



House of Commons  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Official Languages**

---

LANG • NUMBER 043 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Monday, February 7, 2011**

**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**



## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Monday, February 7, 2011

• (1310)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** I would like to call to order this 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. This is the second of three meetings we have scheduled for today.

[English]

We are very efficient.

I would like to welcome our witnesses.

[Translation]

Welcome. We had an opportunity to meet with certain witnesses at this morning's meeting. This afternoon, we will be at the Centre de la francophonie in Whitehorse.

We, the members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, are very pleased to be here. This is our first visit to the Far North since the committee was first established more than 30 years ago, following passage of the Official Languages Act. So, you have before you a microcosm of Parliament. Here today are members of Parliament representing both the government and the Official Opposition.

Apparently, Mr. Gagné, a government MP, is currently stuck at the Vancouver airport. Mr. Lauzon is with us, but Mr. Gagné is having a problem with his flights. We will be following the situation closely. As you can see, the atmosphere is less formal than during question period and, hopefully, less acrimonious.

Without any further ado, I would like to officially welcome the representatives of all the organizations we will be hearing from this afternoon, including the Executive Director of the organization Les EssentiElles, Ms. Ketsia Houde, as well as the chair of the Comité francophone catholique Saint-Eugène-de-Mazenod, Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger, and Mr. Claude Gosselin, who is a priest.

I invite you now to make your opening comments. Members will have questions for you after that.

Mr. Gosselin, please.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin (Priest, Comité francophone catholique Saint-Eugène-de-Mazenod):** Good afternoon.

Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to share with you our experience of life in French here. I hope this will be helpful to you. We have prepared an overview of who we are, what we do, what we're experiencing and how we deal with it. If this brings grist to the mill, that will be a good thing.

I would like to give you some historical background regarding the Comité francophone catholique Saint-Eugène-de-Mazenod. While some religious services in French have been offered since 1991, the Oblate fathers ultimately were the majority here. Most are Oblates who were in the North, and many of them were Francophone. One of the Oblate fathers from Quebec felt strongly about services for Francophones. So, starting in 1991, there were religious services once a week, as requested by certain families.

The Comité francophone catholique Saint-Eugène-de-Mazenod, however, was officially established in 1998. Its mandate is quite simple: it is to provide an active pastoral life to the Francophone catholic population of the Yukon.

In the early 1990s, as I was saying, the pastoral ministry was initially in the hands of an Oblate father who had been living in the Yukon for several decades and felt strongly about the need to support the Francophone cause. After that, other priests followed from the Dioceses of Chicoutimi, in Quebec, and Quebec City itself.

It's important to note here that, at the time, the Anglophone diocese was not interested in providing pastoral service in French. It was only through the determination, tenacity and resourcefulness of men, women and families that this service came into being and has continued to exist for some 20 years now. Anglophones have no choice but to accept us.

Without having the legal status of a parish—we do not have a parish, in fact—our Christian community is more than 200 strong, and the pastoral reality is the same. Our community is diverse in terms of age and origin: it goes from newborns to seniors, some as old as 97. It includes Francophone and Francophile single persons, couples and families who, in many cases as well, are from all the different provinces of Canada and from Europe.

We would initially gather in the schools for Sunday mass; since 1997, however, the Anglophone Sacred Heart parish has been providing us with accommodation and technical support, in the form of space for a secretariat in the church rectory and a weekly meeting place in the cathedral.

Originally supported financially by the Quebec organization *Mission chez nous*, which provides support to missions in Quebec's Far North, we now receive half of our annual funding from Catholic Missions in Canada, which has the same mandate for all of Canada's Far North. The other half of our budget comes from donations from our members or Francophone parishes and organizations in Quebec.

I would now like to talk about our areas of activity. Although it tends to be more concentrated in Whitehorse, our pastoral action extends all across the Yukon Territory, based on the needs of Francophones and their communities. I have just come back after a week in Dawson.

Our priority areas are liturgical services, faith education and sacramental initiation, fraternity and community life, care and spiritual support, visits to the elderly, the sick and families, as well as considerable emphasis on social justice and mutual assistance.

So, a priest and a technical assistant responsible for pastoral life encourage the development of activities and support the actions of dozens of volunteers, without whom pastoral services would not exist. Because this is a community need, people quickly understood that, if they wanted services, they would have to develop them themselves.

We were told that we could talk about some of the issues we are facing and make recommendations in that regard. We have two. This brief preamble will perhaps have allowed you to better understand our issues, based on which we have some recommendations to make with respect to the way of life of the Francophone minority in the Yukon.

The first one is this: what brings our Christian community together is not, first and foremost, language; rather, it is the desire to celebrate our faith in our language. One cannot help but observe that there is a natural equation between the language of the heart and the mother tongue.

The whole area of spirituality works that way. Many events in life—the birth of children, illness, mourning and death—are experienced most fully and most naturally in one's mother tongue. Visits to the elderly who are less able to cope on their own, and to the dying, are particularly eloquent examples of that. Many French-speaking people who have lived most of their lives in English, here or in other Canadian provinces, are comforted by the ability to once again be able to share their experiences, memories, concerns and hopes in their mother tongue.

• (1315)

It's as if the language engraved on the hard disk of their brain or their soul suddenly began to prevail, for some, over their memory loss, for others, over their growing fragility, and for others still, living in even greater isolation, over their disconnectedness from reality. I discovered that here, because I was part of a majority. That was something new for me.

One day, a Francophone nurse working in a centre told us about a lady who was dying all alone and who was French-speaking. It was the first time I saw that kind of rapport. That lady had lived her entire life in English, but she died in French. The last thing she was able to say in French was: Hail Mary. That was when I realized the significance of this.

On another occasion, a young woman who spoke only English remembered that her mother used to hum songs in French. She was from Manitoba. She had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for several years. Her daughter believed that her mother didn't have much longer to live. She told me that she hoped someone would come and pray with her in French. That was a very happy

coincidence for me, because I did not speak English at the time. The lady in question was the same age as my mother. As soon as I began reciting prayers the lady knew, she opened her eyes and started moving her lips. She lived for a year that way. She was senile in English, but she prayed in French. There is a very strong connection there that people tend to talk about a lot more now in homes for the elderly. When people know that no one speaks French, they try to establish that kind of rapport.

Providing spiritual support to the dying is another area where the reestablishment of spiritual contact is often connected to a lifetime of experiences that are deeply embedded in these individuals. They have the sense of finding a certain facility again when they make contact with their mother tongue, the language of their roots, the first language that penetrated their being when they were still in the womb. The pastoral service is also available to quite an extensive community network for the sick and their families.

There is also poverty, the housing crisis, domestic violence, depression and other problems, which are no different for Anglophones than they are for Francophones. And yet these realities are that much more bitterly felt when there is, in addition, an inability to make one's self understood in one's language.

The following recommendation is quite simple, but I think it's always a good idea to mention it. I suggest that, with respect to health and social services—particularly services for families, seniors and the sick—a complete range of services be available in French in accordance with the Act. There is a need, not only to provide services in French, but also to promote respect and dignity of the human person.

If the Comité francophone catholique has managed to provide pastoral service in French for the last 20 years, it is more as a result of active resistance than any recognition by the Anglophone majority. We are not waiting to be given the right to exist, but we do exist, humbly and actively, and seek to impose our presence in all its authenticity and colour and its originality, within our diocese and church, but also the entire Yukon community.

That active resistance facilitates the necessary mobilisation of all our members in the pursuit and attainment of our objectives. It also reminds us that nothing can be taken for granted. While our most ardent desire is to continue to experience our faith in French, it is also important to recognize that this service will remain dynamic only as long as the people wishing to receive it remain involved. Indeed, it is that involvement that leaves its mark and allows the Anglophone majority to open up to that duality, as if by contamination or by attraction. It is important to state that this is also the lot of all Francophone organizations in the Yukon.

So, our recommendation, in support of a dynamic minority which too often grows weary at having to defend the legitimate right to speak French in a country with two official languages, is that both the federal and territorial governments show some political will by clearly recognizing that linguistic duality and enforcing it in concrete terms. To that end, the federal government must improve its monitoring mechanisms to ensure respect for the Official Languages Act and effective promotion of linguistic duality.

Its involvement would encourage the territorial government and all other civil or religious institutions to admit the French fact as a building block in building the Yukon.

In closing, I would say that, based on what we are experiencing in Yukon, linguistic duality receives greater recognition when it is experienced as a companion to the other culture, rather than as something that sits in opposition to it. The CFC would like to see the achievements of the minority acknowledged as a source of cultural enrichment for the entire community. That companionship is part of the history of the Yukon. Why not ensure that this historic recognition remains an example. That is our hope.

• (1320)

Thank you.

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

We will move on now to Ms. Ketsia Houde.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde (Exécutif Director, Les EssentiElles):** Thank you for accepting our request to appear.

Les EssentiElles is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1995. I would like to tell you a little story. It was the then President of the AFY, whom you met this morning, who, seeing that the needs of Francophone women were not well enough defined or dealt with by the organization, asked one of her friends to present a motion at the general meeting stating that separation was necessary and that Les EssentiElles should become an independent group. After that, she resigned from her position at the AFY to join the team of EssentiElles. That gives you some idea of the origins of our group. It was the then President of the AFY who detected a need, and the women supported her to move the project forward.

We are actively involved in enhancing the quality of life of Francophone women in the Yukon as we try to meet their needs. Our mission is to act as their spokesperson in our relations with the AFY, the school board and all the various Francophone and Anglophone organizations, so that the needs and interests of Francophone women taken into account. One of the characteristics of our organization is that we represent women from all over, from all walks of life. We do not only work with children and the sick; we also work in such areas as social justice and education, and we sit on a variety of health-related committees, as well as being members of the Community Partnership in Education. So, we are active in every area, but in a limited fashion, obviously. That is the reason why we advocate with respect to all of these different issues, depending on the priorities set by the committee, but always with a focus on women.

I did not have much time to prepare my presentation, because the invitation arrived late. So, in terms of my presentation, I would like to talk a little about Canadian Heritage. Our ability to fulfill our mission as a spokesperson is possible through the financial assistance provided under Canadian Heritage's Official Language Minority Communities Support Program, under the Roadmap for 2000-2013. That funding is the engine that enables us to carry out our work, and we would like to see it increased. We have been receiving the same amount of money since 2006, with a slight increase between 2003 and 2006.

Basic expenses for the group increase with the cost of living, and to an even greater extent in the North. Diversification of our funding

is one of our priorities, but it is fairly limited for women's groups in Canada, given the fact that, in recent years, there have been massive cuts to Status of Women Canada's programming. There is also the fact that the majority of the funding is now project funding, which means that resources are drawn from the basic operating budget in order to carry out projects. Often employees end up leaving to pursue other professional challenges. Also, when a project is completed and we have not been able to find another project for a fantastic employee who is fully operational, qualified, speaks French and does a good job, we end up losing that employee. It is extremely difficult to retain human resources within the organization.

We would like to point out that the dynamic focus of our group, and therefore its contribution to the vitality of the French fact, is closely connected to the financial assistance we receive from Canadian Heritage under the Roadmap.

With respect to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, there is currently no service in French offered to Francophone immigrants, something that was mentioned this morning by the AFY. We also note that CIC is not fulfilling its obligation to provide services in both official languages. The contract signed with the Louise Multicultural Community Centre does not include an obligation to provide services in both languages.

Francophone immigrant women therefore do not have the same opportunities to become integrated into the community, both the Yukon and Franco-Yukon communities, something which has an effect on their ability to contribute to the expansion of the French fact. All across Canada, we need immigrants to strengthen our communities. If Francophone immigrants arrive here and cannot become integrated into the community or receive services in French, they will have a much harder time feeling as though they're part of the community and will be less likely to stay in the Yukon to participate in community development.

A recent contribution, a project aimed at Francophone immigration, is a step in the right direction. If the project continues, that could attract new Francophones from various regions of the world. However, if there are no settlement services, they won't really be able to become settled, and will end up not staying. A project gets off the ground to welcome Francophones to the area, but then they are not given any services to help them become settled.

With respect to health care, Les EssentiElles offers a prenatal nutrition program to pregnant women and supports them as well as the entire family, the fathers included, up until their child is one year of age.

That program is critical in terms of ensuring language transmission in Francophone and exogamous families, because the ability of Francophone families to receive support and be involved in activities in French during pregnancy and up until their child turns one, means they can retain and pass on the French language and, more importantly, break their isolation. If a family that comes here has to become integrated into an Anglophone group, it is not so simple for them. The parents then have to speak English to their child, when it would be preferable that they speak to the child in French. So, this program allows families to get together and receive services, information and references. Other details may seem insignificant to some—such as the need to know the English translation for “rougeole”. When people go to a health care centre because they believe their child has reached an age when he should be vaccinated, but they don't know the name of the vaccination, the nurse may look at them strangely, making them feel uncomfortable and complicating access to services. That is a problem. With funding, our group develops resources—for example, small index cards that give the translation for different vaccines and illnesses.

• (1325)

On a number of occasions, the committee has pointed out the lack of programs in French for children aged one to school age. A program is available for children up to the age of one, but between that age and the time when children enter school, there is no program in place to allow people to meet and be together. There are in English, but not in French. The Community Action Program for Children would meet that need, but funding for the program has not been renewed in several years. So it has not been possible to register in that program. We have been making our needs known to the Public Health Agency of Canada since at least 2000, but have thus far received no answer.

One of the problems we face, which may be of interest to you, is that there is no bilingual officer managing the programs we receive through Health Canada, and specifically the Public Health Agency of Canada. Because that is the case, every application we make must be translated, whether it involves funding, changes to the budget or requests of another nature. So, on a daily basis, if I have a question for my officer, I send her an e-mail in English, because otherwise, she has to have it translated, which takes a week; in the meantime, I have to wait. Yet under the Official Languages Act, things are not supposed to work that way. I should be able to communicate with federal government officials in French, but that is not the case here.

Last year, we presented a special project on diabetes. We received the funding we had requested, but the grant application was only partially translated into French. In such a case, the officers reviewing the application only access part of the information. The problem here is that these people have not invested the necessary amount of money to have our complete application translated. In that case, we did receive funding, but the opposite could occur if people do not receive complete information.

The health and welfare of Francophone families is the cornerstone of community development, and maintaining the French language at home has a direct influence over registration at the French day care and school. Without the prenatal program, which gives families an opportunity to speak French right from the beginning, it will be more difficult later for them to attend the Francophone day care or school.

As I mentioned, our organization covers every sector of the community, whether it's the economy, health care, employment or culture, an area where Mr. Nadon, whom you met this morning is involved. Financial support from the federal government, through Franco-Yukoner community organizations such as the Association franco-yukonnaise, l'école Émilie-Tremblay, l'école secondaire de l'Académie Parhélie or the Community Health Partnership, are fundamental to our community's ability to assert itself and develop.

The vitality of other organizations has a direct impact on our work, since we cooperate closely with a variety of organizations. For example, as regards training that targets the specific needs of women, a course in basic mechanics is offered to women in French. In terms of promoting and supporting women artists in the field of arts and culture, in cooperation with the AFY, we will be presenting a group exhibition in March which will be an opportunity for Franco-Yukoner women to exhibit their art. It will be a chance to promote Francophone women artists and ensure that they have their rightful place in these activities. That is part of our work. Many women are working within the organization at this time. Often this happens quite naturally, but it's not systematic. Part of our role is to ensure that women have a presence.

In terms of continuity and increased operating funds that would reflect the rise in the cost of living, which is particularly high in the North, they will be critical in the coming years to ensure that what French-speaking Yukoners have achieved in the last 25 years is not lost but is, on the contrary, sustained and strengthened. The cultural, social and economic vitality of our community clearly demonstrates that the resources provided under the Roadmap are a key component of promoting Canada's two official languages. Its renewal is of paramount importance for our community.

I believe you had an opportunity to hear from government officials this morning. At the territorial level, we have noted that the offer of services in French is extremely uneven and based more on individuals than on the services themselves. Indeed, there are not necessarily any positions designated bilingual. Often there is one, but it disappears. A person who speaks French stays in the position for six months, but when that person leaves, the service is no longer available. With respect to several different services, the government determined there was bilingual staff, but active offer is not consistent, which makes requesting services difficult. People come to the counter and ask to be served in French. The attendant replies that he will find someone who will can provide service in French, but that may take 10 or 15 minutes. So, in the meantime, people have to wait, with everyone looking at them. Then the attendant finally comes back and says that the individual in question is on a break, asking whether they want to wait. That is when people decide they have better things to do, so they simply choose to speak English. Yes, there is service in French, but most of the time, it is not available.

●(1330)

There are several departments where it is possible to apply for funding in French, such as Status of Women Canada, which we deal with, and the Community Development Fund. However, even there, the last time I made an application, I received a call from someone wanting to know whether one part of the application was identical to the previous one, in order to avoid having to have it translated again. It was a project application, meaning that it wasn't the same thing and, in any case, they are the ones that demand different applications. It is unpleasant to receive that kind of call.

In terms of government documents, the translation is irregular. Franco-Yukoners don't have systematic access to documents in French, and it is not unusual to have to insist that the documents be translated, or for the department to ask us which part of the report we want to have translated. One department asked me whether we had funds to translate its material. I was quite shocked by that.

●(1335)

**The Chair:** Was it to translate something from French into English?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** They were departmental documents in English. They told us they had no money to have them translated into French and asked us whether we did. Obviously we do not. It was a document from the Yukon government on the prevention of sexual assault, and since they had no funds to translate it into French, they asked if we would do it.

One of the things the committee should try to ascertain is whether there is any form of consultation or communication between people. At the present time, there are consultations on services in French in areas deemed by the community to be a priority, including the ones dealing on the justice system that took place two weeks ago. We received an invitation in December, I believe, and the consultation did take place, but there has been no information provided as to whether there will be a report or a plan of action. We met with officials to talk about the current situation, but without ever receiving any information to suggest that a report or plan of action would be produced at a given time. It's all very vague. A process is in place, but in terms of results, I'm not sure what they will look like.

As for policing services, the RCMP is the police force in charge in the Yukon. In the territories, violence against women, which includes domestic violence and sexual assault, is three to four times higher than in the rest of Canada. So, it's a major problem. Furthermore, access to bilingual police officers is crucial in order for Francophone women to be able to properly explain their circumstances, and thereby lay charges and launch the judicial process. At the present time, the RCMP has no bilingual officers available on an ongoing basis. A woman may make a complaint because her husband is beating her and call the police station, but there will not necessarily be any Francophone officers available, meaning that she will have difficulty recounting what happened. In a document published by the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne, entitled "Mythes et réalités sur les femmes francophones victimes de violence", they cite the example of a woman trying to explain that her husband assaulted her, and the officer asking her if she was "beaten", when what she is actually trying to say is that she was "bitten". They couldn't understand each other. The officer thought

that her husband had beaten her, when she was telling him that he had bitten her. This is the kind of situation that makes it difficult to access services, not to mention the constant obligation to translate.

With respect to health care services, access is problematic because of a lack of bilingual health care personnel, which results in additional problems for women, who are not always able to explain their health issues. As was mentioned this morning, when you have a health problem and you're stressed out, it's difficult to explain what is going on. It's complicated, and if, in addition, you have to do that in a second language, it's even worse. That can lead to delays in receiving services, either because the person does not receive the correct diagnosis, or because the physician doesn't understand us, which means that treatment is increasingly delayed. I also found out about one woman who had been seeing a doctor for two years. He couldn't understand her and didn't realize that she had a chronic illness. Finally, she came to talk to staff at the Community Health Partnership to get help. They realized that the doctor had not understood a thing about her issues and had no idea what was going on. As a result, he had not done the diagnostic tests that he should have done to allow her to receive appropriate care. She had been waiting for two years because her doctor didn't understand what she was saying, and she did not realize it. Those are specific situations.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC):** Was that doctor in the top half or the bottom half of the class?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I don't know.

I'm surprised that staff from Community Health Partnership are not going to meet with you. Unfortunately, Ms. Sandra St-Laurent is out of town right now, but I do think you should secure some documentation or information from them about health care services. They are the ones pressuring the Yukon government to provide services. It is important that the committee get in touch with them, if only in writing.

Finally, with respect to education, I would like to mention that Les EssentiElles supports the school board in its current legal action.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Houde. I would like to thank all our witnesses.

We will begin the first round with Ms. Zarac.

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

Ms. Houde, in other words, a Francophone woman in Yukon has to be very patient. Could you remind me by how much violence against women is higher in the territories than elsewhere?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes, it is three to four times higher.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Because she has trouble explaining what has occurred to police officers, requires medical care following an assault and has trouble making herself understood, meaning that she has to go before the courts a third time, a Francophone woman in Yukon is victimized in multiple ways.

●(1340)

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes, absolutely. She is victimized again because she has to explain what happened, it's complicated, and they don't understand her.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** That is very unfortunate.

You said that the funding you receive from Canadian Heritage increased slightly between 2003 and 2006, but that, since 2006, it has been the same amount. What level of funding are you receiving now?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** We receive \$46,700.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Is that for everything? You say that you deal with education, health and justice. Are you able to spread the \$40,000 around enough to help all those—

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** That covers operating costs, because \$40,000 doesn't take you very far. Much of it is my salary. We also try to organize activities in French and take part in meetings such as this one, today.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** How many volunteers do you have? I assume that you must have volunteers working with you.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** We don't have very many. Depending on the projects we have had, we sometimes hire part-time employees to deal with communications and that sort of thing. What allows us to operate is the fact that we work in cooperation with the Anglophone women's group. All the awareness campaigns against violence are done jointly, and the campaigns are bilingual. We pool our resources and our strengths. Otherwise, we have few activities. We do a lot of things in cooperation with others. Our participation is at a financial and human level: often I will do things to ensure that the AFY and other Anglophone women's groups are involved.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** This morning, the AFY told us that new projects are refused if they already exist. Can you explain in greater detail the benefits of recurring funding in a community?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** In fact, as we were saying, there are very few of us. I am the only person who works full time. If I have to create and develop a new project every year, I don't have time to actually carry out the project I worked on. It really has to do with time limitations.

In addition, even if we have a pilot project that works, is successful and yield results, we are told we have to do something new. It's always difficult in that respect. We cannot build on something because we are constantly being asked to re-invent the wheel.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** In other words, when you have developed something that is successful and effective, you simply have to abandon it?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** That often happens, as a matter of fact. Finding a source of funding to renew something that's already in place occurs is a rare occurrence. I know that Status of Women Canada has just announced funding—for what are called blueprint projects—where you are able to do that, but this is the first time I've seen it. It literally says that the money is for projects that are already in place, in order to keep them going. However, in the other areas there is nothing like that.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** You say that this is new?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I found out about it last week.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** So, you are not really all that familiar with this type of project. Do you have the name—

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I read in an e-mail that it was through Status of Women Canada. It's a new type of funding for what are called blueprint projects—I haven't seen the name in French.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Let's hope it will meet your needs.

You talked about irregular translation. I find that strange. You seemed to be saying that they ask you if you need something translated. Does that mean it doesn't happen automatically?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** No, absolutely not. In the last three months, four important reports have been issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, one on social inclusion, one on housing in the Yukon and another one on acutely intoxicated persons and the homeless, to name only those. Those are the three main reports. They have not been translated into French. There is a fourth report on policing services in Yukon.

They told us that we had not requested a translation. We asked whether the documents would be translated. We were then asked which part we would like to have translated. We answered that we would like the entire thing to be translated. In the case of the policing services report, the summary was translated, but not the whole report. Perhaps it will be, but you never know. If we don't apply pressure to receive a translation, it will not get done.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** You talked about the will to do certain things. Do you have the sense that the government does not have the will to provide those services?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Not really. I think the government does things because we push them to do those things; otherwise, they would not.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Is it a question of will or funding?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I presume it is both. When it comes to translation and services in French, budgets are not unlimited. Nobody has one. As for the reports, they have to select the ones they will have translated. With grant applications, they ask if there is one part that is more important than the other. I'm asked to answer 45 questions, which I answer, but then they end up reading three of my answers. It's frustrating to do the work and then be told they are only going to read three pages.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** If you had to set priorities in terms of the problems facing women, what would they be?

• (1345)

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** With respect to domestic violence, it would be services in French, services provided by police officers and assistance for victims.

Right now, there is a Francophone woman who works at the transition house for women. That organization has been putting a lot of pressure on governments, which has meant that there are now services in French. However, it's always precarious. Maybe that person will find another job and won't be replaced immediately, so that for six months, there will be no one. So, I would say the priorities are the justice system and health care.

If young families don't have access to adequate health care services in French, they will not necessarily stay here. If a child has a serious health problem, they won't have access to services in French. As a result, they will have trouble making themselves understood and obtaining services.



**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** This morning, we heard that there is a fairly high percentage of people who speak both languages, and who are not necessarily Francophone. Do you think some of them might be able to provide services? Are there enough bilingual people to meet the needs?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** In terms of the number of bilingual people, I don't have an answer to that.

I know there are bilingual health care professionals and other professionals who are either Francophone or speak French but who will not want to be identified. Perhaps it's the ministry they work for that will not let them identify themselves.

As Mr. St-Pierre was saying this morning, the school has about 20 teachers. Within the Francophone community, there are about 20 of us who work in French. So, I think it would be possible to hire people who speak French. It's a question of wanting to do it.

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

We will move now to Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Good afternoon, Ms. Houde. My questions are also addressed to you.

You referred to a new program under Status of Women Canada called Blueprint Projects. I don't know exactly what it is. We will inquire and find out more about it.

Are large amounts of money available? What exactly is involved?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I didn't have time to study it in detail, but I believe it's fairly—

Actually, I was really surprised, because last year, there was a basic fund available to support the women of Canada. I don't remember what it's called.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** It was abolished last year.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** It was becoming increasingly vague. The deadline for filing an application was no longer indicated.

Then, last Friday, much to my surprise, I received an e-mail saying that there is a new funding program, called Blueprint Projects, which is intended to support programs that are already in place.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** That would be good news for you, if you were able to receive money to help you carry out your activities.

Do you also work with women seniors?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** We did for a long time. Les EssentiElles had a program called “Vieillir en santé” for a number of years. Last year, a new program was introduced, called “Le regroupement Franco50”. It is intended to bring together people—not seniors, because you're not a senior at the age of 50—who are 50 years and over in Yukon.

We are a feminist organization. As director, I recommended to my board of directors that the project be turned over to the community, because the group in question includes men and women. So, I recommended that it be entirely turned over to the community.

We are always trying to provide assistance to women seniors, but we don't necessarily have a specific program.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** And you have no resources.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** No. We organize specific activities that address them more directly. I know we have established a partnership with the Catholic committee under a program called “Scrapbookez votre vie”. So, we try to attract older women and bring them together. That is done in collaboration with the Comité catholique.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** In terms of health care services, I imagine it's fairly difficult for older women to be served in their language. It is a well-known fact that the population is aging. So this is certainly an issue you will be facing in the coming months and years.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** You already are.

You were saying that you have a program aimed at children aged zero to one. After that, they are left to fend for themselves.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes, and that's what the families are telling us. There is nothing else out there for them. There are no other activities in French. They can participate in Anglophone programs, but if they want to continue to pass on their language, that becomes difficult, even more so if the spouse is English-speaking.

Sometimes, at home, if the spouse does not speak any French at all, the couple will use English, which means that the only time the mother and her child can speak French is when they are in the presence of other Francophones. There are no groups offering programs or activities like “repas-répit” or “matin-maman”.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Are there day-care centres?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** There is one Francophone day-care centre, but it is not currently offering activities that involve both parents and children.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I see. But there is a Francophone day-care centre.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Are there enough resources to handle all the Francophone children?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** There was a baby boom last year. Between the months of September and December, I believe some 25 Franco-phone women gave birth. In the general population, there is a baby boom in Yukon this year. Right now, all the spots in the day care are taken.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** That means you will probably need another one.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes. It's good news for the school board, because it means more and more students will be attending the French schools.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** In terms of school services, do you also work with children? Are you involved in sports, for example?

• (1350)

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** As an organization, Les EssentiElles tries to give workshops in the schools about violence prevention, feminism or other topics. But they are few and far between, because we do not have a lot of resources and the schools are very busy. However, we do try to do some things in the schools.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** You say that there is three to four times more violence against women. Is that in the Greater Municipality of Whitehorse or more outside?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** According to Statistics Canada, it's all across Northern Canada. In the territories, there is three to four times more violence against women. An Aboriginal woman is five times more likely to be a victim of violence.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** These are women who do not necessarily speak French?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Not necessarily. I don't think there are any statistics on Francophone women, but in general, there is a lot more violence. We were thinking that among Francophones, there is less violence, but Francophones are also married to Anglophones...

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I think you're really courageous.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** It's an additional challenge for Francophone women, because it's a small community. If there is violence, those women will have fewer resources and, as everybody knows, if the information comes out, everyone will know.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** So the women do not want to talk about it. Women often do that. Everyone knows each other, so everybody talks. That can lead to situations where neither your neighbour or your best friend will speak to you anymore. That isn't easy to deal with.

I wish you success with this new program. Last year, there were significant cuts to Status of Women Canada, and we were very disappointed by that. Everyone suffered as a result, even in Quebec where grants to groups were completely cut. That grant money was then given to other groups that fight abortion, and so on. We were a little shocked when that happened, but—

If there are new programs in the works, then that's good news. I hope you will be the first ones to take advantage of them, because you really need them.

How many are there in your group?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** There are one or two of us. Ah, ah! It's me, and on occasion, part-time employees, depending on the projects we are able to secure.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** And volunteers.

I hope it works. We will note that in our next report, following this meeting.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I would just like to add one positive point: at the present time, our officer in Edmonton speaks French.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** So, that is a help to you.

In terms of translation, I find that unacceptable. You absolutely have to apply pressure. That is simply ridiculous. We have noted that and will include it in our report.

Thank you very much.

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

We move now to Mr. Lauzon.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will begin with a brief question for Ms. Houde.

First of all, the name of your organization is unique: Les EssentiElles. And so is your first name. Could you explain the origin of your name?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Well, it's a long story. It's not Russian, it's not... Actually, I don't really know.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I would just like a clarification. You said there were no services available for children aged 1 to 5. What services are they missing?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** For example, Anglophone families have access to a program at the Canada Games Centre that is offered on Tuesday afternoons. They can go there to play games, obtain information to help their children learn to read, and so on. There is currently no such program in French.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Thank you.

I have a few questions for Father Claude Gosselin.

First of all, I found your testimony most interesting. I was moved when you talked about the passing of a Francophone. In my own family, my mother was Francophone and spoke English all her life, but for the six months prior to her death, she no longer would speak to us in English; she spoke in French. The fact that this happens is very interesting.

I believe you said that there are about 200 members of your congregation?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Every week, there are between 45 and 60 people who come to church; it varies considerably. The age of those who attend also varies. Certain Sundays, there may be 18 or 20 children under the age of five among the 45 or 50 people. I can't say that there is renewed spirituality, but those who come are people who are returning to something they had abandoned, are affected by the beauty or grandeur of what they see here, or are seeking a community to be able to share that. It is the only community that can express its faith in French.

Furthermore, we are associated with the Anglophone Catholic Church, meaning that we come under the Whitehorse diocese. However, the service per se is not yet something the diocese has officially put in place; it is really only the result of the good will of certain people. When they wanted a priest, they found me. In other words, they went looking on their own. If I were to leave tomorrow morning, I think it would be a similar situation again. At the same time, the community is stronger. I think that services would continue to be provided by volunteers, lay persons, people committed to the cause, parents, faith education, seniors.

We meet with women seniors, because others who are close to them develop natural support networks. This is an unbelievable source of strength for all kinds of things that happen here in the Yukon. When people start to come together in a community, whatever community it is, they share the same centres of interest. It's like the fruits of a community that comes together based on a particular goal. It gives them an opportunity to get to know each other, as well as to share their common experiences.

• (1355)

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Does the diocese support your efforts?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** We have no choice but to see that they support them now. But initially, we really had to make our own place.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** You say that it has been about 20 years now?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes. Now there are a lot more partners, because they also see that providing services in French has a certain impact and they would not be able to provide these same services. It is reciprocal as well, because we share responsibilities at a certain level.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Is the number of participants increasing?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** In my area, three Francophone churches have just closed down.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** We can't close any, because we don't have any. Ah, ah!

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I guess I would say that Francophones have stopped going to mass.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** But it's the reverse here, then.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes, I'd say so.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** The members of your group attended mass in English previously?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Those who attended English mass continued to do so. They continued to have services in English, because their community is English-speaking. They told me that they would not go to mass in French, because the people they know are Anglophone.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** But they are Francophones who attend mass in English.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Of those who attend, there are a lot of people from provinces other than Quebec. I began to appreciate the importance of the Francophonie when I came here. People tend to think that there are Francophones in Quebec, and that Francophones elsewhere in Canada are from Quebec, but that is not the case. These people had also known something different before they came here. Often they perceived religion differently. They had not experienced the same oppression or the same problems in relation to their religion. Their connection to their spirituality or the Catholic faith is different, and they applaud the fact that they can now experience their spirituality or their faith in French.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** There are also a number of Francophiles who attend your mass.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes, as well. There are exogamous or Francophile families who choose to come to mass in French, because the Francophone culture and faith are closely connected. They feel that this way of expressing their faith resonates more for them as well.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** You suggested that both levels of government should be providing financial support.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Financially speaking, we know that we will never receive any money, but in terms of recognizing the language, for the benefit of Francophones in hospital or elderly Francophones in a seniors' home, I would like the staff of these

institutions to be embarrassed to have to say that they do not provide services in French. We should not be embarrassed about asking for it. Do you understand? It's left to the good will of staff on site.

And, I should say that I have lost my temper with some at times. About three or four weeks before that person died, she only spoke French. As far as the staff was concerned, she was senile, because they didn't understand her. At her funeral, her daughter told me in English that they are also coping with the problem of not having passed on the language to their children, for all kinds of reasons. Sometimes the children feel as though they are being judged, because they don't speak French, even though their mother died speaking French. They are also embarrassed to ask for services in French. The daughter of that woman told me that she was sorry that she had not been made aware of the fact that, for many weeks prior to her death, her mother spoke to her children in French, even if they did not understand her. No one reacted. There were approximately 150 employees working in that institution, and yet no one thought to call someone.

• (1400)

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** To be certain that I have the correct understanding: what exactly are you asking of the government?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** I think our demand is legitimate. If there are two languages in this country, why are we still sitting here demanding that people speak French? Are the review or enforcement mechanisms not effective? Why, all of a sudden, because the majority speaks English, are there no longer two founding peoples? If there are no longer two founding peoples, then they should say so. If we are a founding people, and we lose one of those founding peoples, then we lose our foundations.

The issue is not just whether people should be speaking French; it is also about contributing our way of seeing things in French. It's not just simply knowing whether or not I can speak French. If I speak French, you are going to know a lot more about what I think than if I speak English.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I have never heard anyone express it better.

**The Chair:** We will continue our second round with Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not mad about the fact that you allowed Mr. Lauzon to go over his time, because it was an important conversation.

Who provides palliative care in Yukon?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** The territory.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** But who, in the territory?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** With respect to services for seniors, there are two centres for seniors. As far as services are concerned, there is very good coverage physically. Yes. And the territory is responsible for that.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** But in English?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** The system is built in English. Yes. There are a couple of staff members who are starting to speak French but these are not positions designated for Francophones. Furthermore, as you said, the population is aging. And people are now aging in the Yukon. That, too, is new, because people used to leave the Yukon when they got older, to join their children further south. But now, Southerners are moving to the North.

There is also another reality: people here bring their parents to the North from somewhere else, and that is a very common reality for Francophones. There is a Russian lady, but no one speaks Russian. It's more complicated. That is the reality of children who are here and bring their parents to join them.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I can certainly appreciate what you describe, since my mother went through this not long ago. In addition to that, I represent a riding where we fought to retain our French-language hospital. It took time, but the government did recognize that, at a certain point in our lives, when we're older, we do in fact come back to our mother tongue, our original language, to be able to express ourselves. Maybe it's also because we can no longer speak the other language. That's why I ask the question.

I am starting to think that one of the major areas to be explored in our report—because we are starting to think about how we are going to try to help—should be the offer of health care services, which includes palliative care, in my opinion. We don't have to reinvent the wheel in order to do that. It is simply a matter of finding people who can speak acceptable French and English.

I have a few questions. First of all, Ms. Houde, you talked about the amount of money you receive, which is about \$46,000. Do you receive other grants from the territory?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Actually, we're very lucky in the Yukon in that regard. When there were major cuts to Status of Women Canada, the Yukon government released funds to maintain some of the services offered to women's groups. So, we received a core programming grant from the Status of Women Branch in the Yukon.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** How much was it for?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** We receive \$35,000 a year.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Is there an organization equivalent to your own on the English-speaking side?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** There is an Anglophone women's centre. It is obviously larger than ours. We work with them to ensure that they also offer activities in French. That centre actually provides equivalent services in English.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Is it partly funded by the federal government as well? Do you know?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I don't think so. The reason we received a federal grant is because we are Francophones. It is possible that Status of Women Canada does so, but it is always provided on a project basis. Starting very recently, every project began to be funded, even those already underway, but there is no core funding provided by Status of Women Canada.

• (1405)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Are there any statistics on exogamous marriage? There may be some that I haven't seen. Are there statistics on English-French exogamous marriages here in the territories?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I don't know whether there are any on marriage, but I know that a study has just been completed by the Association franco-yukonnaise on literacy in exogamous families.

I'm not certain whether figures for families are even presented in that study. In terms of needs, however, there is a study.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Listening to you, I am inclined to think that you agree with my wife, who has instilled in me that men are always the ones who create the problems, while women are always the ones to find the solutions.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Not necessarily, there are Francophone fathers with Anglophone women.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Well, it was sort of a play on words, or at least an attempt at one, even if it isn't funny.

I heard things said earlier that led me to believe that there is more vitality here and that exogamous marriages seem to attract Anglophones to the Francophone reality. I was wondering if that could be documented or whether that is just a feeling you have.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** We don't have any statistics on this, but one of the two spouses must attract the other to French, because otherwise, we would never see them, in the sense that they would go to the Anglophone church.

Some things we see here are unusual. I don't really know why, but I think it's due to the attraction of the culture, rather than the idea of speaking French. It's the culture, the vitality and the way of living. As soon as one of them has that—

In one case, the Catholic father was an Anglophone, but the Francophone mother was not Catholic; she had no religion. All the same, she insisted on her children experiencing their faith in French. So, the father learned French and attended the mass spoken in French. In one sense, that is fairly unusual. That's why I say it is not cut and dried. I think it really has to do with the attraction of the culture.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** As far as children are concerned, the reaction is to say that it's important that we keep our language. Before having children, people will tend to use English and speak French from time to time, but it's not really a priority. However, once they have children, they suddenly realize that—

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** They want to pass on their language to their children.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes. We really see a difference at that point.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** I would like to ask a question that was asked this morning: is it possible to live one's life in French here? I will try to put it a different way: if someone only speaks French, can they live here?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger (President, Comité Francophone catholique Saint-Eugène-de-Mazenod):** I will speak for my wife, who speaks only French. It's very difficult for her. She wonders whether she will find a job, whether she will be able to continue to do everything in French, and whether that will always be the case. It's possible, because the community is fairly large. But there aren't many of us in Yukon. There are about 1,200 or 1,300 in Whitehorse.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It's 1,245, or something like that.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** Yes, something like that.

People who are part of the community have a sense of community. There is no doubt that people support each other. The ones who are able to live in French only will do so. My wife will survive. French is not a question of survival. It is possible, because the community is there to support us.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Survival and self-actualization are not the same.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** No, they certainly are not.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Even surviving can be difficult. We were talking about social justice earlier, and services for seniors and people in difficulty. If you only speak French and you have to explain something to an ambulance attendant or police officer, without any ability to speak English, then everything stops there.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Are there people—

**The Chair:** Ms. Guay, are you sharing your time with this gentleman?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** No, it's okay. I'll come back.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Has my time started?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right; thank you.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Mauril, I would not have minded if you wanted to use a minute of my time.

Please excuse us, but we are timed.

You say that your wife will survive. Yes, she will survive, but that doesn't mean she will realize her full potential, and that is the problem.

Let me give you an example. In Quebec, Anglophones have no trouble living their lives and fulfilling their potential. They don't need to survive. They have all the institutions they require to fully develop. On the other hand, when I see what is happening here, I'm not sure that someone who speaks only French can fully realize his or her potential. I'd be interested in hearing your views on that.

• (1410)

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** My wife is strong.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** But your wife is not the only one; there are others.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** My wife is strong by nature. That's the way she is. We have seen people die around us. We decided to go to the Yukon, and set off to settle there. It was an adventure; a new beginning. We started from scratch when we got here. My wife took a few English courses to try and get along in English, but she has always been close to Francophones here. She worked at the school in French and went to church in French. She led a singing group and taught music to Francophone children. She is extremely resourceful. Women are not all as strong as she is.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** She should be here to hear what you are saying.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** She is well aware of it.

**The Chair:** We will send her a copy of the "blues", Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I think that's what we will do. You may be a special case, but in other situations—

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** I have examples. I know an older lady whose circumstances are such that she is just trying to survive. She is extremely isolated. If she had not had a natural community network to support her, that lady would be dead now. There is no doubt about it. I was sitting at a table. Some people are terrible. They understand French, but they don't tell us.

So, a group of people who were working for the government wanted to find housing for this lady. Since I didn't speak English, I asked the translator if they were saying that they were going to place her in housing. They could hear what I was saying, those little rascals. She answered, and I spoke in French. I said what I thought and one of the people there told me she had understood. Why didn't they tell me that earlier? That lady, who is over 90, would be dead. We were providing one hour of community support every day. Once they went in to see her and she was on the floor. That's how things were resolved. She was admitted to hospital and a Francophone doctor told me that she would not leave the hospital as long as he did not sign her release. Must we always hope that the right person will be in the right place at the right time, all the time?

**Ms. Monique Guay:** It's survival mode.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** There are many similar examples. You need a network to help you keep going and grow. These events have forged a community which is very tightly knit. It seems to me it can be more than that.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** There is still much to be done. Even for the children, as I was saying, it mustn't simply be a question of survival; they must be able to grow and develop, particularly when they're still very little. People have to think about their language and culture.

I hope you will succeed, because there is work to be done, as you have clearly shown us. I'm happy for your wife; please send her our regards. Mr. Chairman, I think we should do that.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** It's a question of equity between linguistic groups. English is very strong in Quebec, and increasingly so. There are several other languages in Quebec.

The same applies to the other provinces. Mr. Cannon said yesterday that the language question should be left to the territories, but is our territory treating us fairly? Is it giving us what it receives from the federal government? It's a question of equity. We are resourceful and have community spirit, so we will survive, continue to fight and do what is necessary to move forward in life; but if our territory does nothing for us and we complain to the federal government, then what is the point of having governments? Where is the fairness? Do you have scales for all the provinces, whereby you decide that you will give 2% to the territories, for example, 50% to Ontario, and so on? I understand that those are only numbers, but treating human beings fairly is what is important, the language they speak naturally, their mother tongue.

• (1415)

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

We move now to Mr. Galipeau.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Mr. Lauzon will begin.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I have two quick comments.

Father Claude, do you only speak French?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** No, I learned English here.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** So, you speak both languages.

I have the impression there is no real friction between Francophones and Anglophones here in Whitehorse. Am I right?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** Friction?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I think there is less of that.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** There are areas where there is friction, but I have the feeling that here in Whitehorse, people get along fairly well.

Am I correct?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes, that is what I've been told by all kinds of people. Anglophones here come from all over.

There is a common reality which we share, and that is the territory—the Yukon reality. The Yukon is increasingly cross-cultural. It has happened once or twice that there has been friction when people say things like: “We don't speak French here”. It's more like the opposite; it's more difficult to learn English here, because they want to practice their French as well. For example, if I go into a store and someone recognizes my accent, they will start speaking French to me. When they realize that I speak French, they tell me I should have said so before.

So, I don't think there is the kind of friction that exists elsewhere. That said, there is no doubt that there is always room for improvement.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Bélanger:** As I see it, if there is friction, it comes from Francophones themselves, because we live in the midst of a majority. We want that friction and we want to fight; that's all it is.

We want to win something. Actually, it's not power we want; the power is there already. People already have all the power they need. We just want the right balance.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** There is friction when it comes to funding applications. For example, if we, on the Francophone side, receive \$35,000 for the territory and Anglophone groups receive the same amount, they wonder why Francophones, who number only 1,200, are receiving the same amount of money as they are, when there are 30,000 of them. They question that sort of thing.

Also, we hear Anglophones talk about the French mafia. That is the English expression they use to say that Francophones have the right contacts, that they know how to secure money and get things done. They have an incorrect view of things. They think there is inequality and that we have a lot more than they do.

Because the Yukon government takes so little interest in promoting services in French, when we ask for them, we are perceived as whiners who are always asking for more than the others.

For example, if we're waiting in line and want to be served in French, all the other people who are waiting wonder what we're doing, and why they are at the back of the line. It takes time for them to get over it. We look like people who are always making a nuisance of ourselves.

That is the kind of friction we see.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** But in the community, that friction is not evident.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** In terms of interpersonal relationships, I'd say it's pretty relaxed, but in recent years, the AFY has opened up a lot from a cultural standpoint. It invited Francophiles to come on board and let Anglophones know that they were welcome. It produced bilingual posters, and that made a big difference.

So, at an individual level, there may or may not be much friction, but there can be frustration.

[English]

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Everybody gets along as long as everybody gets along in English.

[Translation]

We have seen that before.

Father Gosselin, you have quite a challenge here. You have a network—a community of about 200.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** To be honest with you, I would say that it only happens about once a year that there are actually 200 in attendance—at Christmas. I just decide that all those people are members.

**A voice:** Ah, ah!

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** But seriously, there are between 100 and 125 people who would feel comfortable saying that they are part of the community.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** There are 50 people who attend every Sunday. The ones who come on Christmas are like the submarines that only surface once a year.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** No, I'm not judgmental about those people. They have a service in French as well.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** Since you were saying that there are 1,245 people in all, that suggests there is a lot of potential.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** But they are not all Catholic.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** If they are French Canadian, their roots are there, somewhere.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** As soon as I came, they told me that all of them were not. That was fine; I was comfortable with that, because I had just arrived from Quebec.

**Voices:** Ah, ah!

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** I had no such expectations, and I didn't learn anything about that there.

However, I also think that, if we're talking about spirituality—I'm not talking about Catholic faith here—if we can do that in French and offer activities that allow people to feel comfortable, well, that requires openness. That's the challenge. You can't force them to get involved in what we do. The challenge is to provide a spiritual service to the population that helps them.

You can forget about that; that is not the way things work here. It's not about forcing people to get involved. As you said, there are 1,200 of us. So, the more we work together, cooperatively, and the more things we do that help people, the better it will be. Without feeling any obligation—

• (1420)

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I think what you're doing is admirable, and the same applies to the testimony we heard this morning and this afternoon.

Ms. Houde was saying that there are 25 pregnancies at the present time. I guess that means that husbands are not always violent.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I don't think there is any connection between pregnancies and violence.

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** I assume that those ones were conceived with love.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I don't think we can assume anything, but ideally, you are right.

**The Chair:** Mr. Galipeau, are you finished?

**Mr. Royal Galipeau:** There are lots of other things I would like to say, but I prefer to say them confidentially.

**The Chair:** That's fine.

Mr. Murphy, please.

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** I have a few questions. In your briefs, you don't talk very much about education and the Church. Historically, in New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba and the other provinces, the Church has been very heavily involved in founding schools.

I note that for more than a century, there were a great many missionaries here in the Yukon, and yet the first schools go back to the 1990s, if I'm not mistaken. L'école Émilie-Tremblay was the first.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** It is a Francophone school, but not a Catholic one.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** It is just Francophone.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** That's correct. There are three English-speaking Catholic schools in the territory.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Has the Church been involved in founding Catholic schools here in the Yukon?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes, through the English-speaking educational system; there are two schools, but they are Anglophone only.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** I see. Are there immersion programs?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** They are Anglophone only.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** So, there was no French language education available before l'école Émilie-Tremblay came into being?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** That's correct. In fact, Francophones residing here worked and lived their lives in English. Most of the missionaries came from Europe. In fact, there are still some left, who are 80 years of age and over. It's quite interesting to hear them. They came here to live in English.

Some came from Quebec. They would speak French among themselves, but they were too few in number to found a

Francophone Catholic school. The idea was to have at least one Francophone school.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Was the Church involved in managing the three or four English-speaking Catholic schools?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** So, it was involved in the management.

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Yes. In fact, it was shared.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** There was no school board. The Church alone managed the Catholic schools. Was it under the direction of—

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** Thanks to the Ministry of Education, these people are able to have Catholic schools through the territorial education system.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Are there a lot of priests here in Yukon?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** There are five of us in the territory.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** How many are Francophone or bilingual?

**Rev. Father Claude Gosselin:** The Francophones are the same ones as before, but I am the only one to serve the Francophone population. We cover the entire territory. Whitehorse is the only place where there are religious services in French. Outside Whitehorse, it is more in the form of visits, or according to needs.

• (1425)

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Is there a community health centre?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Actually, one of the priorities of the health care group and the AFY is to promote that idea. However, no strategic plan has been developed by authorities in the Yukon territory for health care services in French. As Régis mentioned this morning, it's very difficult to speak to a government official, because he is in mediation. Our goal is to have a Francophone community health centre.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Everyone agrees that there is a need for a health care centre. I know that the AFY has been promoting that since 2003, and everyone recognizes that need.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Yes, I think so.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Colleagues, I think it would be a good idea for the federal government to support that by cutting the ribbon.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Can I use my colleague's remaining time?

**The Chair:** Yes, and I believe you will be sharing it with Ms. Zarac.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Do you know whether there are young people in the Yukon who are taking health care training through the Consortium de santé en français that exists right across the country?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** The Yukon is partnering with the SOFA through the AFY.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Are there young people from the Yukon taking part in the program?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Young people?

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Yes, young participants? In terms of people being trained?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I can't answer that.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** It's a good question. We'll find the answer.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** I will be very quick.

You mentioned the baby boom. I have just returned from a mission to Ethiopia where I saw that small steps can result in major changes in terms of the health, not only of mothers, but children as well. As you know, our prime minister has just been appointed joint chair of the UN Committee on Maternal and Child Health. Do you think that Francophone women in the Yukon have the sense that maternal health is a priority?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** Are you asking me whether that is considered to be a priority at this time? I really couldn't say. We have been asking for prenatal courses in French for eight years now.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** And there are none?

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** They tell us there will be this year, but it's always like that. We have been asking for them for eight years now and we're still waiting.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Thank you.

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

Perhaps our witnesses would like to make some closing comments before we adjourn the meeting.

**Ms. Ketsia Houde:** I think that what can bring us closer together is social justice. Claude is working very hard to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are met, just as we are. That is one of the gaps at the present time, because there are practically no social services in French, nor does the AFY have the necessary resources to provide them. I'd say that is a pressing need.

**The Chair:** I want to thank you on behalf of everyone. I also want to tell you how much we appreciate your having put a human face on the work of this committee. We are quite excited about the content of our report and the recommendations that will come forward. Thank you very much for being here and we wish you all the best as you continue your work.

We are now going to the Maison francophone. I want members to know that we are to reassemble 10 or 15 minutes from now in the reception hall, because we do have some errands to run in anticipation of our travel tomorrow.

If you like, we can have a picture taken with our witnesses.

The meeting is adjourned.

---









**MAIL  POSTE**

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

**Lettermail**

**Poste-lettre**

**1782711  
Ottawa**

*If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:*  
Publishing and Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,  
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*  
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

### **SPEAKER'S PERMISSION**

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and  
Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5  
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943  
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757  
[publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)  
<http://publications.gc.ca>

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the  
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

### **PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT**

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les  
Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5  
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943  
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757  
[publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)  
<http://publications.gc.ca>

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à  
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>