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## **Standing Committee on Official Languages**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, November 30, 2010**

**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**



## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

● (0845)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order.

Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), this morning we are considering the 2009-2010 Annual Report (Volume II) of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which was referred to the committee on Tuesday, November 2, 2010.

We have two representatives of Library and Archives Canada, Mr. Daniel J. Caron, who is Librarian and Archivist, and Mr. Mark Melanson, who is Senior Director General, Corporate Resourcing Branch.

I welcome you and, without further ado, invite you to make your opening statement.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron (Librarian and Archivist, Library and Archives Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Blaney.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. I am appearing before you in response to the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Official Languages which was tabled on November 2. That report contains an evaluation of the performance of Library and Archives Canada as measured against its obligations under the Official Languages Act.

I'm accompanied here to by Mr. Mark Melanson, as he oversees the implementation of the Official Languages Act within our institution.

Library and Archives Canada combines the holdings, services and staff of two organizations that have now been merged: the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada. Our essential mandate is to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada for the benefit of present and future generations; to be a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada; to facilitate in Canada cooperation among communities, including official language minority communities, involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge; and, lastly, to serve as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions.

[English]

The face of information has changed substantially in the last decade. There is now superabundance; rapid creation, multiple formats; unprecedented access; and expanding user influence. This picture is in direct contrast to that of the past, which was characterized by limited creation and quantity, mediated access and decisions, authoritative sources, specialist interventions, a limited number of fixed formats, limited sharing, and fewer players. All of this calls into question the very basis of the traditional practices and theories that have driven the management of information, librarianship, documentary heritage, and the development of Canada's continuing memory.

Library and Archives Canada now needs to determine how to achieve optimal results in this constantly evolving environment to stay relevant to Canadians.

[Translation]

As the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, I am leading my institution through a process of modernization that touches all of our principal business activities in order to ensure that LAC respects and maintains its legislated mandate of acquiring, preserving and making accessible Canada's documentary heritage for present and future generations.

During this process, I draw upon my experience as the former president of the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions to ensure that our new and emerging organization embodies in an exemplary fashion the spirit and intention of the Official Languages Act.

In general, recognition and respect for official languages is a question of respect for colleagues and Canadians. It is a matter of institutional and constitutional sustainability, of reinforcing our comparative advantages and of making Canadian values more vibrant in our daily life. In short, it means respecting our founding principles.

The future of official languages in Canada depends on our willingness and our ability to make linguistic duality work. We do not need to wait for new rules and regulations; we need to use what we have, to be respectful of our values and to be creative and innovative.

Canadians expect that their federal public service will be institutionally bilingual. Not only to be able to serve Canadians in the official language of their choice, but also to nourish policy thinking from the work and ideas emerging from the two official language communities.

[English]

With regard to the publication of the Commissioner of Official Languages annual report, I would like to respond with respect to LAC successes, areas where progress can be made, and areas where we have taken significant steps to improve.

In particular, LAC received perfect scores for the provision of its services in both official languages, in person or by phone. Concerning the active offer of service by telephone, Library and Archives Canada was one of only three institutions to receive this perfect score.

As for the application of the Official Languages Act in the work environment, Library and Archives Canada is proud of its performance, having attained the highest grade given among the 16 federal institutions evaluated.

Finally, with respect to the comprehensive measures taken by LAC to promote the vitality of official language minority communities, I would like to mention that LAC was evaluated during the first year of a four-year action plan for official languages.

● (0850)

[Translation]

Within the allotted time frame that allows for the completion of LAC's action plan, it is understood that we will need to make some adjustments beyond the first year of its implementation, especially when we take into consideration the nature of capturing a community's documentary heritage.

Gone are the days when a national archive could decide on its own what is the appropriate collection of heritage documents for a linguistic minority community and determine how this heritage will be accessed. A modern organization like LAC seeks to form partnerships with the members of the minority communities in order to have them participate meaningfully in addressing the fundamental questions of their documentary heritage. This process of meaningful consultation and collaboration is the foundation of LAC's action plan for promoting the vitality and sustainability of the official language minority communities.

For example, this year at the Conference of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Archivists, a collaborative project was undertaken to elaborate a national strategy for the documentary heritage for Franco-Canadian communities that includes the participation of the territorial archive of the Yukon and the provincial archives of New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, along with the National Library and Archives of Quebec and LAC.

Presently, the member organizations are engaged in important consultations that will determine the principal parameters of the project and the criteria that will be used to document a shared heritage.

[English]

It is also envisioned that the formation of this network will afford LAC with the opportunity to share with the official language minority communities its growing expertise in the digital realm. Indeed, the transition from analogue to digital communications can

empower these communities to transcend the limitations of geographic isolation by enhancing the communications between community members and provide better communications with federal government departments. Social networking offers many opportunities for community building, and LAC, in partnership with the communities, can help document the particularities of this transition to the digital reality of the 21st century.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, the promotion of Canada's linguistic duality is a core principle at the heart of the modernization project at LAC. In fulfilling our mandate to provide Canadians continued access to their documentary heritage, we will continue to work with the language minority communities to ensure that their heritage is also properly captured.

Thank you. I would be happy to respond to your questions.

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

Without further ado, we'll begin the first round with Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Caron and Mr. Melanson.

I'm a bit confused. I heard what you said. That's all well and good; it's even exemplary. However, the mark you got from the commissioner is not very good; it's a D. You also got a failing mark in one or two areas. How do you explain that?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I'm very much aware that the overall mark is not very high. That's because the commissioner put the emphasis on part VII of the Official Languages Act, that is to say consultation with the communities. You have to understand that Library and Archives Canada is an organization that doesn't have programs, in fact, barely a very little program at National Archives of Canada. So our organization has no tradition of consultation with communities outside its federal mandate. That gives us a very low mark. Little work has been done with the outside.

The modernization project has put in place a new collaborative approach with all communities. Last week, I signed a request from the Department of French Studies at the University of Waterloo to connect all the archives of the francophone missionaries across the country. That had never been done and that's what we're doing now.

● (0855)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** How long have you been there, Mr. Caron?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I've been in my position since April 2009.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Who was responsible before that?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** It was Mr. Wilson.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Melanson, were you there before that?

**Mr. Mark Melanson (Senior Director General, Office of the Senior Director General - Corporate Resourcing Branch, Library and Archives Canada):** I've been involved in the official languages file since April of this year.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** How long have you been involved in the file?

**Mr. Mark Melanson:** I've been involved in the official languages file since April of this year.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** So we can't accuse you of what was done when you weren't there. Note that the amendments to the act adopted in 2005 came into force in 2006. You say you are in the first year of a four-year plan. That means that, for two or three years, not much was done with regard to part VII of the Official Languages Act.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** A number of aspects were established, such as the Canada Project.

Pardon me, I gave you the wrong answer. I've been at Library and Archives Canada for six years, but I've been at the head of the institution since 2009.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** That's what I meant, at the head. In that capacity, you are responsible for the act's implementation.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, absolutely. Before that, a number of things were done, perhaps not as rigorously as they are being done now, but, with the Canada Project, among other things, there are aspects that engage the country's official language communities.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** May we have a copy of that four-year plan?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, we'll send it to the clerk.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** In that plan—I haven't seen it—do you plan periodic, annual or semi-annual consultations with the communities, not with the provinces or provincial or territorial agencies but with the communities?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** The project as such operates on an ongoing basis. Project officers met on Monday and are doing so on an ongoing basis as well. We started with the provincial network in order to go after the various players, and new players are joining it as we go along. So I would say that it's ongoing. It isn't once or twice a year; it's really a project that is designed to build a French Canadian archival network. That's the project as such. It's not something that comes up again periodically, but it's a project that should produce results in 18 or 24 months, I believe.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** You say "on an ongoing basis"; that's fine, but the official language communities are organized in provincial or territorial associations that have an annual base, which moves to the capital a few times a year. I want to ensure that contact won't be by chance, but rather will be systematic, and that contact with representatives of the communities will be planned on a regular basis.

I'm absolutely convinced that, at that point, projects and collaboration will follow. However, even without that rigour, that communication discipline, it will be done as it's done in a number of other departments. With all due respect to the other departments, Mr. Caron, it's a bit of a mess. If I clearly understand your remarks, that's not your intention.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I share your opinion, and we want to be very rigorous. However, I must tell you that not everyone is interested in this archival project. That's why we started with the provincial archives, which are leading us to the French Canadian associations, and those that are interested will indeed participate, but that will be done in a rigorous and systematic manner. As to whether

it will be in cooperation with the major associations, I can't tell you that for the moment.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I have an example of a possible project. In the National Capital Region, there is a French-language daily, *Le Droit*, that will soon be celebrating its centenary. Unfortunately, not all its archives have been digitized. Could there be a cooperative effort between the Canadian archives and *Le Droit* to digitize all its archives so as to make them available?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We would have to discuss that, but we aren't engaged in digitization projects. We are currently involved in joint catalogue development projects so that people know where information is, whether it's available. We aren't involved in an extensive digitization project.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** So you're telling me that couldn't be done.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I'm not saying that couldn't be done.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Even if that's what the community wanted?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** If that's what the community wanted, that could become a project, but we're not involved in digitization projects.

• (0900)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** All right, thank you.

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

Mr. Caron, we've seen that one person in the federal institutions is responsible for the linguistic duality file, the official languages champion. Do you have such a champion in your organization, or a person who...?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes. We're changing champions. Ms. Zahra Pourjafar-Ziaei was our champion, but she is leaving. Mr. Melanson will be taking over in a month or two.

**The Chair:** That's Mr. Melanson who is with us here with morning. All right. Thank you.

We'll continue with Mr. Nadeau.

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

Good morning, Mr. Caron. Good morning, Mr. Melanson.

I must admit to you sincerely that, as the Bloc Québécois official languages critic, I was very surprised when I saw the mark. And that obviously wasn't in the happy sense of the term. The surprise was twofold because I visited the centre in Gatineau. I have previously used your services on Wellington Street, here in Ottawa. I thought of a host of things to try to explain this situation.

I must admit that, as a consumer, and later as a member, I had no grounds to criticize Library and Archives Canada. However, the Commissioner of Official Languages has conducted much more in-depth studies. At the time, when I met Mr. Wilson—and I also met you, Mr. Caron, concerning another file—he told me about the difficulties involved in transferring from the Wellington Street building to the place where you are now. I believe a lot may have to be done with regard to the organization's culture. There was at least one petition to avoid transferring people from Ottawa to Gatineau. They said it was

[English]

because they didn't want to go there—out in the bush.

[Translation]

You know the story better than I do. People didn't want to go and work in Gatineau, a remote francophone place on the other side of the world. However, that place is less than 17 km from here. So there is that aspect of the internal culture.

I'm thinking in particular of a statistic concerning personal service. It's in the commissioner's report. It states that, in 100% of cases, you visually announce that you provide active offer. I tip my hat. However, it states that the figure is 56% when it comes to opening your mouth and answering people who want service in French. So only 56% of services are provided in French.

What kind of electroshock is required to make people understand...? Particularly since we are in the national capital region. Elsewhere in the country, the shock may be great, and the unilingual anglophone majority may be very much an issue, but here... Mr. Melanson, you have the file in hand. Mr. Caron, you have it as well. You are the "file-bearer", if I may use that expression.

What has to be done for you to earn As the next time, across the board, as regards your organization's entire culture?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** If I compare our culture to those of other departments, I would say it is nevertheless very bilingual. What has happened in recent years is that the modernization project and the merger caused a lot of staff movements. We're trying to take quite innovative initiatives, such as the single window which makes it possible not to have to search for published and unpublished material. It's possible that, as a result of staff movements, the linguistic profile has not been at a sufficient level for offer of service purposes. However, all that will be corrected. We are going to comply with this act. We want to offer our services in both official languages. That will be corrected very soon.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** At one point in his career, Mr. Wilson was responsible for archives in Saskatchewan. We previously talked about that. Among other things, that concerned the Louis Riel archives, which were of considerable interest to me. We talked about part VII of the act. The historical societies could be involved. I could give you names, but I know you're going to do the work. You could definitely speak to francophone associations in each of the provinces. They probably work more at the provincial level than at the federal level, since they are concerned with local history.

In Saskatchewan, they talk about Willow Bunch, who was originally baptised Hart-Rouge. There's the entire phenomenon of assimilation and name changes, but that's entirely local history. At the federal level, you probably don't have those archives. We'd have to see how it's possible to help those francophone organizations that do business with the provinces that don't respect the French fact and that don't have to do so under our Constitution. They don't have to respect the French-language communities.

There are definitely ties that should be established with those organizations. You know as well as I do that, when you're in the minority, you know its history, but you don't know it when you are the assimilator.

Has Library and Archives Canada previously offered its support to more local archival projects?

• (0905)

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes. In fact, we're starting. The modernization project was put together in 2009 and put in place in February 2010. Its original aim was collaboration. That obviously includes the minority communities. The historical societies and other organizations were gradually approached, because there are a lot of them. There was a partners forum in October of this year. We're talking about the major partners. That gradually led us to identify the people we can work with. When we say "help", that means in all kinds of ways, whether it be with catalogues, methodologies, and so on, since we don't have any programs as such. We want to connect all the archives so that we can weave a pan-Canadian web of archival documents that will be known and accessible to the population as a whole, from sea to sea. That's our goal, and we're working with those organizations. One of those organizations, whose name I can't remember, approached us. We're working with it, but that will be done gradually.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nadeau. I'm convinced that your evidence will be appreciated by our witnesses.

We'll go to Mr. Gravelle.

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

Thank you for being here Mr. Caron and Mr. Melanson.

Allow me to say that I find it incredible that the minister responsible for official languages, James Moore, can submit his departmental performance report without talking about official languages. Are you prepared to integrate official languages into your five strategic choices that serve as departmental priorities?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes. In fact, all our priorities include the official languages aspect, in everything we do.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Why isn't that written down?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Do you mean on paper? When you refer to the five strategic choices, you're talking about—

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** We're talking about the strategic choices of Library and Archives Canada. The five choices are here: ... concluding its focus on five strategic choices that have served as our departmental priorities. They are listed in the table immediately to the right of this section. This is the departmental report.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Those are the strategic choices that were put forward before the modernization. I know what you're talking about. You're talking about the five strategic choices that had been made and that were replaced as part of the modernization exercise, including the official languages issue, but not expressly stated.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Then are you prepared to fully integrate the official languages into your next business plan? That's a serious gap. We find the same problem in the document you put on line on the modernization of Library and Archives Canada; there's no mention of official languages.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, no doubt we can mention it, absolutely.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** What specific instructions have you received from the Clerk of the Privy Council regarding official languages? Can you send them to the committee?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** That's entirely possible.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** In what specific way do you report on official languages to the Clerk of the Privy Council? Can you send your report to the committee?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We'll do that.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** In 2010-2011, you will have to reduce your ongoing expenditures by \$4.6 million. Your business plan states that Library and Archives Canada may not be able to carry out its main activities and discharge its obligations for lack of resources or budget.

What is your plan to reconcile those cuts with your official language responsibilities?

• (0910)

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I don't believe that will affect official languages. To absorb the shock, I believe we simply have to find innovative ways of describing things, for example, and make greater use of information technologies in order to absorb those cuts.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** How do you explain the fact that the Commissioner of Official Languages gave you an overall mark of D, when your 2008 assessment under the Treasury Board Secretariat's Management Accountability Framework states that you are fully performing your linguistic obligations?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** That sort of goes back to the question that Mr. Bélanger asked. There is one point that I perhaps didn't mention earlier. We will have to resolve that by communicating with the commissioner more. We have regional offices, but they are in fact document warehouses for the federal government. They thought they were offices where we offered services to citizens, but that's not the case. There's no active offer of service across the country. I believe that was misunderstood. That should be clarified. That's our fault. We will have to work with the commissioner more so he understands that role. Those offices, those warehouses are located across the country: Halifax, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto and in the west. They aren't open to the public and are used solely to store federal government documents.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** The Library of Parliament tells us that you intend to consider official languages "once all of [your] policies have been renewed". That's a poor management practice. Why not seize the opportunity to consider official languages in developing your policies?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We consider official languages at all times in our policy development.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** All right.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

We'll now go to the parliamentary secretary, Mr. Rickford.

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Caron and Mr. Melanson.

We have an interesting situation at Library and Archives Canada. There's good news, but there's also bad news.

Mr. Caron, I'm going to read to you a little. Mr. Joncas from *Francopresse* says:

Note that, with regard to personal service, Library and Archives Canada is the only institution that had employees available to offer services in both official languages at all times.

Bravo! That's the good news. Then he says:

However, that same institution actively offered bilingual services in person on only 56% of the visits by the commissioner's representatives. By telephone, four out of 16 institutions were able to offer bilingual service at all times.

That's clearly the bad news.

Can you tell us in a few minutes the reasons for that deficiency and what specific measures your institution intends to take to improve its performance, particularly of course with regard to the active offer of bilingual services in person?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes. Our objective is obviously to reach 100%, as mentioned earlier. To do that, we're going to put the necessary measures in place, that is to say we're going to have people in the reference department who can function completely in both official languages, from a to z, not simply in the introduction, but in the service as a whole. We're going to take the necessary measures by reviewing our reference department, and therefore reviewing staff assigned—

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** I believe that's already the case, first of all. There's a difference, I believe.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, I believe that's the case. It's somewhat what I was explaining earlier. We have moved a lot. We merged two reference departments: one department for published material and another for unpublished material, which led us to make a lot of changes and as a result of which that somewhat got away from us.

What we have to do now is to correct the situation. We have this new reference department which is unique and we must ensure that it offers services in both languages, in fact 100% of the time.

• (0915)

[English]

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Thank you.

Mr. Caron, as you know, the Council of the Network of Departmental Official Languages Champions is equipped with a formal structure and a permanent secretariat. I think, as an exiting chair of the Council of the Network of Departmental Official Languages Champions, you made a presentation entitled "The Evolution of Official Languages" during an armchair discussion at the Canada School of Public Service on February 19, 2009. It's an interesting read, and I just have a couple of questions for you in this regard.

During your presentation you said the following:

...we must forget the old concept of "mandatory bilingualism" and continue to develop what I would call a "positively necessary and voluntarily adopted bilingualism."

Can you tell us what you mean by this? What does this mean from exactly the point of view of the impact of this discussion on Library and Archives Canada?

You can take a couple of minutes here.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Absolutely.

What I meant and what I continue to believe is that over and above the obligations we have, we must carry a spirit of bilingualism within the institutions and within all federal institutions.

I made that speech also to the heads of federal agencies that, yes, there are some rules we need to follow, but we need to do more than that to make it lively and to make it possible also.

So it's to create a real spirit of bilingualism within the institutions; that's what we are after. It's more than being able to get a "B" or whatever. This is not the spirit we're looking for. We need to have a true bilingual institution that can serve Canadians in the language of their choice.

This is coming to me from my readings from the 18th century, which tell us about our founding principles. This is grounded in those founding principles of this nation.

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Thank you.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** It's to understand—not only to be able to speak, but to understand—where it's coming from.

[Translation]

I don't want to go into the major historical speeches, but if we recall the exchanges between General Murray and the Lords of Trade, at the time, they demanded this bilingualism which consisted not only in speaking the language, but also in understanding what it meant, on both sides.

[English]

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Thank you for clarifying that.

I think I have a minute or a minute and a half left, and I want to revisit a line of questioning that had started earlier.

With regard to positive measures, we had a little trouble getting.... Again, I'm always going to the specific. What specific mechanisms ensure your accountability under part VII of the act? Can you give us some really concrete examples?

You mentioned a few, and I'd like to give you a chance to finish that.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** There are two things we're going to do. We're going to do our own audit process, so mystery shoppers—

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Will you be using the same kind of methodology that the commissioner used?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Exactly.

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** He changed that this year, as we saw with the changed methodology and a more rigorous analysis on results rather than process.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes. We're going to do that to have a better sense of what the situation is.

As well, we were one of the first to have professional trainers to train our people in both official languages. It's a partnership with the Canada School of Public Service. On site, we have two professors to support our employees to become bilingual, in fact, and it's working quite well. We will pursue that to ensure that we're also supporting the employees to reach the right level.

[Translation]

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

For the second round, we're going to begin with the committee vice-chair.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I'm going to speak briefly to Mr. Caron, since Ms. Zarac has been kind enough to lend me some of the time allotted to her.

Your agency is one of the 17 or 18 that belong to the Department of Canadian Heritage. Is that correct? The heads of those agencies meet regularly, or perhaps once or twice a year.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** All the heads of all the small government agencies meet.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, I'm talking about the agencies included in the Department of Canadian Heritage. No, you don't meet? I had the impression you met. My question would have been: when you meet, do you talk about official languages? So I have the answer: you don't.

There are meetings at the deputy minister level—you are the equivalent of a deputy minister—there are meetings.

• (0920)

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, but as I am an agency head, I don't attend the deputy ministers' breakfast on Wednesday. We have lunch once a month on themes—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Are there any themes concerning official languages at those breakfasts?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** There haven't been since I've been there. There have been at the meetings of the small agency heads. There have been at that time.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** All right. Thank you.

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

Good morning, Mr. Caron.

If I look at your language of work result, I see that you got a good mark: B. That means it's good.

However, it's a bit contradictory that the mark you got for offer of service is 56%, which is not a very good mark. That seems a bit contradictory, and I wonder whether you have enough bilingual resources in your service. If the answer is no, what do you intend to do?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, we have bilingual resources and we also have bilingual profiles.



I was a bit surprised, and that's why we're going to conduct some slightly more sporadic audits based on the commissioner's methodology. We were surprised by that mark. Our resources are bilingual, and we aren't lacking bilingual resources. In any case, the profiles of the benchmark positions, the people who offer the service, are bilingual.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** So you're saying all your employees are bilingual?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** In the reference department.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** You mentioned that two departments had been integrated. Did that cause a problem?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** It's possible that, at that point, we took people who weren't bilingual and put them in bilingual position profiles. They don't meet requirements immediately; they have two years to do it. So we're going to see what the situation is.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** When you say you're going to take the necessary measures, can you be a little more specific. What measures, what actions are you going to take?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We're going to ensure that our people who occupy benchmark positions in offering services have the skills to do so. We're also going to ensure they do it because I think that's what's important.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** If I understand correctly, you're going to conduct a reassessment of their... Perfect. Thank you.

With regard to your modernization process, what position do the official languages occupy in that project?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Everything we undertake with regard to modernization is done in both official languages. The description, the modernization project as a whole, is very bilingual, very Canadian. We work a lot with Quebec's Bibliothèque et Archives nationales. I met the dean of the Campus Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta. The purpose of this project is to bring together all Canadian documentary resources, in both official languages, for the official language communities, both anglophone and francophone.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Would I be right in saying that your modernization project is the work plan for implementing your responsibilities under the Official Languages Act?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** It concerns the modernization of the entire institution.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Do you have one that specifically concerns your responsibilities in this area?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We have a four-year official languages plan. It will be submitted—

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** It's going to be submitted?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** It's a plan that Mark will be sending to the clerk.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** All right.

I'd like to know when the plan concerning your official languages responsibilities was implemented.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** That was in 2009, last year. So we're in the first year.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** There was nothing before last year?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, but perhaps it wasn't as official and organized.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Can you give me an example?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We had an annual plan. We could submit a copy of that. It's more official now.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** All right.

I'd like to go back to the second recommendation of the Commissioner of Official Languages. It concerns promotion of official languages. He specifically states in his report that this is one of your weaknesses.

What measures are you going to take in this area?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We've already begun a consultation and collaboration effort. In particular, we are setting up a pan-Canadian network. This includes the French Canadian network of archives that we are implementing together with the various interested parties. That's one of the activities, but there are others, involving libraries, that we are considering.

We're going to work in cooperation with the players in the field. We don't offer our services directly across the country. We work with others. We aren't responsible for local or provincial archives. We're going to support these stakeholders and work in cooperation with them, since our mandate enables us to do that. So that's what we're going to do. We have put particular emphasis on French Canadian archives.

● (0925)

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

We'll now go to Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** It's Mr. Nadeau who is going to speak.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Caron, page 27 of the report refers to writing. It states that, at all 16 of the organizations that the commissioner examined closely—and that includes yours—employees' ability to write in the official language of their choice left much to be desired. They were unable to get a good mark in that area. That really troubles me.

I am the member for the constituency of Gatineau; Mr. Bélanger is a member in the Ottawa region. Many francophones live there. We're talking here about 138,000 Government of Canada employees. Obviously a number of them are at your organization. These people are entitled to work in their language. However, people who are very supportive and respectful of their language, French, have stopped writing for their supervisors in French because people look at them funny. In addition, their supervisors send their work for translation and it occasionally comes back to the person who originally wrote it in French, to see whether the translation has been well done. The two versions regularly are slightly different, and in some instances the subtleties of certain aspects have disappeared.

Are you aware of the fact that these francophones write in English most of the time to avoid problems with their bosses?

Are your employees encouraged and invited to write in the official language of their choice? We agree that it's always French that suffers in these situations.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I'm aware of that difficulty, of course. However, once again, I'm a bit surprised at the results because, since I've been at the head of the organization—and even before that, when Mr. Wilson was there, because I was very close to the subject as well—all employees wrote in the language of their choice. There was never any issue or dynamic of that kind, which can be irritating. I was never previously aware of that as official languages champion at the institution. Even when I wrote to the minister, I did so in French. So I didn't sense that. However, it's always good to recall it—I'm aware of that—because some things may happen unknown to us. However, I have sensed no resistance, no obligation to work in a language other than the language of choice at the institution since my arrival.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** All right. There's another statistic. I'm still referring to Volume II of the report, which concerns communication with one's supervisor.

Three out of 16 "do the job". What does "do the job" mean? It depends on the evaluation method. In addition, 13 out of 16 do not meet the criteria. I know that we're touching on a delicate subject and one involving a degree of subjectivity. Can you tell us whether the francophones you know at the institution, or the majority of them—I know it's a big machine, you have a number of buildings, and you aren't in all the buildings every day—can speak and conduct professional discussions in French in the language of their choice with their supervisors at Library and Archives Canada?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** My answer is yes. I encourage it and I know that my management committee encourages it as well. I have never gone to a meeting where there were no discussions in both languages and without translation. It's a very bilingual department—I admit that I myself am a bit surprised at the results. I've worked in nine departments in my career, and I can say that I have never seen any tension over language or writing at this department. I'm nevertheless going to follow up on the commissioner's comments because I believe he knows his job. However, we don't have that kind of tension. Wherever I go, wherever my executive committee people chair meetings, it's always done in both languages. When we chair a meeting, we ensure that the two languages alternate in order to encourage that dynamic.

• (0930)

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

I will now give the floor to Mrs. O'Neill-Gordon.

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

I want to welcome Mr. Caron and Mr. Melanson. Thank you for joining us today and taking time to be with us.

I also want to congratulate you on the score you did receive. We also know there is always need for improvement in anything you do. I guess that's part of being a teacher; you always look for more improvement with everybody.

With regard to your attitude in saying that we must forget the old concept of "mandatory bilingualism" and continue to develop what you call a "positively necessary and voluntarily adopted bilingualism", I must say I like that idea. Anything you do on a voluntary

basis comes from the heart. It gives a more pleasant and more positive spin to it all.

So just with those two characteristics, of being positive and being more pleasant in your department, I'm sure that too will make a big difference in your score, and it is something people like to receive when they visit your department.

As a New Brunswick MP, I also was happy to hear you say this morning that the conference of federal, provincial, and territorial archivists has included the province of New Brunswick as one of the provinces. You know and I know that there are many francophone pockets in New Brunswick. Bilingual services are very important in New Brunswick as well as right across our great country.

As well, being a teacher, I certainly recognize and realize the importance of high services, great services, being provided in libraries, because libraries provide us with lots of information. We need to have it available for all of us to receive.

Getting down to my question, we all know that the Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for official languages, and I'm wondering to what extent you work with Canadian Heritage to define positive measures to ensure greater compliance with part VII of the Official Languages Act.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We honestly haven't had to discuss it with Heritage at any.... We're quite autonomous in the way we administer our act, and this was not subject to discussion. I think it's understood that we need to do that.

As I explained earlier, we don't have offices across the country, so this is not something on the radar. I think because of the new digital environment, it is becoming more obvious that we're going to have to be out there in different ways. I think it's going to be more important. But we've never had to discuss it with Heritage.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Okay.

Is your institution required to report to the heritage department on what it has achieved with respect to the implementation of section 41 of OLA? If yes, can you please provide us with a copy of that report?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Sure.

**Mr. Mark Melanson:** As far as I understand it, we have not had to report to Heritage under section 41 at this point.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Okay.

As we see on page 34 of the report, the Canada School of Public Service has signed agreements with various federal institutions such as Library and Archives Canada. These agreements stipulate that instructors from the Canada School of Public Service can offer language training to employees.

Do many of your employees take this opportunity, and can you say how such an opportunity will help them improve their performance and the performance of Library and Archives?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, it's very popular. In fact, I think it's a full class. We could provide you with numbers, but it's popular, and we will continue to offer it. It helps a lot. It supports the delivery of our mandate in both official languages.

● (0935)

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** You can provide us with those numbers?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We can do that.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** I'm wondering, as a New Brunswick MP, what kind of working rapport you have with the New Brunswick archives.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** This is interesting, because I'm doing a tour of the country, and New Brunswick is in January.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** That's an awful month to choose.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We have a good relationship with Marion Beyea, and we work very closely; we meet twice a year, all together, but I'm going to New Brunswick to develop a more close relationship with them. I'm also going to talk about *les Acadiens* at the same time, because she's part of the *franco-canadien* network.

So I can tell you more next time.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** What area of New Brunswick will you go to in January?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We're meeting them in Fredericton.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** That's not too bad. If you were going up to the Acadian peninsula, you might have been in for lots of snow or something like that.

I wish you could go during a better month, but anyway, you'll be welcome, I'm sure.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon. We'll stay tuned.

[Translation]

We'll now go to Mr. Gravelle and complete the second round.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I can't congratulate you. If I had gone home with a report card full of Es and Ds when I was at school, I wouldn't have been very popular. I can assure you of that.

**A voice:** You would have been punished.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** I really would have been punished.

In my opinion, the fact that you think that bilingualism should be introduced voluntarily represents a major step backwards. I attended a bilingual school. When someone goes to a bilingual school, he's attending an English school. It's not a French school or a bilingual school. I hope that will never be a voluntary decision.

When did you last meet with the Commissioner of Official Languages in person to discuss official languages?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** When did I meet Mr. Fraser?

[English]

—last summer—

[Translation]

It was in the summer, when he came to the meeting of agency heads. In fact, it wasn't a face-to-face meeting.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Have you met him face to face?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** No.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Don't you think that might be a good idea to go and meet him personally so he can give you specific instructions on how to improve the situation?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** We could do that. We worked very closely, Mr. Fraser and I, when I was president of the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions. Yes, absolutely, we can meet.

Moreover, we are going to analyze the results because we ourselves were surprised. We're not pleased with the mark either.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** It seems that some people are happy, but I'm not. Es are not encouraging.

From a practical standpoint, do you find the commissioner's work useful?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes, I believe so.

I think the commissioner does very useful work that sends very useful messages about how we work.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** How could the commissioner make your life easier? What else could he do to help you?

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** I don't think he can do anything more, no. I think he's doing his job. He's an officer of Parliament who is doing a good job.

Perhaps I'd like to go back over what you said about volunteer work. I think that may be misinterpreted. I entirely agree with the act. What I said at the School of Public Service was that we had to go beyond that and go with something a little more fundamental than simply B or C levels, that it had to be more felt. I want to be clear on that point. It's not one or the other; we have to go further.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** To go further, you think it would be better if the effort were voluntary.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** No, the act is right. What I'm saying is that, even with the act, we have to go further personally. It's also a matter of people, individuals, who have to get involved in this linguistic duality. That was my message.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** All right. Thank you.

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

We've just completed the second round. That ultimately completes the meeting.

Mr. Bélanger has a question. If I have committee members' consent, we'll proceed diligently

● (0940)

[English]

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Monsieur Melanson, you said in response to a question by Madam O'Neill-Gordon that you have not reported to the heritage department vis-à-vis what you've done with regard to section 41.

**Mr. Mark Melanson:** To my knowledge that is the case, but I'll check that when I get back, and I can bring that back to the committee.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Please do, because it is my understanding that Canadian Heritage has the responsibility government-wide to make sure that particular section of the law—the law itself—is respected. Furthermore, your institution falls within the Department of Canadian Heritage, on top of that.

So if you don't have to report to them, do they ask anybody to report? That's the next question. It's not a question I can ask of you, but what you said is very significant.

You're the champion?

**Mr. Mark Melanson:** I will be the champion within a couple of months.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Who is the champion now?

**Mr. Mark Melanson:** Right now it's Zahra Pourjafar-Ziaei.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you.

[Translation]

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

This completes the first part of our meeting. I would like to thank our witnesses for coming to meet with us to tell us about the situation at their department.

We encourage you to continue your efforts and to forward the information that was requested by committee members.

Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to address another topic, and perhaps Mr. Bélanger could enlighten me as well.

How is a champion selected? I understand the principle with regard to official languages. Is it a competition? Mr. Caron, you yourself were a champion.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** First, the champion has to be a member of senior management, of the executive committee. There are various files, so it's important that it's someone bilingual, someone who can promote the official languages, of course, which should be the case of all members of senior management. So that person is selected from among management officers and plays that role for perhaps two years. Then that person moves on to other roles, and so on. However, it isn't a competition; it's a responsibility.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Among peers and around the management table.

**Mr. Daniel J. Caron:** Yes. The person has to be a high-level employee. Otherwise that has no impact.

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

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

We'll suspend the meeting for a few minutes and then come back to discuss committee business.

Thank you.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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