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•(0900)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.)): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the 12th meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages. I am replacing the chair for a few minutes, at his request.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Has he been held up by a snow storm?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): I think he's still celebrating the Canadiens' victory.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: That's a good reason.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): This morning, we are starting the study on the big, vast issue of immigration. We think it is useful and definitely pleasant to start by getting a statistical overview. Two experts from Statistics Canada are with us, Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil and Mr. René Houle.

Gentlemen, I hand over to you.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil (Chief Specialist, Language Statistics Section, Statistics Canada): I would like to thank you for inviting Statistics Canada to appear before you. I am here today with René Houle, Senior Analyst in the Language Statistics Section and co-author of the study "Statistical Portrait of the French-Speaking Immigrant Population Outside Quebec (1991 to 2006)".

I'm going to briefly present a number of elements. This will take about 10 minutes. Then we can answer your questions.

In September 2006, the Citizenship and Immigration Canada-Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee launched the Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities. The main objectives of this plan are to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants in francophone-minority communities and to facilitate their reception and their social, cultural and economic integration within these communities.

In June 2008, the Canadian government published the second Five-year Action Plan on Official languages, entitled "Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future." The Roadmap rests on two pillars: the participation of all Canadians in linguistic duality and support for official language minority communities. It provides for investment to be spread across five key sectors, including immigration.

On this subject, the Roadmap states that "[a]llotting funds for research and data analysis will make it possible to better target issues

related to francophone immigration outside of Quebec, and to address the various needs of the communities, the provinces and territories, and employers." In light of these objectives, Citizenship and Immigration Canada has commissioned Statistics Canada to prepare a statistical portrait of the French-speaking immigrant population outside Quebec.

This portrait published on April 6 presents information on the demographic, linguistic, social and economic characteristics of francophone immigration in French-speaking minority communities using data drawn from Canadian censuses from 1991 to 2006.

Before we began this research, Statistics Canada had to focus on how this analytical document would define the linguistic groups to be discussed. The question, then, was what criteria were used here to define what constitutes a French-speaking immigrant. Although there is no standard definition of who is a francophone, the statistical portrait produced by Statistics Canada on the French-speaking immigrants living outside Quebec is mostly based on the concept of the first official language spoken, which is now widely used as a criterion of linguistic definition in studies on official-language minorities.

The fact is that changes over the years in the composition of the Canadian population tend to call for a redefinition or expansion of the concept of francophone group or community insofar as a significant number of persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English nevertheless use French either predominantly or on a regular basis in their daily lives.

Here are a few highlights. Overall, francophone minority communities outside Quebec received little benefit from the demographic contribution of international immigration, owing to the strong propensity of these immigrants to integrate into communities with an English-speaking majority. Moreover, the phenomenon of French-language immigration outside Quebec has become a matter of interest fairly recently, as has the question of its contribution to the development and growth of official-language minorities.

The francophone immigrant population outside Quebec is comprised of two groups: those who have only French as their first official language spoken and those who have both French and English. From a statistical point of view, the francophone immigrant population living outside Quebec is fairly small, both in absolute numbers and in relation to either the French-speaking population or the immigrant population as a whole. However, the relative weight of francophone immigrants within the French-speaking population has increased, going from 6% to 10% between 1991 and 2006, while their weight within the overall immigrant population has varied more moderately, and in 2006 it was, at most, less than 2%. By comparison, it is worth mentioning that the English-speaking immigrant population living outside Quebec was slightly less than 5 million people in 2006 and represented 22% of the overall English-speaking population, against 18% in 1991. The majority of francophone immigrants outside Quebec—70%—are concentrated in Ontario. Furthermore, two-thirds of French-speaking immigrants live in three metropolitan areas: Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

• (0905)

In Canada outside Quebec, the 76,000 immigrants having both French and English as first official language spoken in the 2006 Census, are slightly more numerous than the immigrants having French as the first official language spoken, who number almost 61,000. I've distributed some statistical tables that we could look at a little later.

In some cities, especially Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary, this characteristic is more prevalent, with French-English immigrants outnumbering their French first language counterparts by almost two to one. The study prepared by Statistics Canada shows that the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of these two groups are sometimes quite different.

International immigration to Canada has undergone a rapid transformation in recent decades. Immigrants of European origin have tended to give way to immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America. In this regard, immigrants whose first official language spoken is French stand out from other immigrants in that a large proportion of them come from Africa. Thus, in 2006, Africans accounted for 30% of all French-speaking immigrants compared to 20% in 1991. The main change observed over recent decades was a sizable reduction in the proportion of immigrants of European origin, as their relative weight declined between 1991 and 2006, going from approximately 50% to 40% or less.

Outside Quebec, there are major differences in interprovincial migration patterns between francophones and non-francophones. Whereas francophones tend to settle in Quebec when they migrate within Canada, non-francophones tend instead to choose one of the other nine provinces, especially Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. In Quebec, the patterns are exactly the reverse: Quebec francophones, whether native-born or immigrants, migrate relatively little to the other provinces, whereas a much larger proportion of non-francophones leave the province.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the examination of the types of occupation in the four urban areas studied (Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver) reveals that native francophones tend to move to the remote suburbs more often than immigrants, which

could mean an older settlement of the population among the French-speaking natives.

An examination of linguistic behaviours at home and at work among francophone immigrants who have settled outside Quebec shows that there is competition between French and English spoken at home and used in the workplace. Among French first language immigrants, about half report speaking French most often at home, while 32% report speaking English and 10% a non-official language. However, the use of French at home increases to almost 73% when people reporting speaking French regularly at home are accounted for, even though French is not their main home language.

Among immigrants for whom both English and French are the first official languages spoken, the use of French spoken at home is not very widespread, reaching 13%, even including the number of French speakers who report speaking that language at home on a regular basis, rather than most often.

The transmission of French depends on both the type of couple with children in their home and the context in which that language is used. French is firstly transmitted by couples in which both partners are solely French first language: in their case, the majority of minor children have French as their mother tongue, speak it most often at home and have it as their first official language spoken. The situation is entirely different for the other types of couples, where the transmission of English or a non-official language dominates. However, among couples formed by immigrants having both French and English as their first official languages spoken, 40% of children have French, alone or in conjunction with English, as their first official spoken language.

In conclusion, the analytical report prepared by Statistics Canada has, in some places, distinguished between immigrants for whom French is the only official language spoken and those who cannot be assigned either French or English as their first official language. In other places, it has redistributed the French-English category as the Treasury Board Secretariat does in applying the Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations.

Whatever the variants used in the different parts of this study, it is difficult not to conclude, following a comparative examination of the two sub-populations of immigrants, that those with French and English as their first official language spoken differ as much in their characteristics and behaviours from immigrants with French as their only first official language as from the rest of immigrants (i.e., non-francophone immigrants).

• (0910)

Indeed, French-English first language immigrants share many more behaviours and characteristics with non-francophone immigrants than with French first language immigrants.

These results seem to suggest that inclusion of immigrants with a double first official language spoken in the francophone immigrant population is an issue that poses quite different challenges from those related to the integration of immigrants for whom French is the only first official language spoken.

Thank you for your time.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. Houle, do you want to add anything?

Mr. René Houle (Senior Analyst, Language Statistics Section, Statistics Canada): No.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

There's a lot of material there. And we're going to start our first round of questions.

Mr. D'Amours.

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

Don't worry, I won't be talking to you about translation this morning, but rather about immigration, and I'm pleased about that.

You mentioned a number of points. In my constituency, we have what we call the Carrefour d'immigration rurale. It was funded in 2005 so that it could lay a foundation enabling francophones living elsewhere than in Canada to settle in the rural regions.

Earlier you mentioned one point that provides food for thought. There are a lot of francophone communities across the country, and not necessarily just in urban regions. Many of them are in rural regions.

I have a question, and perhaps you can clarify the situation. Would that be because of a poor knowledge of the rural regions? Are the rural regions not promoted enough to francophone immigrants? That would explain why, when they arrive in Canada, they naturally head toward the larger centres that enjoy a higher profile. Don't think it's just because there are more shopping centres. Perhaps that can be explained as being the result of a higher profile or something else.

Is it the result of a lack of information or a lack of visibility? Do you have any information on that subject?

• (0915)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Your question is obviously very relevant. We know that the regionalization of immigration has been a major issue for a number of decades. Quebec in particular has tried on a number of occasions to regionalize immigration over the past 30 years, with variable and mixed results.

We are still trying to understand the reasons why immigrants settle in urban rather than rural regions. In general, immigrants believe they are more likely to be able to find a job in urban areas. Sometimes it's also a matter of reunification with members of their own community that encourages immigrants to settle in urban areas. We observe this particularly in the Ottawa region: we observe in particular that francophones are located in the eastern part of the city, whereas immigrants are much more concentrated in the downtown

area and in Vanier, in neighbourhoods very close to the downtown area.

It's also very much a matter of networks that are already in place that can facilitate the integration of these immigrants. To give you a quick example, some studies have shown that the francophone members of the clergy in Ottawa play a central role in the integration of French-language immigrants who are members of their parish, through the support and services they offer them.

Rural areas are much more homogenous. The understanding of immigration issues is not the same and definitely not as acute as what you see in the urban areas.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: We can manage to convince francophone immigrants to come to a rural community, but the other challenge is to keep them in the rural community. When these people who have come to settle in rural areas go elsewhere, is it to urban francophone communities or to anglophone communities, for various reasons? Do you know that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I'll answer you in a somewhat simplistic way, even though your question isn't simplistic at all. We try to determine whether our community is francophone or not and where it is located. People often decide to immigrate for employment-related reasons, without there necessarily being any link with integration in a francophone community. The reasons that push them are first of all economic. Subsequently, if there is clearly a supply of services in French, they will more naturally tend to go there. We have observed that in Toronto.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Even if it means going to an anglophone region.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Pardon me, Mr. D'Amours, we'll come back to that.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: It's already over?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): It already is, unfortunately.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: You're strict.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Mr. Nadeau, it's your turn.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Good morning, gentlemen.

Personally, I'm interested first and foremost in the halting and even reversing of assimilation and the loss of the French fact in Canada as a whole where assimilation is greater, with the exception of Quebec. We know that the closer you get to Quebec geographically, the less assimilation there is, and the more you move away from it, the greater assimilation is. Consequently, we understand why assimilation is not as strong for Franco-Ontarians near the Quebec border and for Acadians and francophone New-Brunswickers near Quebec. There is some, but it is not as strong.

My question is perhaps hypothetical. I don't know what has been studied statistically, but has the settlement of francophones in Canadian minority francophone environments outside Quebec had an impact on increased assimilation? Does that help combat assimilation and the loss of the French fact? Is there anything you can tell us about that?

• (0920)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Of course, everything depends on the geographic reference you use. At the provincial level, results may be different from those you'll get if you use a more regional scale. For example, in Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, a major effort has been made to welcome and integrate French-language immigrants. At the local level, they have achieved quite significant success.

However, survey results have shown that immigrants who settle in minority francophone areas are disadvantaged in the labour market if they do not know English because that happens. Consequently, there is nevertheless a fairly significant need to know both official languages in order to integrate, economically speaking.

I wouldn't say that immigration raises or lowers the assimilation rate. You clearly can't ask immigrants to do what francophones can't do themselves. Having said that, we have to pay attention to the way we define the issue of assimilation because we realize that a significant proportion of francophones speak English at home. On the other hand, French is regularly used in the home, which, in a way, may allow French to be used in the community.

The issue of assimilation is not necessarily clear. It doesn't just happen in the family environment; it also comes into play in the community. If there are community centres and centres providing services in the language, it will be possible to increase the importance and use of French.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I visited the Pavillon Gustave-Dubois at the École canadienne-française in Saskatoon last January. I must say that I taught there at one point. I left 10 or 12 years ago. However, I noticed that the school population included people who were francophone, even though they were not born in Canada. That is a very poignant example. I'm not talking about Saskatchewan as a whole, but about a place that I know well and where I went.

On the other hand, in the Pontiac region in Quebec, which is one of 125 constituencies in the National Assembly, French is losing ground. We even see that assimilation is doing its work. This issue is closer to me both politically and geographically. Earlier you talked about learning French in the case of people who used to use it but have forgotten it, as well as of new Canadians who want to learn it. However, it must not be forgotten that things often happen in English when people enter a workplace, at many locations in the federal public service, for example, or in private business, when you leave Gatineau and go to Ottawa. I'm not saying it's the same everywhere in Ottawa, but that's the current situation in a number of places.

Is there some way to coordinate efforts to enable these newcomers to retain or to learn French and to function, even though the labour market is mainly anglophone?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Mr. Corbeil, I'm going to ask you to keep the question in mind. We can come back to it later.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: All right, you're a kind man.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Mr. Godin, go ahead, please.

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

Welcome, Mr. Corbeil and Mr. Houle.

For immigrants to New Brunswick, the figure is 11.7. Is that a number or a percentage? Are we talking about 11.7% per year?

• (0925)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: That's the 2006 Census. We don't check every year, but, in 2006, we calculated the percentage of immigrants for whom French was the first official language spoken, and we also determined that it was 12% of them. In overall terms, we're talking about some 3,000 persons. If we add the 600 persons who use both languages, that totals 3,600 immigrants. In short, in New Brunswick, French is the first official language spoken for approximately 3,600 immigrants.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You say that 70% of francophone immigrants living outside Quebec settle in Ontario.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Exactly, and that's mainly in Ottawa and Toronto.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Two-thirds of francophone immigrants live in one of three cities: Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Have you previously determined why they settle in those cities?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: The fact that Toronto was one of those cities is not very surprising, given that it already takes in most immigrants in general. Immigrants who speak English and French, like all other immigrants, try to settle in Toronto. As for Ottawa, the fact that it is the federal capital and close to Quebec means that French-speaking immigrants very much tend to settle there.

I know that efforts are being made by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to New Brunswick. Of course, the arrival of immigrants is a relatively recent phenomenon in New Brunswick. It's evolving. Most immigrants obviously settle in Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa because those three cities already take in most immigrants, regardless of language.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Do you check what goes on at the embassies? Do you know what kind of promotion is done for regions other than Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: The Citizenship and Immigration Canada people would be in a better position than I am to answer that question.

Mr. Yvon Godin: All right, but you haven't—

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: No, we don't have any information on that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's fine.

It's true that New Brunswick is making an effort right now. The province is less well positioned than Quebec, for example, which I congratulate. It should not be forgotten that Quebec already has immigration offices in other francophone countries, which gives it the opportunity to attract people to Quebec. Quebec will not promote New Brunswick, and I don't blame it. It's up to Citizenship and Immigration Canada to do that.

However, it is surprising to see that 70% of people go elsewhere. Do they explain why? Is it because they have more of a chance to get a job in Toronto?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: With regard to Toronto, I must point out that, outside Canada, when people think of a city in Canada, they don't necessarily think of Moncton. That's unfortunate, because I like Moncton a lot.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I agree with you.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: We're going to focus—

Mr. Yvon Godin: I agree with you. When Industry Canada advertises to attract immigrants to Canada and someone says not to go to Val-Comeau, New Brunswick and that it would be much better in Toronto if you have a business, that doesn't really encourage people to come to New Brunswick.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: You have to bear in mind that New Brunswick has approximately 235,000 francophones—

Mr. Yvon Godin: One-third—

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: —outside Quebec. Ontario has nearly 500,000. Given the fact that there are nevertheless a lot of francophones in New Brunswick and that they are essentially concentrated in the north, that sometimes becomes a less crucial issue. In all cases, it's less the case than in Ontario, for example, where the proportion of francophones is less than 5%.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Godin. We'll come back to that.

Mrs. O'Neill-Gordon, it's your turn.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you both for being here this morning and thank you for the presentation you've made.

This report certainly has a lot of statistics for us and gives us much information to consider and understand the many areas of settlement of immigrants.

My question is this. The author of the statistical portrait opted to choose FOLS as the identification criterion. Why was this criterion chosen, and what are the pros and cons of this choice?

• (0930)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Thank you for your questions.

In the past, we used to use the mother tongue criterion. One of the reasons was that prior to 1971 the mother tongue question was the only question asked, along with the knowledge of official languages question, in the census. Following the recommendation of the Laurendeau-Dunton commission in the 1960s, Statistics Canada added a question in the census on the language spoken most often at home.

We used to use the mother tongue criterion because it was easy to make historical comparisons, at least from the 1950s onward. However, since the middle of the 1980s, because of the levels of immigration, which kept increasing, more and more immigrants tended to adopt English or French as their main language. It was considered by many that to use only the mother tongue variable—that is, English, French, or “other”, or “allophones”, which was used in the 1970s in Quebec—was somewhat restrictive. They wanted to take into account those who didn't have French as their mother

tongue but who could use French on a daily basis at work or in everyday life. That's why the Treasury Board asked Statistics Canada to develop a variable called “first official language spoken” at the end of the 1980s—in 1989, to be exact. We derived two methods. One was adopted by the Treasury Board.

Overall, in some places it makes a very important difference. If you look, let's say, at Canada outside Quebec in general, there isn't much difference between using the mother tongue variable or the first official language spoken variable, because we have 4.1% who have French as their mother tongue and 4.2% who have French as first official language spoken. In Quebec, it makes a significant difference, because 8% of the population have English as their mother tongue, compared with 13% of the population who have English as first official language spoken. What this takes into account is the attraction that English can have on immigrants in Quebec, or used to have in the past.

When we look at some cities specifically—if we look at Toronto, for example—if we take into account the “first official language spoken” variable, more than 40% of the francophone population has French as the first official language spoken. If you take the mother tongue variable, the rate would be much lower, around 10% or even less than that. Just to give you another example, in Ottawa it's around 15%.

So using the “first official language spoken” variable is much more inclusive, if you like. It takes into account the adoption by the recent waves of immigrants who have come to Canada of one or the other official language.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon: According to the statistical profile, the francophone immigrant population comprises two groups, those who have only French as FOLS and those who have both French and English. Why is this distinction made, and should the committee always take this distinction into account in its study of immigration?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Your question is very relevant. The thing is that usually what the Treasury Board does is, and the approach that was adopted in the early 1990s was, because we couldn't really attribute French or English to a fair number of immigrants outside Quebec, to split them into two groups. That is, they took half and put them along with the francophone population and took the other half and put them along with the anglophone population. Obviously, depending on the approach you take, if you include all of these people together, you have a population close to 130,000 people; if you split them up, you have a population of 100,000 people.

The thing is, if you want to develop strategies to integrate immigrants into the francophone population outside of Quebec, we realized that this was important, because these immigrants—those who only have French, and those who have English and French—do not come from the same countries, do not have the same linguistic behaviours and characteristics as those who only have French. Because the intention of the federal government is to increase francophone immigration outside Quebec, in hoping that they will contribute to the vitality of official language minorities, it is important to make this distinction because of their behaviours and characteristics that are different.

• (0935)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

Mrs. Zarac, go ahead, please.

Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen.

I'd like to talk about interprovincial migration. I know perfectly well that many immigrants decide, after arriving in a province, that it does not meet their expectations with regard to quality of life. In fact, they mainly come for economic reasons and for a quality of life. Consequently, employability is very important for them.

Have you conducted any studies on that type of migration and its causes? Does it cause an imbalance? What could we do to ensure that there won't be this migration that discourages linguistic duality?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: On the whole, interprovincial migration is a relatively limited phenomenon, if you consider the francophone population in general. Of course, as we've seen from one census to the next or from one intercensal period to the next, there can be significant population movements, both francophone and non-francophone.

For example, between 1996 and 2001, more francophones left Quebec than settled in Quebec, and the difference was nearly 10,000 persons. Those people went mainly to Ottawa and Toronto. A number of them went to settle in Calgary and Vancouver. Following those migratory movements, over a period of five years, the francophone population outside Quebec rose by nearly 10,000 persons. Five years later, we observed a significant return of francophones who were originally from Quebec. They returned to Quebec and the francophone population outside Quebec declined by 5,000.

In general, immigrants who tend to leave Quebec are clearly immigrants who use French less than others. Perhaps it isn't their mother tongue or their first official language spoken; they tend not to have it from the outset. Sometimes this barrier can impede movement.

We do not see any considerable movement of francophone immigrants; there is no considerable movement, for example, from Ontario and British Columbia to Quebec. There may be some movements between border provinces, but that is not a very significant phenomenon. Of course, the economic issue is fundamentally important. We have heard all kinds of stories. For example, to prevent a school from closing, people absolutely wanted to attract immigrants. Immigrant couples arrived, everyone was happy, and the school stayed open, but the parents couldn't find work because their specialization was in information technology and there were no positions in that field.

This is an important consideration and it will greatly influence movements, much more than any intention to join a given linguistic community.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Let's talk about employability and about the importance of working for parents. We know that the immigrant

population is better educated. Have you compared the average salaries of those people who go and settle in minority communities with those of immigrants who settle in the major centres?

• (0940)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: In studying the censuses from 1991 to 2006, the 2006 Census in particular, we found that French-speaking immigrants are more educated than other immigrants, based on the number of university degrees. In addition, the main field of study or training will have a very high impact on ability to find work.

For example, Africans represent approximately 30% of the immigration population outside Quebec. Unfortunately, we observe that Africans are at a particular disadvantage in terms of the unemployment rate. In fact, they are more disadvantaged than less educated immigrants, as they may also have more specific training in fields in greater demand, for example.

That said, the unemployment rate is slightly higher among francophone immigrants, despite the fact that they are better educated.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you very much.

Ms. Guay, you have five minutes.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Good morning gentlemen.

Issues related to immigration statistics are highly complex. I see you have prepared a document, but I believe the idea will have to be developed much more.

In particular, there is a very serious immigration problem in British Columbia. We're not talking about francophone or anglophone immigration, but about Chinese immigration. We're trying to organize all that, and it's not necessarily easy. In Quebec, of course, people go to the major centres such as Montreal.

However, there is a program in Quebec designed to help immigrants settle in the regions. In my constituency, it's called *Le Coffret*. They're offered all the services so they can integrate. In other words, they integrate twice as fast as immigrants who settle in a large city.

I'm not going to hand over to my colleague because he's already had a lot to say, but I will let you answer his question.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Learning English and French is clearly fundamentally important for the integration of immigrants in regions outside Quebec. Learning English is clearly so for obvious reasons.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): We're hearing a little echo.

Thank you.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: In fact, we always try to see whether this affects health services. We always think about the issue of active offer; we often think about awareness, so that immigrants who come and settle are well informed about the means available to enable them to enter the labour market and the communities.

I know that a fairly big job is being done in British Columbia in this area. Unfortunately—I don't know whether you can say it's unfortunate—these are often bilingual centres. For francophone immigrants to integrate or be entitled to certain resources, they consult anglophone or bilingual centres. That simply shows the importance of knowing and using both official languages.

As for regionalization, we know that the distribution of francophones is quite particular in Vancouver. And we can't encourage immigrants to go where there are no francophones. Vancouver is much more urban, although it's quite spread out.

In the case of Ontario, francophones essentially live in the east and in rural areas, whereas immigrants are in urban areas. Urging immigrants to move far away from the centres where there are more job opportunities is another matter all together.

I think we can help immigrants by communicating the information. If an immigrant knows he can obtain services, send his children to a French-language school and get a job if he moves to a particular region, the incentive to move is greater than if that information is not shared or is non-existent.

I don't know whether that answers your question.

• (0945)

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Are you letting me continue?

I've realized one thing. In some francophone centres—it doesn't matter which ones—permission was given, although that caused a scandal, to provide English courses to immigrants in order to take economic necessities into account. That's understandable. However, even though they want to combat assimilation and help the community, they're giving English courses to immigrants so they can integrate further. You can see the difficulty.

For me, it's preferable for immigrants to be in highly francophone areas if we want them to integrate into the francophone community, whether it be in Quebec, New Brunswick, Acadia or in the north, or in Ontario, in the towns and villages, in order to integrate economically as well.

Francophones themselves acknowledge this situation and say they want to retain immigrants by teaching them English. The primary link with the francophone community won't develop economically in French. As for integration, we find ourselves in a paradox that further encourages assimilation. That's the situation.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Please answer quite quickly, Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I'll answer you very quickly as follows. When we conducted the survey on the vitality of the official language minorities in 2006, nearly 50% of francophones outside Quebec stated, based on their experience, that they identified with both the francophone and anglophone groups. A kind of bilingual identity has emerged in Canada outside Quebec, and I would say that it's quite an issue.

The question is as follows. Francophones have this dual identity. For example, they use English at work, but nevertheless contribute to the development of the francophone community, in community centres and at home, and they send their children to French-language schools. Can they cope with this bilingual duality or identity? Is it

necessarily harmful? That's an open question. There's a whole debate over this.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

Mrs. Glover, go ahead, please.

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

Welcome to our committee. I'm going to take advantage of the question Mr. Nadeau asked in the first round.

Mr. Corbeil, you said that Saint-Boniface had had a number of successes. I'd like to know what you were talking about.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: We noticed that immigration outside Quebec represents 2% of francophone immigration. We have to see what's going on in the field, more locally. For example, we recently learned that a population of 400 Rwandan immigrants settled in Winnipeg. Those immigrants know French and want services in French. However that's not just the case of the Rwandans. Other immigrants from other regions of Africa also want to contribute, to integrate into the community and use the services. Of course, in examining their distribution over the territory, we realize that, although they do not settle in exactly the same locations as francophones born in Canada, these immigrants are nevertheless nearby and also tend to use services and to send their children to French-language schools or, at least, to schools offering immersion programs. So there is a will locally.

In various conferences, people have told us about experiences in the field where attempts were made to integrate these immigrants. We heard about a quite significant degree of vitality in the francophone community in Winnipeg and Saint-Boniface.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Are you aware of the strategies used to achieve that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I don't have that information, but I know that, among the important factors, there is the issue of integration in job search efforts. There is integration through community centres, for example, through activities organized by francophones to which these immigrants contribute. So these are activities that promote integration since children can attend French-language schools. People are trying to integrate them into the broader francophone community.

When we look at statistics in Manitoba, we realize that we're talking about approximately 2,600 French-language immigrants. You'll say that's not very much, but Winnipeg francophones feel they're developing this approach. I also know that efforts have been made to provide information at offices outside Canada to encourage immigrants to settle in the francophone community in Manitoba.

• (0950)

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you very much.

I was aware of that, since I am the member for Saint-Boniface, but I wanted it to be shared with the committee. I can tell you that, in addition to the strategies you've already mentioned, we have others. For example, in Saint-Boniface, francophones are not only people who have French as their first language, but also those who, like me, were born anglophone and like to speak French—francophiles. Together we're helping to improve the situation of francophones. Embracing the cause of francophones in Saint-Boniface is working very well. This enables us to achieve some success. Recently, because we seriously believe in the idea of living in French, I approached our French-language newspaper to have it distributed to the immersion schools. These are some little things that we're doing.

You talk about services, and that's what I'm interested in. I'm not usually considered a francophone, according to your census. There is an impact on services provided, because those services are determined based on your census. So there are reasons to change the definition. In that way, we would clearly see that, in Canada, there are a lot more people who would like to have services in French than your formula or form shows.

Are there any other suggestions for improving the forms so that they more accurately reflect expectations, so that services are offered more widely to the public who, like me, are not really considered as rights holders? Has anyone considered having another form or another definition?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Go ahead quickly.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Quickly, I would say that you've raised a very current and extremely complex issue. If we had the day, perhaps we could examine it. I'll give you just one example. In the survey on the vitality of the official language minorities conducted in 2006, we surveyed 31,000 children outside Quebec who are considered anglophones, since English is their mother tongue, and who use that language most often at home, although those children regularly use French at home, with the French-speaking parent, and they attend an immersion school or a French-language school.

Let's talk about the definition issue. We previously tried something at the request of the Treasury Board Secretariat and following publication of the 2001 Census, since we added a question on other languages used in the home. With regard to people who have both languages, this is based on the approach we use, of course. If we divide them into two groups, we see that English is very often the other language they regularly speak in the home, apart from their unofficial language or third language.

So there are all kinds of issues related to the definition. I believe people are already examining this issue right now. It's quite a complex issue and one that definitely deserves some attention.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. D'Amours. No, pardon me.

Mr. Godin, pardon me.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You're pardoned.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Yvon Godin: I don't know whether you touched on this. For example in British Columbia, how many people in the Chinese

community, who learn both languages, have learned French? What are the results?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: That's a very good question. I don't remember the number off the top of my head. We could easily provide you with that information. There is indeed an interest. It's a phenomenon that we've observed. Sometimes, when we look at statistics, we of course get the impression that people whose mother tongue is English tend more to attend French immersion programs at English schools. However, in the case of a not negligible percentage of immigrants in Vancouver, parents choose to send their children to an immersion school because they figure there are two official languages in Canada and that may be a significant asset for their children.

• (0955)

Mr. Yvon Godin: They weren't on board the two boats that left England and France and fought all the way to Canada.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: That's it.

I don't have the exact number, but there are quite a lot of Chinese parents who choose to send their children to immersion schools because they figure that may be an economic advantage for their children.

Mr. Yvon Godin: However, you say you have the figures, don't you?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: We have those figures in the administrative files of the Tourism Division and of the Education Statistics Centre at Statistics Canada. We know how many people attend those schools by region. However, we don't have those figures by mother tongue of the parents. That aspect is more often anecdotal.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Who at Statistics Canada decides who will be entered on the form? If you don't already have those figures, I think it would be important for you to get them.

The people in the Chinese community in Vancouver have a great deal of will. I was there with the Canada-France Interparliamentary Committee. We thought it was incredible the number of people learning French and the number of people on the waiting list to be admitted to French immersion schools.

Perhaps it would be a good idea to look at the number of immigrants who are prepared to learn French.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Of course there are surveys at Statistics Canada. There are tonnes of surveys and there's the census.

However, to answer your question, I would say that one of the difficulties lies in the fact that these statistics are usually gathered by means of provincial administrative files. As a result, the major challenge is not only to make the forms of all the provinces somewhat homogenous, but also to include new questions in the forms. It's here that discussions with provincial representatives can become necessary.

For example, we know that, in Quebec, to gather statistics on education, we ask questions on mother tongue and language knowledge, questions that are generally not found in the forms and the files the other provinces send to us.

So the challenge is a special one and requires cooperation among the provinces at the national level.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Could you send the other figures to the committee?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Absolutely. I'll try to send you the figures we have on the subject.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'd like to answer Mrs. Glover's question. You said you would need an entire day to talk about it. Perhaps you could take advantage of my last few minutes to continue talking about it?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Right now, I would say that question is related to the amendment to Part IV of the Official Languages Act. To date, we've used the first official language spoken as a criterion. Moreover, there are people who believe that we shouldn't be concerned with statistics, that we should instead simply stick to the communities, to the schools, etc. Unfortunately, this question is often based on statistics and depends on the figures we use for the census. Of course, we could consider everyone living outside Quebec who is able to speak French; there are nearly 2.5 million of them. However, are they necessarily likely to request services in French?

Mr. Yvon Godin: That can be a double-edged sword. For example, knowing the number of francophones who speak English, we might take it for granted that they don't need to be served in French.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Indeed. We know that nearly 45% of francophones outside Quebec live in municipalities where they represent less than 10% of the population and that 60% of those francophones speak English as their main language and mainly identify with the anglophone group. That's a challenge and also an issue. We may suppose that, if French were more present, they would use that language more, but we don't know that.

As you can see, there are some issues. On the one hand, we want to include as much as possible those who are likely to request services in French; on the other hand, a number of francophones do not request French-language services because English is their main language. So there are many issues in this area.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

Now it's your turn, Mr. D'Amours.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to continue on the sections of the forms, or data collection, which is related to the decisions made in each of the provinces. It may be difficult, since the same questions are not necessarily asked or no effort is made to obtain the same data in each of the provinces. So it is a major challenge to develop a national picture of a specific element. It's virtually impossible.

• (1000)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: At Statistics Canada, as I mentioned to Mr. Godin, we conduct an enormous number of surveys on various topics. When we conduct surveys, often funded by various federal departments, we are able to ask the same questions in all provinces

and of all respondents. To minimize the volume of responses, of course, we often try to use administrative files. If we already have information in administrative files, why would we ask questions in the context of surveys?

The problem is better documenting the language in which people study. For example, we know how many children attend immersion schools, how many children attend minority schools, but we don't know, based on those files, the mother tongue of those people. That information is not available. We had to wait for the Survey on the Vitality of Official Language Minorities in 2006 to really establish that 50% of children who have a French-speaking parent attend a minority school. Otherwise, we didn't know that because, in certain cases, anglophone children were attending minority schools because there was no immersion program. These issues are quite—

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Time is passing quickly, Mr. Corbeil.

Earlier you said that immigrants don't necessarily settle where francophones are in a community, but that they often settle near major centres in general. If I understand correctly, the problem is not necessarily attracting francophone immigrants to Canada, but rather finding solutions for rural areas. In the major rural areas—not in the major urban regions—the solution is the same for non-immigrants as for immigrants. You talked about work, the economy and various services in general, which are not necessarily related to language, all factors that are already problematic. If these people are looking for work, the economy and services, they'll settle around the major urban areas, even if that's not necessarily where the francophones are, and the problem of the rural regions will persist. We can very well take in all the immigrants we want, but until we provide a solution to the problem of the rural areas, it will always be hard to convince francophone immigrants to settle in a rural area, since they will be looking for the same conditions as non-immigrants.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Yes, you're absolutely right. This is a phenomenon that we've been observing for the past 10, 15 or 20 years. Francophones are clearly migrating from the rural to the urban areas. What we often observe is that the youngest, as in all communities, regardless of language group, leave the rural areas to go and live in urban areas in order to study. In many cases, when they study in urban areas, they subsequently stay there to hold a job.

So there is a phenomenon, and you are absolutely right, that affects—

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: It's similar.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: —all the communities. I'll briefly mention an interesting observation that came out of a study that we conducted on health professionals and the official language minorities, at Health Canada's request. In a city like Toronto, nearly 25% of doctors were able to hold a conversation in French, despite the fact that the weight of francophones is nevertheless quite low in that city.

So there's the entire question of visibility and active offer of service which can also encourage people who have moved to an urban area to use the language. There is that aspect. But you are right about the disconnect that often exists between rural and urban areas, in attracting immigrants. We see it among non-immigrants as well.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): You won't have time to ask another question and get an answer; so we'll move on.

I believe it is Mrs. Boucher's turn. You can check; I haven't been strict at all.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good morning, gentlemen. This is very interesting. I have a lot of questions, but I'm going to ask two.

I saw in your profile that the francophone immigrant population is relatively young. As we know that young people are more open to the world and to many subjects that are of less interest to our generation, does that change the data? In addition, what services would that young francophone population need in order to fully integrate into Canadian society and to grow and develop in French?

In the same line of thinking, we have heard a lot about French-language services. When you ask the questions contained in your booklets for statistical purposes, why don't you ask respondents whether they would like to receive French-language services? Perhaps that might change the situation as well.

•(1005)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Thank you for asking me some very relevant questions.

The immigrant population, in particular the population that has two official languages, English and French, is indeed younger. What kind of impact can that have? From what comes to mind, knowing that school is the major driver for vitality in the community, over the years, as a result of the aging population and the fact that French is less and less being transmitted to the younger generation, we may wind up with schools where we have a lot more immigrants than non-immigrants. That depends on the regions, but that's a situation that may exist.

I know that the question of rights holders and section 23, which is based on mother tongue and not on the first official language spoken, is a completely different issue.

In a way, for rights holding parents who have not studied in French and whose mother tongue is not French, this is another issue. I would say, of course, that with a younger population, if there is a different dynamism, there is a space that could well be occupied perhaps to a greater degree by those immigrants.

With regard to services, I repeat that it is extremely difficult to ask questions in a census. We already have a census that includes nearly 54 questions. So the burden of the answers is significant.

However, in certain surveys, the Canadian Community Health Survey or the one I referred to earlier on the vitality of the minorities, we asked francophone respondents whether they had requested services in their language and whether it was important for them to have services. In general, in response to that question, the majority of francophones say that, even though they don't use French regularly, it's very important for them to receive services and to ensure that

their children speak the minority language. There is a clear desire for services. However, when we ask them why they didn't ask to be served in French, a degree of resignation sometimes emerges and suggests that, ultimately, that would be too complicated or take too long because they assume the specialist or the person who provides the service to them doesn't speak French. These are answers that we received in that survey.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We talk a lot about francophones, but I know some francophiles who would be very happy to get certain services in French. What can we do to help them?

At some point, perhaps we won't have this issue, but there are francophiles who speak fluent French even though they are not of francophone stock. It may be their second language, but they are also rights holders. What do we do for them?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: There would definitely be a way to gather that type of information.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That's correct.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: But there would have to be a will to conduct that type of survey and to gather that type of information. Francophiles often say they are open, regardless of the language of service. That's not always the case of individuals of francophone stock.

I'm sorry, but I don't remember your last question.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: My last question was precisely on this subject, but I have another one.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): We'll have to come back to it.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: All right.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Mr. Nadeau, go ahead, please.

•(1010)

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

Mr. Corbeil, a little earlier you said something that has stayed in my mind. We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation in which we are asking francophone immigrants, regardless of their country of origin, to fill a void and thus to contribute to the continued existence of the French fact, whereas francophones and French Canadians are not doing that job themselves. They are under social, historic and even daily pressure that pushes them to join a surrounding anglophone majority. They no longer even identify with their origins, with what their parents taught them, with the cultural heritage they gave them. That's a crucial problem.

I remember one young woman who, following her studies at the University of Ottawa, was hired as a teacher at Zenon Park, a very rural community. That girl was originally from Ottawa, an urban area. She had asked whether there was a shopping centre nearby where she could do our shopping. The recruiters, who really wanted to hire this teacher, answered that there was a large shopping centre in that place. The large centre in question was in fact a Sears depot. So you can somewhat see the paradox. When people want to attract immigrants to a certain place, they at times deform the facts.

We consider Eastern Ontario a rural area. I'm originally from Hawkesbury and I've made the unfortunate mistake of talking about "my home village of Hawkesbury". People from there responded by saying that there were now five traffic lights in Hawkesbury. So I said "in my home town of Hawkesbury" because I didn't want to be stoned that day. There's also the aspect of the proximity between Montreal, Quebec, and the region east of Ottawa, which I would say is the basic ingredient that very much shapes the sense of identity. Acadians have that pride; they have a national identity of their own, which is a major strength.

That said, we are talking about linguistic aspects here, about the French fact, about the francophonie, but are we also talking about the ethnolinguistic aspect, about the cultural identity that is that of francophones? You mentioned it. Someone may say: "I'm a francophone, but I consider myself an anglophone."

The other aspect is religious practice. Some people come from the Maghreb, from North Africa, for example, where there are francophones, or even from Europe. We've seen, in the history of Quebec, Huguenots, that is Protestants, denied access to Catholic schools and having to attend English schools. That's ancient history, but it happened to people of my generation and older than me.

According to your statistics, do the francophones who arrive in a place where certain aspects of this francophone reality do not meet their cultural, religious and identity aspirations stay in that environment for a long time, or do they tend to head toward the major centres where they can find a nucleus?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Thank you for your question. I would say it's quite complex. We know that, if we adopt this concept of immigrant integration, it's of course linguistic, cultural, economic and social integration. As we mentioned, language is only one of the factors of that integration, of course.

Quebec is a quite obvious example. In the Maghreb community in Quebec, there are various types of integration, various approaches. We know very well that the Arabic mother tongue community in Quebec is one of the largest groups of recent immigrants and that those immigrants will not integrate easily. It isn't just the linguistic aspect that is involved. We are pleased to receive francophone immigrants, but cultural and social integration, particularly in more "traditional" communities, if we may use that term, raises obvious challenges.

When I went to make a presentation before various representatives of the French-language school boards of Eastern Ontario following Ontario's decision to adopt a new definition of francophonie to include immigrants, they were very interested but, at the same time, somewhat novices in the field since there are no immigrants in that region. For them, the entire issue of immigrant integration in francophone communities was a novelty, whereas that is not the case in the major urban centres. It may vary by region, but when it comes to the rural regions, there is often more than just the issue of linguistic integration; there is the act of entering a community that does not at all have the same customs and usages, as it were.

•(1015)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

This brings us to the end of the third round. I admit I was hoping Mr. Blaney would be back by now so I could ask a few questions myself. However, since we're not starting the fourth round, I'm going to hand over to Mrs. Glover. With my colleagues' permission, I'll ask a few questions as well, and then, if other members of the committee want to add something, we can come back to them, which will bring our meeting to an end. Then we'll proceed with our steering committee meeting.

Mrs. Glover, go ahead, please.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Chairman, I'm giving you the chance to ask your questions before me because we may be interrupted.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): You think a vote is coming?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I'm sharing my time with you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

Mr. Corbeil, in your presentation you provided some interesting statistics on the francophone population outside Quebec. You said that the percentage of immigrants increased to 10% of that population, whereas it was 6% in 1991. So it has increased from 6% to 10%. In the anglophone population, again outside Quebec, I believe the percentage has increased from 18% in 1991 to 22%.

I'm trying to get an overall picture. I'd like to have the absolute figures, first, so we can see the weight of each relative to the francophone community and anglophone community as a whole. Can you send that to the committee?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I can even give it to you right away, if you wish.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): First I'm going to ask my question. Then you can do it if there is any time left.

Do you have any statistics on the anglophone population and anglophone immigration in Quebec during the same period of time?

In addition, you stopped at 1991. Would the 1986 Census questions make it possible to go back even further, or did the questions change at that time?

Then you said it seems that francophone immigrants are settling in different places in urban centres, more downtown than in the suburbs. Can we consider that that can be explained by mainly economic reasons, or are there any other reasons that you could give?

Lastly, about a month and a half ago, Statistics Canada made public its projections for the visible minorities populations for 2031. Are there any linguistic projections for 2031? Is anyone planning to prepare them, if there aren't? Could you start that, and how much would it cost?

Thank you. All that cost me two and a half minutes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: He won't have time to answer all the questions you've asked.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): The answer can come later.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I'm going to answer your first questions quickly. Even by redistributing the English-French category, we're talking about approximately 5 million English-language immigrants outside Quebec; there are about 100,000 French-language immigrants. That gives us have an idea of the numbers.

In Quebec, according to the 2006 Census, there are approximately 850,000 immigrants, of whom 325,000 are anglophone and slightly less than 500,000 francophone. It is interesting to note as well that we know that 33% of anglophones in Quebec, for example, are immigrants and 8% of francophones are immigrants. That also gives us an idea of the numbers.

On the other hand, let's look at how many immigrants are anglophones. We see that 38% of immigrants are anglophones and 57% francophone. That's a lot, of course, as a result of the past weight. As regards immigrants who arrived very recently, that is to say in 2001 and 2006, 64% of immigrants in Quebec are francophone, as opposed to 31% who are anglophone. That gives you an order of magnitude.

You asked the question whether there was a way to go back further in time. That's possible, of course. In 1991, we regrouped all the language questions, which reduced the number of multiple answers to census questions because people were able to express the language knowledge they had and to understand the questions asked them after the fact. Obviously, we could easily go back to the 1970s, at least starting in 1971, because we have one question on the language spoken in the home. So we have the question concerning the first official language spoken.

Your second-last question concerned the reasons... We know that immigrants have a greater tendency to settle in urban areas rather than rural areas, depending on the province, of course. In New Brunswick, for example, we know that the francophone population generally lives more in small municipalities and in rural rather than urban areas. However, there has been a significant migration to Moncton in recent years.

• (1020)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): I must interrupt you there. I have to stick to the clock.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: All right, that's fine.

Perhaps I can briefly answer your question on population projections. I don't know whether that interests you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Go ahead.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Projections have been done for visible minorities. It is complicated to project in time—to 2031—what the francophone population in Canada will be relative to the anglophone population. A lot of assumptions have to be established because we have to try to take into account migration, language transmission, language transfers, and so on. It's quite a large-scale project. No one is currently doing that kind of study, or has already done it. More standard or more conventional projections have been made in the past, in Quebec, among others, by Marc Termote.

However, based on the model that has been developed and the information that has been distributed on visible minorities, this approach is relatively new and has not been used for other purposes.

I know it is currently being done for aboriginal peoples. It's a project, a type of study, that could cost between \$450,000 and \$500,000 and could require about one year of work. In so doing, we would be able to establish these kinds of projections.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

Are we doing a fourth round, colleagues?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I have a question.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Go ahead, Mrs. Glover.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to go back to the will we were talking about, regarding the question that we could perhaps ask in the census.

I think this is quite important for our immigrants. A number of immigrants back home speak not only an African language, but English and French as well. Since the census will ask the question one way, they will answer that they speak English. And yet they speak both English and French, and based on that answer they will not be counted among the people who are entitled to French-language services. That's what troubles me a great deal. It's troubling not only for immigrants, but also for Canadians.

You talked about a will. There was some question of a will regarding the question suggested by Mrs. Boucher. We should ask who wants French-language services rather than ask people whether they were born francophone, whether French is their mother tongue and so on.

How could we emphasize that will? To whom do we speak to demonstrate that will? We want a question to be asked so that we can count all those who want to receive French-language services. How do we do that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I'm going to answer you by going back to what Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Godin said. You have to be aware that this can also be a doubled-edged sword. If we ask people whether they want French-language services and a not negligible number of francophones answer that it's not particularly important for them, what do we do? The question is nevertheless worth asking, I believe. Some people can no longer carry on a conversation in French, but are still considered by some as belonging to the francophone community because French is their mother tongue. However, the possibility that those people will request French-language services is very low. On the other hand, people may request French-language services when they are not considered francophones.

• (1025)

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I completely agree with Mr. Godin that rights holders should not have their rights withdrawn. We could ask those who are not identified as rights holders whether, since they are bilingual, they want to receive French-language services, even though their mother tongue is not French.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Some thinking is currently being done at Statistics Canada, but, as you know, cost recovery is often an issue in surveys at Statistics Canada. One survey is very important at Statistics Canada, and that's the General Social Survey. Every year, we address a variety of themes such as victimization, social networks and so on. Of course this is possible, to the extent that we can insert a number of specific questions in a survey. Those who fund these surveys must simply want to insert those kind of questions. The General Social Survey involves a sample of nearly 25,000 persons.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Chairman, I therefore suggest that the committee determine whether it wishes to push this matter further. I don't know whether we want to discuss it another day, in committee only, or whether everyone already agrees that it is reasonable, relevant and feasible. I leave it to you to determine when we address the subject. Can you ask the question right away?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): I think the question will definitely be addressed when we write and approve a report.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: That's it.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Mr. Godin asked whether he could speak for a few minutes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would like to ask a question about immigrants who attend university. Do you know how many of them do not go back to their country of origin and ask to stay here in Canada?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I don't have the number in mind, but I can tell you that, since the 2006 Census, we have been asking where people earned their highest degree. So we can determine where they were five years earlier. However, the big challenge for the census is emigration, which we can't get a handle on. Here I'm talking about people who leave the country. When we conduct the census, they are no longer here to tell us that they were in Quebec or Ontario five years earlier.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'm not talking about the ones who leave, but the ones who stay.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: In the 2006 or 2011 Census, we are able to ask where they earned their highest degree. Some say it was in Canada. Then we ask them how long they have been in Canada, and they answer three years, for example. That at least enables us to obtain information indirectly on the number of people who have earned that degree. Those who earned it outside Canada—

Mr. Yvon Godin: Can the question be asked more directly?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: What do you mean?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Can we simply ask them what made them come to Canada?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: That would be a bit difficult in the context of the census, but it would be possible as part of a survey. That type of question was asked during the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada.

Mr. Yvon Godin: At the Université de Moncton, they've made considerable efforts to attract immigrations.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): Thank you.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I had a question on immigrants at the universities. In Quebec City, we have the Université Laval, where an enormous number of Africans are registered. There are a lot of immigrants in my constituency. These people, who are already very highly educated before they arrive and who go to university, have even more trouble finding a job. You mentioned that earlier. That's a provincial government matter, but what could we do at the federal level to make those immigrants stay here? Have you previously studied the immigrant retention aspect?

● (1030)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): We'll let Mr. Houle answer that.

Mr. René Houle: In fact, foreign students are not immigrants.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: They're not?

Mr. René Houle: These people come to Canada to study, and we give them study permits.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: All right, I understand.

Mr. René Houle: We don't necessarily give them the right to stay afterwards. Many leave. For retention purposes, there's a whole complex process and you have to go through Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Mauril Bélanger): All that's left is for me to thank you. Mr. Houle, I wanted to thank you for your active listening, but I also thank you for your answer and your attention. Mr. Corbeil and Mr. Houle, thank you very much for being here this morning and for the information you've given us for the purpose of undertaking what appears to be quite an interesting study. We'll see where it leads us.

We'll take two minutes to say hello to our witnesses and the steering committee will come back briefly to establish the agenda for future meetings.

Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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