concerns appointments. My bill is not retroactive. I am not talking about replacing justices who are already sitting. However, in the future, Mr. Minister, if you believe in what you said, that it was important to hear René Lévesque in his language and to understand his passion, do you not think that it's important for a justice to listen to arguments before the Supreme Court in the language of the accused? It is the highest court in our country. There is no other possible appeal.

**Hon. James Moore:** You have expressed your reasons. I have mine. You have your standards; I have mine.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Could you review anything in your reasons?

**Hon. James Moore:** It's clear that Yvon Godin wants Bev McLachlin to step down from the Supreme Court. I do not agree.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That is not what my bill states. Mr. Chair, it's clear. My bill is clear: it concerns future appointments. By making such statements, the minister is mistaken. He is wrong and this is not acceptable.

**Hon. James Moore:** There will be a vote in the House on your bill, and once again you will be defeated.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. This completes our meeting with you, minister.

We will take a recess for several minutes before welcoming our next witnesses.

**Hon. James Moore:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for coming.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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• (1005)

**The Chair:** The committee meeting will now resume. I would invite the committee members to return to their seats, if they want to have time to question our witnesses. We are hearing from two other witnesses during this meeting. In fact, we have three witnesses; that's even better.

On behalf of the committee members I would like to welcome Mr. Tom Scrimger, Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Corporate Affairs. He is also a committee regular. Furthermore, Mr. Hubert Lussier, Director General, Official Languages Support Program, remains with us for the second hour. Finally we also have Mr. Jérôme Moisan, Senior Director, Official Languages Secretariat.

Gentlemen, welcome.

You haven't really prepared a speech, because we are continuing the study we began earlier on departmental priorities and the Roadmap on Linguistic Duality in Canada.

We will begin our third round.

Mr. Rodriguez.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** We will take this opportunity to ask for some clarifications along the same lines as what I was raising earlier. For me, consultations and so forth end up being, as I said earlier, an extension of the Dion plan, with a few additions. In my opinion, this is the bulk of it. It's not bad, it is fine; the Dion plan was a good plan.

Could you tell me concretely what the additions are? What more is there in the Roadmap than there was before?

**Mr. Tom Scrimger (Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Corporate Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage):** Thank you for your question. What are the new amounts for the departments concerned? I'm going to quickly list the targeted departments and tell you the amounts. My colleagues will be able to add to my answer. With regard to the Official Languages Secretariat, which falls under Canadian Heritage, there is a new investment of \$8 million. For the other programs under Canadian Heritage, there is \$38.5 million. For Health Canada, there is \$59.3 million. For HRSDC, there is \$55 million.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Are these all new programs? What is being added?

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** I'll give you the overall amount, which includes both the continuation of existing programs as well as new programs.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** I don't want to talk about ongoing programs. The government is patting itself on the back for the Roadmap. From what I can see, in large part, it's what we had before, which is fine and well. But what I want to know, is what is new?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan (Senior Director, Official Languages Secretariat, Department of Canadian Heritage):** First, funds have been added to the envelopes that have been maintained. As Mr. Scrimger said, Health Canada has received additional funds for existing envelopes. This is an example of an increase. The same thing is true for Justice Canada, where amounts were added to existing envelopes, in the same way. There are a number of new initiatives, including the Fonds de développement culturel under Heritage Canada and support for francophone immigration to New Brunswick.

• (1010)

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** And how much is the Fonds de développement culturel?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** It is \$14 million over four years.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** That's it?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** With regard to support for immigration to New Brunswick, ACOA received \$10 million over five years. Also the Music Showcases for Artists from Official Language Minority Communities program under Canadian Heritage has a \$4.5 million budget over five years. I could send you a list in writing.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Thanks to some 10 or 15 new initiatives, various departments that were not part of the previous action plan received funding. Among the new funds, we could mention those allocated to Public Works for the implementation of a linguistic gateway, translation branch, and the language industry initiative. Other departments have also followed.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Could we have that in writing?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Yes, absolutely. To give you a specific answer to your question, there will be a difference between the new initiatives and the addition of funds to existing initiatives.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** What is the increase compared to the total amount? The envelope for five years is \$1 billion. Is this correct?

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** The total investment is \$1.1 billion. The new funds are approximately \$250 million.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Two hundred fifty million dollars over five years.

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Yes, correct.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Perfect.

Do you know about the new Canadian Media Fund, that the minister mentioned earlier? And what about Radio-Canada?

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** That does not come under us.

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Okay.

Go ahead, Jean-Claude.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Chair, I have one minute remaining. I'd like to still try to understand. You are saying that there were additions, but we're talking about reaching the amount set out in the Dion plan. If we multiply by five the amount set out in the last year of the Dion plan, would it be close to the \$1 billion amount that you referred to?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** If we renewed funding for the last of the five years, it would not equal \$1 billion, but approximately \$800 million. Money was added in order to reach that amount.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** You are responsible for official languages. You said that Radio-Canada is not part of your mandate, but with regard to the official languages, this is not the case. If we are no longer able to provide services to francophones outside Quebec, we are not meeting the needs of our communities. Why is this not tied to your sector?

**The Chair:** Please answer very briefly.

**Mr. Hubert Lussier (Director General, Official Languages Support Programs, Department of Canadian Heritage):** To repeat what the minister said earlier, it is the responsibility of the board of Radio-Canada to manage that corporation. However, to respond to your question, Radio-Canada is a designated institution for the purposes of the administration of Part VII of the Official Languages Act, which the Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for coordinating. In other words, this is an institution with which we constantly work and which has reporting and planning obligations concerning its obligations towards those communities, as do some 30 other institutions. Public servants regularly communicate with Radio-Canada regarding the issue of official languages and these communities.

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

Thank you, sir, for those clarifications.

We will now move on with Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Good day, gentlemen.

Earlier you heard our minister talk about the money granted to the Department of Immigration. In Quebec, immigration is an area that falls under joint jurisdiction. Several Quebec organizations, whose role is to help immigrants learn another language in addition to their mother tongue, complained. They said that the sums transferred by the federal government that were supposed to be used to teach immigrants English or French—French, in this case—had been paid out, but that it hadn't worked because the money had been put into the partner's consolidated funds, meaning the provincial partner.

You meet with the provinces and territories. I would like to know whether you have kept track of the funds granted by the federal government, by the taxpayers, to see whether the services enabling immigrants and newcomers to learn one of the official languages have in fact been provided. I don't know which of you will be able to answer me.

• (1015)

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** I don't know whether we will be able to respond specifically to your question, but I can tell you that it is the duty of the department responsible for those funds, in this case Citizenship and Immigration Canada, to keep track of the funds to ensure that they are spent in accordance with the contribution agreements reached with the partners. The secretariat has some knowledge of the programs, but this knowledge is not detailed. If you have a specific question, we could always ask our colleagues at CIC to provide us with a more complete answer. I will let my colleague Mr. Moisan add his comments.

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** I would like to make a clarification. The Roadmap refers to amounts to be used solely for francophone immigration. So this affects all provinces, with the exception of Quebec.

The Roadmap is concerned with francophone immigration, so essentially outside Quebec. In short, with regard to this program, the amounts for immigration are not for the Government of Quebec.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Do I have any time left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You still have two minutes.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Mr. Moisan, I want to continue along these lines. It seems that some things are not working with the COFI. Perhaps you are better informed than I am about this. Had you heard that the money was not going out fast enough? Do you know if it's going to the right place? Have you been advised about such a problem?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Honourable member, I would invite you to speak to our colleagues at Immigration Canada. The COFI are perhaps part of the programs and the relationship between the Department of Immigration and Quebec. We do not have any specific information about this.

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

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

We are now going to hear from Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good day, gentlemen.

Approximately two weeks ago, I took part in a meeting with people from the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau. Perhaps you were there. The conferences were excellent. Some of your former colleagues, among others, and people working in research told us about very interesting analyses on the 40 years of the Official Languages Act. The commitment of the machinery of government was one of the issues raised during the discussions. This relates to one of the four nerve centres of the federal government with regard to the official languages. I won't give you a detailed overview of everything that was said. Unfortunately we don't have the time.

Someone whom you know raised a point that I find extremely relevant. I would like to hear your reaction to this. Someone talked about the recruitment of new employees to the federal public service. There is an unease in this area, and consequently this entire issue is being studied by the committee. We are looking at the issue of bilingualism in the public service. Among other things, we are looking at the learning of official languages at the elementary, secondary and university levels. However, this speaker stressed the fact that, during recruiting, the federal government is not presenting itself as a bilingual employer. This realization was made by someone who is extremely familiar with the federal public service.

I would like to hear your suggestions on this subject, to hear how you think this could be improved.

• (1020)

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** Mr. Nadeau, I did not have the opportunity to take part in this conference. Consequently, it is difficult to answer this question without knowing more about the context. You say that the government is not highlighting the fact that it is a bilingual employer, but what does that mean? It would probably be more appropriate to address the question to my colleagues of the Treasury Board Secretariat or the Public Service Commission.

Having acquired 30 years of experience within the public service, I can certainly say that bilingualism is a key element in any government recruitment campaign. Increasingly, we need to ensure that we are able to provide Canadians with services in both official languages. I just spent five years at Sports Canada. Within my small group, the number of bilingual positions has gone from 56% to 98%. I don't know whether this is representative of all government. It is extremely difficult for us to say how the situation might be improved. Canadian Heritage has a bilingual environment; our recruiting efforts comply with official languages needs and our requirements, as well as ensuring the promotion of linguistic duality.

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

Let me say that I am somewhat disappointed with the answer, but I will not hold that against you. Employees of the federal state, of agencies, crown corporations or departments who live in this region, in Gatineau, are telling me that they have to do their work in English because otherwise, some things could not be communicated as easily. This is due to the fact that some people do not understand French. This is the situation, once we get inside the organization. No one can make me believe the opposite. I hear such comments fairly regularly. I am also told that some senior officials in the federal apparatus do not speak French or are not able to communicate adequately in French. This is also a major problem. Should we shed more light on it?

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me tell you a joke about two senior federal officials. The one says to the other: "Hi, how do you do? How was your weekend?" And the other answers "My weekend was very good." And then one of the two says: "Now, let us speak French because that must remain as a secret between the two of us." The comedy troupe Les cyniques were telling this joke 40 years ago. I find that this joke is all too real in the federal structure. I am submitting it to you for reflection, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for this humorous interlude, Mr. Nadeau.

I would like to have some advice from committee members. Two of you had things to say. Do you want us to continue? If you want to intervene, we can do another round.

Mr. Lemieux, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Thank you very much for being here this morning. We hear in the news and from my colleagues of the other parties that the Roadmap is criticized because no funds are provided for communities. I would like to put some questions regarding this.

Does the Roadmap provide any funds for our minority official language communities? If so, how much do these funds amount to?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** If we look at the Roadmap initiatives as a whole, we see that large sums will be provided for communities, for instance, all the economic development funds that will go through the economic development groups such as the RDÉE Canada, which has branches such as RDÉE Ontario. In turn, these groups all have internal subgroups in various regions. For example, for matters regarding health, they have networks which are in fact community organizations.

• (1025)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** If an organization receives money from the Roadmap, could you tell us how much, if the information is available?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** I can give you overall figures, but I do not have the figures for each organization. For example, regarding the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities, where the funds go directly to economic development groups outside of Quebec and in Quebec, we are talking about \$69 million over a five-year period. These funds will eventually end up in the hands of the *Regroupements de développement économique*.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Currently, funds are being distributed in accordance with the Roadmap.

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Are you sure of that?

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Absolutely. We are collating the figures for 2008 and 2009 and they will be published later. We know very well that this year, in accordance with the Roadmap, more than \$180 million are being allocated to fund various initiatives by various departments. These funds are granted to community projects or organizations, which include economic development, but there are also funds for health and for various other things such as immigration.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I just have one point to clarify. It is inaccurate to say that no funds are being granted to communities.

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Exactly.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** The associations and organizations that are at work in our communities have also been receiving money since April 1 of last year.

**Mr. Jérôme Moisan:** Yes.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Fine. Thank you.

Have I any time left?

**The Chair:** You have two minutes left.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** I would like some clarification about the funds that were earmarked for culture. Culture is very important in my riding just as it is in the ridings that have minority official language communities. What are the targets of the \$14 million program for culture?

**Mr. Hubert Lussier:** I'll answer this question, Mr. Lemieux.

The program will be launched on April 1. It is already open for submissions. Basically, we will try to do two things. First, we want to support community cultural projects that can have a long-term impact on community vitality. Some projects are for all of Canada and others are local projects. We are trying to do something that will impact the retention and the development of the identity of the young

generation, and to establish links so that schools will not be the only places where the minority language is used. This is the first category.

Regarding the second category, we would like to encourage other kinds of public support, from provinces as well as from municipalities, which are often already somewhat committed, and some are very committed—as is the case in New Brunswick and in Quebec—and in other places perhaps they are not committed enough. We would like to encourage the submission of projects that will encourage them to do more in support of minority cultures.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you.

I would like to clarify that Heritage Canada provides funding for arts and culture across Canada. This \$14 million worth of funding is specifically for official language communities. Do these official language communities also have access to Heritage Canada funding of arts and culture in general?

**Mr. Hubert Lussier:** They do absolutely, and it is over and above what you refer to when you say that the heritage programs and the agency programs already support minority community cultural projects.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Lemieux.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gravelle, do you have a question?

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Yes.

I am very worried about Radio-Canada. I am from northern Ontario where many Franco-Ontarians live. I get many phone calls from senior citizens who are worried that they may lose the services of Radio-Canada. The minister mentioned the fact that advertising revenue for Radio-Canada is decreasing, and this is also the case for private stations. CamWest has asked for help, and we will help them, as we have done for other broadcasting companies. However, it seems we either do not want to or we cannot help Radio-Canada. I would like to know whether we can do something to help Radio-Canada get through this difficult period. Could we grant it some temporary aid, could we give it some extra money to make it easier for Radio-Canada to get over this period, so that there would be no cuts? In many places in Canada, in small communities, especially in northern Ontario and elsewhere in the Canadian north, Radio-Canada is the company that people have access to. Now, because of the coming cuts, they risk losing this service. I would like to know if we can do something to help Radio-Canada get through this temporary period.

• (1030)

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** Mr. Gravelle, I cannot add much to what the minister told you earlier this morning. He explained the conversations he has had with Mr. Lacroix and told us about the assurances he had received. As public servants, we are not in a position to discuss the decision which must be taken by the minister and his colleagues.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** You can convey our concern to the minister.

**Mr. Tom Scrimger:** Yes.

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

That concludes this round. Mr. Chong, however, indicated he would like to ask a brief question. We will then adjourn.

Mr. Chong, you have the floor.

[*English*]

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing.

I'd like to congratulate Mr. Scrimger for his promotion within the department.

I am disappointed that successive governments of different stripes have set targets with respect to the number of bilingual students in Canada and that we've consistently failed to meet those targets. I think this is an incredibly important issue and a long-term problem that we have. At this relatively quiet time in our country's unity, it's the type of thing I think we should put a lot more effort into.

My question is why we are not hitting these targets, why we are going in the opposite direction. Is it a question of money? Is it a question of the way these federal and provincial agreements have been structured? Is it a question of something else? Why are we not hitting these targets?

**Mr. Hubert Lussier:** If we knew the answer as well as we would like, we'd probably do better. It's a multi-faceted issue. Part of it is a question of the numbers of students who do learn the second language—and it varies across the provinces—and how they learn the second language. We know, for instance, that most children in Canada learn French—and I'm now talking about the kids in Quebec learning English—in what we call core French, which is not proving very effective. Immersion is much more effective, and the number of children who go to immersion keeps going up. Mr. Moore is a product of immersion, and he's very proud of it. But we need to emphasize and to better the techniques through which kids learn who

are not in immersion, because you can't put everybody in immersion. You can still improve. You can increase the number of classes and teachers who do immersion.

Core French is not the success we'd like it to be. There's a new method called intensive French, which is a kind of halfway method between core and immersion that is proving quite effective and that is applied in a greater number of places.

The way children are taught is part of the problem. The other one is that when we have set targets maybe we haven't been realistic enough, and when we negotiate the agreements on education one on one with provinces, the targets that the federal government has set itself don't mean very much for them. What we're going to try to focus on in the next round of agreements is targets that belong to provinces themselves.

● (1035)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you to our witnesses.

I would like to make a suggestion to committee members. In his presentation, the minister spoke to our study on post-secondary institutions. If, in our report, we want to refer to the minister's testimony, we would need unanimous consent. Otherwise, we will not be able to include what the minister said this morning in our report. The minister's comments are on the record; he spoke to the issue this morning. I'm putting out feelers. I would like to know whether there is unanimous consent to take into account what the minister said. I'll quickly go around the table. Fine. If I don't obtain unanimous consent, that settles the matter.

Thank you very much. Our next meeting is on Thursday morning.

The meeting is adjourned.

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