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Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

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•(0845)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Thursday, February 16, 2012, and this is our 26th meeting. We are here pursuant to Standing Order 108 to study the evaluation of the Roadmap: improving programs and service delivery.

We have three witnesses here today: Mr. Lussier, Mr. Déry and Mr. Gauthier. Welcome, everyone.

We'll begin with a 10-minute presentation.

Mr. Lussier, you have the floor.

Mr. Hubert Lussier (Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As the members will no doubt recall, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages has two duties with respect to official languages. These duties involve ensuring there is government-wide coordination of official languages issues, which includes coordination of the roadmap that you are studying and involves about 15 federal institutions.

Moreover, we provide the delivery of two programs that support official language minority communities and linguistic duality, which includes encouraging contact and exchange between the two linguistic communities, namely, anglophones and francophones.

[*English*]

With your indulgence, my two colleagues, who each exercise functions associated with these two topics, will make brief presentations. First, Jean-Pierre Gauthier will say a few words about the road map, complementing the presentation made in October to you. And then Yvan Déry will explain our department's official languages support programs and how they relate to the road map.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier (Senior Director, Official Languages Secretariat, Department of Canadian Heritage): Good morning, everyone. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to appear again before the committee as part of your study of the roadmap.

I'll take only two minutes because I want to give as much time as possible to my colleague, who has new material, and to questions from the committee. In our first appearance before the committee on October 18, 2011, we unfortunately didn't have as much time as we would have liked for questions. So I am pleased to be here to continue this discussion and answer the questions that couldn't be

asked last time or that may have been raised in the testimonies you've heard since then.

I just want to take the opportunity to stress the importance that my team and I place on the committee's work. You are an important source of information. We listen to the testimonies you receive. We are greatly interested in the information that emerges. In fact, we consider the testimonies you hear as being formal consultations. Obviously in addition to that we have our informal consultations that take place as part of our business dealings. We are conducting a series of forums and special events, as well as a detailed study of the documentation, strategic plans from the communities and other various sources. This amalgamation of all this information provides us with clarification and enables us to make proposals to the minister.

I'll stop there because I'm sure there will be questions. I will now turn things over to the assistant deputy minister, if I may.

Mr. Yvan Déry (Acting Director General, Official Languages Support Programs, Office of the Director General, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you very much for having us here today.

The official languages support programs are the most significant in terms of cost, and they are the oldest programs of the Government of Canada dedicated exclusively to promoting official languages outside the federal government. These programs were created in the 1970s and have been improved over the years.

There are two programs in our current structure.

First, there's the Development of Official-Language Communities. With this program, we work with the provinces to support minority-language education, either in French outside Quebec or in English in Quebec. We also support the two main networks of representative organizations, the one for francophones outside Quebec and the one for anglophones in Quebec, as well as a large group of regional and local organizations that support community vitality in every region in the country.

The second program is the Enhancement of Official Languages. Once again, we are working with the provincial governments and, with this program, we support second-language learning across Canada. We also support organizations such as Canadian Parents for French, which promotes second-language learning. We support stronger links between anglophones and francophones.

Funding for these two main programs totalled \$337 million this year, for 2011-2012, or \$1.7 billion over five years, which is the horizon for the roadmap. The roadmap's contribution to this \$1.7 billion amount is \$600 million, which is a major complement to our work, representing 35% of the total of what we are funding. With this \$600 million, we are an important player when it comes to the roadmap. So it's practically the oldest and the largest program funded by the horizontal initiative that come under Jean-Pierre Gauthier.

● (0850)

[English]

So the road map is a complement to what we do. With \$600 million over five years, the complement is divided into many missions. We have a big segment of that, which is used to do what we call building on achievements, to consolidate what we have been building over the years before. The bulk of the road map money goes to education.

Our two missions in education are second language learning and minority language support. We also fund, through our provincial partners, exchange programs—summer language bursaries—for 8,000 young Canadians each year who will go to another region of the country to learn their other language for five weeks of immersion. We have a language monitor program that is also well known, where you have young university students used as teacher assistants in classes, in areas where young Albertans, or young British Columbians, for that matter, have never seen a francophone in their life. You get a born francophone who will assist the teacher in giving French lessons. That's invaluable for the experience of these young students.

The “building on achievements” part of the road map also continues the work we are doing with the networks of organizations throughout the country—the minority community organizations. We also work with all of the provinces and territories to support their provision of services in the language of the minority. In provinces like Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, you have a wide array of services, depending on each province's situation. All provinces are now working with the federal government to provide key services in the language of their minority.

The road map also brought about two new youth initiatives for the first year of the road map, and the cultural development fund, which has been working now for four years. We have results to communicate later on in the presentation.

Finally, the road map promised that we would bring about a new cross-nation mechanism to support the work of all federal institutions in delivering on their obligations under the Official Languages Act.

[Translation]

The achievements in minority-language education are vast and it's a field that involves hundreds and hundreds of people across the country. It's extremely important for the future of minority communities.

As we speak, 245,000 young people are receiving primary and secondary education in their language in a minority situation—in English in Quebec and in French outside Quebec—in 900 schools

administered by 40 minority school boards. Talk about school administration in minority communities began in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, so these school boards for the most part haven't yet been around for 20 years. Progress in this field is measured with the help of the federal government, provincial and territorial governments and through the work of thousands of volunteers across the country.

In recent years, our program has made it possible to create what we call living milieux. The creation of school/community centres is one achievement we are particularly proud of. It's practically an invention of our program. There are now 31 centres across the country. The same building houses a community centre and a cultural centre that are attached to a school. Some good examples show to what extent this type of link with the school is vital in isolated communities. It's an idea that has created spin-offs. People are now talking more and more about community schools. New Brunswick launched the concept. In Quebec, we call these “community learning centres”. Rather than add a wing to a school to create a community centre, we make full use of the school's rooms and infrastructure.

I could go on for an hour, but I know my time is limited. You have before you documents that provide details about the various ways we can use the roadmap funds. There have been extraordinary advances in the field of education in minority situations.

● (0855)

[English]

On the second language learning side of things, we have 2.4 million young Canadians who are studying French or English as their second language, as we speak. While the general school population is declining, the number of students taking French or English as a second language is increasing. The proportion is increasing, it's being maintained, and we're working on improving that. But the real challenge is not to increase those numbers as much as to increase the quality of the experience of those second language learners. We have immersion that is climbing as well.

We're working with provinces on what we call intensive learning. It's a new approach, an approach that has been developed over the last 15 years, and it is now expanding throughout the country.

[Translation]

As for the achievements in community support, we talked about networks of organizations. We're working with 400 organizations across the country. The ones that have testified before you are the major stakeholders, but they have behind them hundreds of local organizations that provide services, drive communities and serve as a point of reference and contact in regions where the minority language is difficult to find, to see and to hear.

[English]

We have the cultural development fund, which has been in addition to the road map, because in the preceding years, people have said that culture must be a vital part, integral to the vitality experience, yet previous plans did not make direct mention of that. We have been funding, by choice, small projects that will bring a local experience, that will revitalize culture or create animation in local centres through this program. It's booming, it's working quite well, and I think you've seen an array of organizations that have been praising this program over the course of your work.

[Translation]

Let's go to the last slide.

Since 1994, the Department of Canadian Heritage has been working with 32 federal institutions recognized for their superior ability to contribute to community development. As part of the roadmap, we promised to work with 200 federal institutions. We are keeping this commitment and, as of the next fiscal year, these 200 institutions will be asked regularly to contribute to the development of the communities and to promote both official languages.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, everyone.

We have 50 minutes left for questions and comments.

We'll start with Mr. Godin.

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

I'd like to welcome our witnesses, Mr. Lussier, Mr. Gauthier and Mr. Déry.

Since the time is limited, I'll get straight to my questions.

When do you think the mid-term report will be ready? Will it be made public?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: The mid-term report is being finalized. I think it will be available in a few weeks. The decision was made to make it public and present it before the committee, since the committee requested it.

• (0900)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Gauthier, I'm a little concerned because of something you said earlier.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes, I noticed that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: It made me jump. It made my hair stand on end.

Mr. Gauthier, you said that your department really looked at the work done by this committee and considered all the testimonies given here and viewed it as a formal study. You said that you were going to do another, more informal study.

Here's what concerns me in all that. Unless I'm mistaken, when we did the study, the question was whether the roadmap was working. We asked our questions with that in mind. We did not ask what should happen in the future. If the consultation and this committee are off track, wouldn't it be better to do a study with the

communities, that the government meet with communities to really find out if what was done worked?

Since you follow the committee meetings, surely you'll agree with me that the message is clear: the roadmap was positive. Is that what you understood from the testimony?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes, absolutely. We do follow the testimony. We read all the transcripts. We extract the essence of the testimonies to help us with our work.

One thing is important. When I talk about formal consultations, we obviously have a number of mechanisms, a number of opportunities to speak with communities and find out what they think, whether it's with a more specific objective or not.

For example, I'm thinking of the mid-term consultations that we had and that was still fairly broad, but that had a fairly specific perspective, very retrospective, and it focused more on the roadmap. But on other occasions, we have also gotten our information by listening to the communities.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'd like to come back to that, but I also want to come back to something else. Does the department itself find that the roadmap has been productive and positive?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: This is in fact documented and we know of many examples that demonstrate these successes. In our coordination role, we speak to all the roadmap partners. We are amassing a large number of great stories that have happened because of the support of the roadmap.

The evaluations are under way. They will provide a more systematic look, if I may. They will make it possible to see in detail if the objectives established for each component have been reached and if they were effective. This is under way and it is part of the input we will be looking at. We want to know what the evaluators are telling us. It's a combination of all of that.

However, we can tell you right now that a lot of good things have been done. It's been documented and observed. As for the results achieved program by program and the evaluation of effectiveness, we are listening to the committee. We'll have the committee report, but we will also have the evaluations. We will take in all of that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Will there be another roadmap?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: I'm not the one to make the decision, and I don't think it's been decided yet. We are listening and doing analysis to see how to follow up on the government's official language commitments in the best possible way in the years after the roadmap ends.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Are you going to take into account the fact that the communities want the roadmap?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: We realize that, yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think that was clear.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes, I agree with you.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Déry, a little earlier you talked about the memorandum of understanding between the federal government and the provinces that ends in 2013. Are negotiations currently under way with the provinces?

Mr. Yvan Déry: Formal negotiations with the provinces will begin in the next few months. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada has already set up its negotiation committee. We have had some contact already. We are getting ready for the start of the next fiscal year. We have a schedule of meetings to prepare for the renewal of our agreements on April 1st, 2013.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'll ask you once again if you intend to consider the requests of the communities that want to be able to take advantage of the roadmap.

• (0905)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: As I already said, we communicate with the communities at various times. We hold informal meetings. For example, tomorrow there will be a day organized by the Department of Justice. It's the justice component, which I am taking part in. We take into account everything we hear at these forums.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You're talking about forums that may be held any time, but I want to know if meetings with the communities are planned, specifically for the roadmap.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: When we arrange meetings—and I could give you the example of the research symposium that took place in September—we indicate fairly clearly to participants that the discussions provide us with information about following up on the roadmap. This way, all the participants at the event are aware that meetings may be held regularly, but that this one has special significance.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The department has not yet decided whether there will be another roadmap. In fact, you're not talking about its renewal.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: What you are looking for doesn't seem to go against what we are doing. Something will follow the roadmap. The government must continue to take action in official languages. As for whether it will be known as the roadmap or by another name...

Mr. Yvon Godin: Unless I'm mistaken, I think that Part VII of the Official Languages Act states that the population must be consulted when there are changes in view. It's not the members here who need to be consulted.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: You're right, and that's why...

Mr. Yvon Godin: And by that, I don't mean that you shouldn't consult us.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: With respect to what could follow on the roadmap, it's completely clear that, during our consultations, aside from this one, we listen. When communities talk to us about these matters, we are always there for them. In fact, we are fairly fond of information that can help us provide advice on the follow-up to this program.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lussier.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Lussier and Mr. Déry, thank you for being here this morning.

Is our study important in the context of your work and future consultations? I'm sure you listen to the witnesses who appear before

this committee, but do you contact them afterwards? Do you analyze everything they say and, if so, how do you go about it?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Basically, we review what is said. There are two perspectives. First, we try to find out how what exists worked. The approach is rather retrospective. It's an evaluation, in some way. Then, we listen to the needs and possible emerging trends that, in some cases, show up in the testimonies.

Clearly, by focusing attentively on what is said, we are trying to extract the substance of all the testimonies and understand what in the roadmap worked well. We are also trying to determine what future action we could take. In that respect, there is other input, and there are other opportunities or forums. For example, we are looking at the community strategic documentation. These people create their own strategic plans or determine their priorities. There is a national strategic plan and plans in the provinces and territories. It's part of all the data that combines to create a picture of the needs, interests and priorities of the communities. It enables us to think about how best to respond to them.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Based on the work we have done, are there other organizations that would be interested in testifying before us to give us more detail about their needs?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: I've reviewed the work done by the committee to date. I need to acknowledge that you've done a lot. You've heard from a lot of very relevant stakeholders. There are numerous organizations within the communities. So the committee will be able to choose the level of detail it wants to give to this. Some organizations are very specific. As a general comment, it seems to me that, so far, the number of witnesses from the anglophone minority community in Quebec has been more limited. But your work isn't done yet.

We give a great deal of attention to organizations that focus on linguistic duality. These are organizations that we engage, that we want to listen to. In terms of official languages, we give importance to the minority communities, as well as to the promotion of official languages in general.

In short, these are certainly sources of information that we are going to try to look at.

• (0910)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I learned from your presentation that a lot of good work is being done with the school community centres, both for francophones and anglophones. We know that the entire school sector is under provincial jurisdiction.

What is our relationship with the provinces? Is it good when we want to establish these kinds of things?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: You're right that education is a provincial matter. We support the provinces in taking care of their responsibilities. In the case of a school/community centre, we do it because it is community based, but it is also education based because the draw that these centres have for parents boosts school recruitment with the potential clientele and increases the quality and quantity of after-school activities, which are essential for the quality of the child's school experience.

I'd say our relationships are very good. We are in touch with the CMEC for the negotiations my colleague Yvan Déry mentioned in his presentation. The negotiations are about to resume. We have regular bilateral exchanges, we have bilateral agreements with the 13 provinces and territories that guide where we choose to invest and that give the results that we tried to give you a sample of.

Mr. Yvan Déry: The relationships between the federal government, Canadian Heritage and the departments of education are good. Work is also going very well between the provincial governments and the francophone school boards. If we consider the fact that the francophone population is scattered across the country, we can say that it's provincial jurisdiction, but in the plural. In fact, it's all the provinces and all the territories. A tripartite committee has existed since the mid-2000s. The department of education for each of the anglophone provinces and the school boards meet and share expertise and information. Educational resources developed in Ontario for the francophone schools will be used in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We are going to work on this type of matter. Canadian Heritage, with the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones, was kind of an instigator when it came to these meetings. We are interested and amused observers because the ball has been thrown. People bring their willingness, and the governments work together to move the minority language education file forward.

Good things are happening in Quebec, including the expansion of the development of community learning centres. We started with about a dozen centres less than 10 years ago; there are now 37, with more constantly being added. There's a real passion. Even if it doesn't make the news, there's a real passion. Something's really happening with minority education across the country.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: It may be difficult to answer my next question. When we send money or the school boards receive money from the roadmap, do the provinces opt out for about the same amount when services they could have offered themselves are involved, or is it really complementary? Can it be determined?

Mr. Yvan Déry: The reason why the federal government got involved in these issues dates back to the early 1970s. It started from the acknowledgement that implementing a minority education system would cost much more than making do with providing education to young minority language speakers in the majority system. This meant that additional costs and the federal government were going to help the provinces assume these additional costs.

School boards across the country, minority schools, the parties, offices of the departments of education that develop learning material, all that incurs additional costs. Our help in this respect is at most 50% of the budget. In a lot of cases, the provinces dedicate much more money to it than we do. Is that a disengagement? You might think so because there's a constitutional obligation to

guarantee minority education. But constant effort is needed to provide a quality education, to ensure that the role of the school is more than just education, as the Supreme Court has told us a number of times.

The minority school is a community, a home. It's the anchor of an entire community. The dual, if not triple, mission of the minority school often transcends the jurisdiction of a department of education. So federal support is important. The effort of the provinces is also sustained.

• (0915)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Déry.

Mr. Bélanger, it's your turn.

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

The summative evaluations were to be done between November and February. Have they been completed?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Only one small one has been completed. The others are behind schedule. The last time I checked, I saw that we were talking about March, May and June. So we'll have the...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: This would be the last year for the roadmap. Do you think that's reasonable?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: I find it a little unfortunate, but... There are delays.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay. Can we know who asked questions and to whom, what those questions were and what the answers were?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: As part of the evaluation?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I'm talking about the summative evaluations.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Today we're going to receive the evaluations that we were to submit to you. They will show the parameters. As for the questions and the answers, that's part of the evaluators' notes. I'll see what they have. Their material is different from mine.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: When was the decision not to hold formal consultations made? I'm talking about the renewal.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: It was in looking at the progress of the committee's work, the testimonies. We're running a little behind. Before the holidays, we looked at it and asked ourselves how we could best bring together a consultation exercise. We are already arranging everything I spoke about earlier, and I'm not going to go over it again. So how to best articulate our formal mechanism...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Gauthier, I'm going to interrupt. As you may have noticed, my questions were short. I'd like your answers to be short as well, if you don't mind.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Okay. I am just trying to give you the best information I can. I will keep things shorter.

Basically, the decision was made a little before Christmas and I informed the communities directly so that they would not be surprised when they came back from holidays.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Why didn't you inform the committee?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Basically—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you agree that consultations require a degree of professionalism?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes, of course.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you think that we have the training to hold consultations?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Well—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you think that holding consultations is part of the committee's mandate?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: I think that the committee is fulfilling its mandate by conducting this study.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No, I want to know if, in your opinion, we have the mandate to hold consultations.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: The committee can give itself the mandate it wants. The witnesses that you hear from—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: With all due respect, Mr. Gauthier, the mandate that the committee took on, as I recall, did not include holding consultations for the secretariat.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: I quite agree.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So you unilaterally decided to use what we had done as official consultations and not hold any yourselves. Is that correct?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes, we decided to take advantage of the testimony that you were gathering and use it to provide us with information.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You were eavesdropping. So when you do that, do you warn people? Do you tell them that is the equivalent of an official consultation? Can you prove that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes. To make sure that it was clear, I spoke to people from two key organizations whose members appeared before you.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Are you aware that what you are doing could be illegal?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Really? How so?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The act requires that consultations be held. It does not require that the committee hold your consultations for you.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: There are no requirements in the act about the form the consultations take. A lot of consultations were held, whether here or in other meetings.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Gauthier, I find it absolutely deplorable that the department made that decision unilaterally. Questions here are asked in a highly political atmosphere. You could see that last autumn. Most of the questions I asked then dealt with Radio-Canada. What does that have to do with the Roadmap? You propose to interpret that testimony and those questions as if they were official consultations about the renewal of the Roadmap. Do you think that is reasonable?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: Mr. Bélanger, what we are saying is this: we are going to use the extremely important forum that you represent, as well as many other sources of information provided—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Lussier, Mr. Gauthier said that our committee work would serve as official consultations. That is what he said.

● (0920)

Mr. Hubert Lussier: This is the most official vehicle for information gathering that we have access to at the moment.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Will you be funding the committee's work? You get funding for evaluations and consultations. We don't.

Mr. Lussier and Mr. Gauthier, I am honestly shocked to see that you have the nerve to put the committee, its members and the communities in this type of situation. It is absolutely unbelievable and unacceptable. I do not get carried away very often but I think that your actions show a lack of professionalism, honesty and transparency. I hope you are going to fix the situation and hold official consultations with the communities, the way they should be.

With all due respect, Mr. Gauthier, a 10-minute testimony followed by a series of questions where the same old game unfolds is not a consultation.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to the committee, we acknowledge Mr. Bélanger's comments. But I have to reiterate that we have shown transparency in saying that we take your committee's work very seriously. That's crucial. You are members of Parliament, but we are also able to gather information from a host of other sources.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay. I think I have made my point.

Mr. Déry, the official languages action plan, not the roadmap, listed two objectives for education: the first objective was to double the number of young people learning the other language and the second objective was to see an increase in the enrollment rates of eligible students from 60% to 80%. Where are we at with that?

Mr. Yvan Déry: I do not have the data with me. That's a good question. Determining the number is much more complex than the 2003 action plan might have led us to believe. There is a lot of material there for discussion.

The work that we have been doing since 2003 has certainly made identifying eligible participants and recruiting young people living in exogamous households a priority for every school board and for every education ministry. We are working very hard on that.

The numbers are going up, the francophone minority system continues to grow despite general reductions in education staff.

However, I don't have the exact answer to your question.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You don't have the answer. Do you have it somewhere in the files at your office?

Mr. Yvan Déry: In terms of eligible participants, the answer is no. And in terms of second-language learners, the answer is that the numbers have not doubled.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So where are we at right now?

Mr. Yvan Déry: I cannot tell you off the top of my head.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So you are going to send us this information. And could you also get this information from all the school boards in the country? They have the numbers for eligible students. If you ask them, they will give them to you, and you will be able to forward them to us.

Mr. Yvan Déry: We have some data on eligible students, but there is always a debate about the number.

The Chair: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Déry, could you give the clerk the information on the number of students so that the information is then passed to all the members of the committee?

Mr. Yvan Déry: Sure, no problem.

The Chair: Mr. Trottier, the floor is yours.

Mr. Yvon Godin: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

Earlier Mr. Lussier said that they were transparent. For the sake of clarity, I just want to say that we have never been informed that the Department of Canadian Heritage was doing legitimate studies. That is not being transparent and it is not right.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Trottier, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions have to do with the long term.

The Roadmap was implemented in 2008 and I was not a member of Parliament then. I am guessing that it was a solution to a problem that affected official languages, a funding problem in the medium or long term, meaning five years, and a lack of coordination as well.

Were the three of you there then? Could you describe what the problems were in terms of lack of long-term funding and lack of coordination between departments and the groups receiving funding?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: My colleague Yvan Déry was the only one there at the time and he had a different role. I think it would be a bit much to ask him to fully answer that question.

I got there soon after, but it is true that lack of coordination was perceived in terms of official languages. There was a perceived need for additional momentum in some areas that had been identified as priorities by official language communities and stakeholders.

That is why investments were made and maintained for the second language and for minority language education, both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. That is why investments were made in health care. Actually, for many years, the communities wanted us to focus on that sector since the needs for minority language services were significant. That was possible through the program now led by my colleague Yvan. The same goes for immigration, which was an area of focus in the past 10 years with the help of the commissioner of official languages at the time. So it was a matter of wanting to bring everything together into a more coherent whole, by focusing on specific areas.

● (0925)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: From what the witnesses have said, we saw that many groups received funding. They said that there was a lack of clarity and a lack of accountability. They didn't know where the funding was coming from. If we look at the coordination among departments, your group that was doing the coordinating and the provinces, are there problems to fix in order to eliminate this lack of clarity from the next version of the Roadmap?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: My colleague Mr. Déry talked a little about that earlier. Every department integrates official language activities with overall operations. So, depending on circumstances, departments and their mandates, it can be difficult to identify what they are doing specifically in terms of official languages.

A coordinated strategy like the strategy under the Roadmap makes it at least possible to establish some clear key initiatives—there are 32 in the Roadmap—that together reflect a significant part of the federal government's action in terms of official languages.

We have an interesting system that enables us to be accountable, through departmental performance reports and reports on plans and priorities, for the money spent by each department every year. An appendix shows that information. We have provided the committee with copies.

In retrospect, we see that—and this is included in our mid-term evaluation—we definitely need to spend more time on tracing funding on the ground. We should perhaps do something so that people on the ground know that the Roadmap exists and that funding or part of the funding for such and such a project comes from the Roadmap. That is perhaps an improvement we should consider.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Yes, we got the feeling that a number of witnesses thought that it was especially difficult to find out what to do to obtain long-term funding because the process was byzantine. They said they didn't know who to contact and how to get through all the red tape to get help.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: We have actually noted the same comments. Difficulties of a practical nature don't make our task any easier. In a number of cases, the funding from the Roadmap basically gets added on to existing funds. So that simply increases the amounts that are available for investment. From an accounting point of view in terms of how funding is allocated, it is challenging to distinguish between money that comes from the Roadmap and regular money within the same fund. But we should be able to solve those problems somehow. That is actually something to consider improving.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you.

Is the current process, the mid-term evaluation, a good way to measure effectiveness? Would it be better to use performance measures that are applied every year, for example? In your view, what would be the best way to evaluate the Roadmap?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Actually, there are a number of ways of doing it. Combining all of those ways is what is going to help us be more and more comfortable. As was mentioned earlier, we have summative evaluations. There will also be a horizontal evaluation to help us group everything that was accomplished through the Roadmap and put it in a global perspective. There is also the work of the committee and the accountability I was talking about. I feel that all those methods can help us determine how to achieve the objectives that we have set up. Each tool, each method, has its limits. That is why, by having access to more sources of information, our confidence level goes up.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Is there a more effective performance measure? How do you decide what works and what doesn't?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Objectives are identified for each of the 32 programs in the Roadmap. Initially, we specify which indicators will enable us to measure the extent to which each objective was achieved. That is the slightly more technical part. It comes with the summative evaluations. When we do those evaluations, we go into the field and, using the pre-established objectives and indicators, we try to measure all that. We then report our findings.

• (0930)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Overall, is the Roadmap a success?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: I am waiting for the evaluation reports to see that. Having said that, we have some anecdotal information, basically success stories. We know there are a lot of encouraging comments. You have also heard some in this committee. So it is looking very promising at the moment.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Weston, the floor is yours.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for joining us today.

As we study the Roadmap, I keep remembering that there are two philosophical approaches. There is the approach where we develop great programs with taxpayers' money to promote both official languages in our great country. And then we have the approach that starts with the consumers, students in schools or clients who want to receive services in both languages.

A school in Whistler in my riding wants to teach French, but it is coming up against difficulties because people are wondering what the actual need for French is in Whistler, British Columbia.

When you coordinate programs, do you think about the people who do your work, who promote the use of English and French in Canada without government support and without taxpayers' money? Do you think about the people who do this work without our money? Do you encourage them with the programs that we have?

Mr. Yvan Déry: The short answer is yes. We are doing that and we are working at various levels. As we have mentioned, we work with provincial and territorial governments. At that stage, we don't think that we are working closely with the parents from Whistler who want to have an immersion school or the parents from minority groups who want to have schools in those minority languages. We

work with organizations on the ground. We work with the Canadian Parents for French network and with second-language teachers across the country. We give them the tools and the support they need. The people on the ground will create the demand.

[English]

We're working on supply and demand.

[Translation]

It is more complicated. We would like to stand behind every parent who wants their child to learn French in an immersion school or in an intensive French course. It would be great to be able to be in every living room and to get into each and every head to promote those objectives, but our way of reaching those people is through organizations that work on the ground. The mission of Canadian Parents for French, which has been around for a number of years, is to promote the immersion model, to encourage parents by supporting them and providing convincing arguments.

[English]

Yes, your kid can learn French even if you don't speak French yourself. Your kid can go to a French school. It will be beneficial not only for his learning of French but also his learning of mathematics and other topics. Immersion just broadens the mind. That message is not a message that is relayed only by bureaucrats sitting in Gatineau or bureaucrats sitting in departments of education throughout the country; parents are pushing this message.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: And it makes them very happy. I can attest to those efforts. I am a member of Canadian Parents for French. The people from the association were here. They came to my office. But more specifically, our family took part in a Canadian Parents for French camp in northern British Columbia.

I think the true measure of our success is when people do it without support from politicians and bureaucrats. If our Roadmap can recognize the real progress of people working along those lines, perhaps that will make all politicians and all taxpayers even more happy.

• (0935)

Mr. Yvan Déry: I quite agree.

What those organizations tell us is that, on the ground, it is not necessarily always money that they need. What they need is support at the level of major institutions. In terms of bilingualism, they have to have the impression that it is alive and well nationally. That has to be the case so that those people, in their own areas, can convince their neighbours to finally make the decision to get involved. The work of the committee and the work that we are doing are part of that and of the Roadmap. The commitments that successive governments have made and will continue to make are also part of the undertaking. But, you are right, it has to get to the people. We are trying to make that happen, but a number of players need to work together.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Your turn, Mr. Aubin.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, welcome and thank you for being here.

Since we started this study on the Roadmap, I have had a great many questions on the methodology, and this morning, I am exploding with them.

Do you really believe that everyone who has come before our committee would have had the same comments and would have provided the same testimony, knowing what we know now?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: No. That is why we told them about it. Honestly, we looked at the way in which this study that the committee is doing evolved in the first weeks, in order to get a kind of idea of what it would look like, what the nature of the testimony would be and which witnesses would be invited. In that way, we would also be able to evaluate the situation a little and to be assured that we had a reasonable response.

When we got to—

Mr. Robert Aubin: Let me interrupt you for a few seconds.

Did you say you told them about it?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes.

Mr. Robert Aubin: So they knew their testimony was going to be used—

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Let me finish my thought.

I told them about it after we had formed an opinion about the way in which the committee was going to conduct its study. As I said just now, with the benefit of that hindsight, around the time of the holidays, we communicated with the associations to tell them about our intention.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Mr. Lussier, during your exchange with Mr. Bélanger just now, you said that, besides our committee's work that you were going to use, there were going to be a lot of other sources of information. Can you give us some examples of how pertinent those sources of information are?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: Just now, my colleague Jean-Pierre made reference to the consultations held by the departments responsible for Roadmap programs, such as Health, Citizenship and Immigration, and Human Resources and Skills Development.

In the case at hand and in the case of the programs that Yvan Déry talked about, we have regular consultations with the non-profit groups that we support. They may deal with minorities or they may be groups involved with linguistic duality. We consult with the provinces. Just recently, we came out of a series of consultations, not only with the provinces, but also often with school boards. We have quite an extensive list of regular consultations.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Great, thank you.

So according to the information I have received, this would mean the holidays were three weeks ago, but whatever.

When you talk to me about departmental evaluations, it is also a problem for me. In fact, the whole methodological framework of the evaluation that has to produce this mid-mandate report, one that will

probably be either really late or really incomplete, is a serious problem for me.

Mr. Yvon Godin: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

The witness says that he advised the communities. It has just been acknowledged that that was about three weeks ago. But we had already met with all the communities. So the communities were not aware that their comments could be used for that evaluation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin, but that is more a point of information.

Let us go back to Mr. Aubin.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In a Heritage Canada document entitled “Report on mid-term consultations”, I find some interesting things. It says, for example:

2011 marks the halfway point of the Roadmap and is the year to examine its operation and progress...

I will skip a bit as we are pressed for time.

To that end, in March 2011, the Official Languages Secretariat (OLS) developed a methodological framework in order to hold effective consultations with stakeholders.

Could we have that methodological framework?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you. We can get it quickly, I assume?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Yes.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Because of their cooperation and their suggestions, participation in those consultations was successful...

That is said with no figures to support the statement. I assume the methodology will come with figures that will help us to understand.

...the main purpose of the consultations was to better understand the specific ways in which the operation of the Roadmap had been received on the ground. This was a first attempt at a report card of the rollout and the outcomes of the initiatives, highlighting to the extent possible their strengths, their weaknesses and the progress...

As I read the rest, it seems to me that the document focuses on the strengths. The only things ever talked about are the successes, which is not a problem in itself. But, to me, the problem seems to come if you cannot also find out about the things that worked less well. This is not necessarily in order to throw stones, but to know which adjustments to make. Maybe that problem will be solved when I see the methodology.

You decided to make this committee's work your main source of information. Do you have experts in testing, evaluation, or sociology who can confirm that that is a scientifically valid method of evaluation?

● (0940)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Several members of my team are accomplished researchers with a lot of experience. But I repeat that the committee is engaged in a number of mechanisms. It's the sum total that we are trying to get out of it. As I said previously, each mechanism has its strengths and its weaknesses. We try to have several sources of information, not just one. I certainly do not want to disregard the fact that a number of other sources of information will help to bring everything together, so that it can be compared to what you hear and to the statements made before the committee.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Don't you think that, if we had been made aware of this sooner, the committee would have been the judge, the umpire of the testimony and the questions we wanted to ask the witnesses? You have now put us in a situation where we are not the judge and the ump, we are the judge and the chump. I get the distinct impression that I have been duped into not being able to play the role around this table that is mine to play.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aubin.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier: Basically, we have to remember that, when we looked at the big picture, we saw that the committee was holding its hearings, that people were getting ready to present reports and, in some cases, to table documents in the name of their communities. We waited to see how that work was going to be organized in order to find out what kind of information source it could be for us. In that spirit, over time, we recognized the number of witnesses, the quality of the testimony and the nature of the debates. We decided that it was a source of information that we could not disregard and we made the decision to use it. That's what I feel it comes down to.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gauthier.

[English]

Mr. Williamson, you are last.

[Translation]

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Tell me a little about the 74 schools built in New Brunswick that are now open. I may have a couple of questions.

Mr. Yvan Déry: The concept of the community school is not just about building or adding a community centre or something like that. The idea is that a school employee is mandated to reach out to the community. That person becomes a facilitator, bringing the community into the school so that the entire community can take advantage of the facilities and so that community representatives can play a role in the way the school operates. The school can become the focal point of the community.

In the Acadian peninsula, practically speaking, the francophone community forms the majority. In majority language situations like that, it means that parents, businesspeople and social groups are able to participate in school activities. Where the community is more diffuse, it really makes the school the main vehicle for community life.

● (0945)

Mr. John Williamson: In the case of New Brunswick, does that mean that your efforts go towards English being taught in the north

and French in the south? Or are you trying to make sure that French is well represented in the north? New Brunswick is strange, in that a third of the population is francophone. They are not really a minority like others elsewhere in the country.

Mr. Yvan Déry: People from the francophone school boards would tell you that all the students coming out of their schools are bilingual. In a community school, English is taught as a second language, certainly, but the value is in the community mandate of the school vis-à-vis the linguistic minority. Then, another part of our program lets us work specifically with provincial governments in order to improve and expand second-language teaching.

In southern New Brunswick, to use your example, schools in anglophone boards offer education in French. French is taught with immersion and intensive programs. New Brunswick is the first province to decide, quite recently, to extend intensive learning of the other language to all its anglophone and francophone classes. Quebec is going to do the same thing, because that is the easiest way to double, or to rapidly increase, the number of Canadians who are bilingual.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Williamson. Thank you, Mr. Déry.

Thanks to all the witnesses for their testimony.

Committee members asked to receive some figures. You can send them to the clerk of the committee. Thank you for doing that.

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

The Chair: Your turn, Mr. Bélanger.

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Would a motion be in order to the effect that the bill for all the witnesses who appeared before us vis-à-vis the road map be sent to the Department of Canadian Heritage?

The Chair: Right now it would not be.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You'd have to give me notice for that, and then I would let you know at that point whether it's in order. But it's certainly not in order right now.

We'll suspend for five....

Yes.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Chair, my apologies.

Having not had an opportunity to speak, I just want to quickly ask two questions through the chair. One, could we ask Heritage to provide a list to the committee of the organizations you informed; and two, at what point did the governing party learn that this was happening?

An hon. member: That's not a point of order.

Mr. Dan Harris: I didn't say it was.

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

The department has heard the questions, and along with the figures that have been previously requested, we'll ask that they respond to those questions as well, through the clerk, who will then distribute them to all members of the committee.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Without further ado, we'll suspend for five minutes.

• _____ (Pause) _____

•

• (0950)

The Chair: We're on to committee business and the selection of witnesses. I'm going to suggest, as chair, that we go in camera for this, as we normally would, but I'm going to leave it to the will of the committee.

First Mr. Trottier, and then Monsieur Godin.

An hon. member: I think that's what he wants to propose.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Since we will be talking about committee work and about the list of witnesses for the coming weeks, I have no objection to the meeting going in camera.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll go in camera.

• (0955)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, I prefer to remain in public.

The Chair: I think I have the consent to do it.

The chair is going to ask the clerk to go in camera.

While we're going in camera, I just want to tell members what the chair's view is of going in camera. My view is that we do it for two occasions: when we're talking about potential witnesses, because those witnesses don't have a chance to defend themselves if members are critiquing them and making comments as to why they should not appear, and secondly, for discussion of draft reports of committee. That's the way I've always interpreted the rules and run committees during the time that I've been here. But at the end of the day, it's up to the committee to decide, so that's why I defer to you.

Mr. Dan Harris: On the flip side, we shouldn't be boosters of individuals either.

The Chair: I just want to be consistent about the rules. It makes my job easier when there's consistency.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

[*Translation*]

• _____ (Pause) _____

•

[*Public proceedings resume*]

• (1020)

[*English*]

The Chair: We're now in public session.

I'm going to pass the floor to Mr. Bélanger.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to point out to you that, when we sit in public, the letters are in red. I find that interesting.

I would like to thank our analyst, Ms. Lecomte, for the two documents she provided to us yesterday.

The one I asked for, the summary of Roadmap expenses, is very well done. It really gives us a pretty accurate idea of the status of each department in terms of expenses. You can see that, for the most part, everything seems to be going well. But, for some, like the economic agencies, things are not going as well. I am very pleased to see that we are going to be meeting with them. We needed that information. I am grateful to our analyst for providing it.

The other document, which I have not had the chance to read, also seems to be very substantial. That is the analysis of the Canada-Saskatchewan agreement on second language instruction.

I would like to publicly express my thanks to our analyst for the work she has done.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'd like to second that.

The analyst does a lot of very good work. If you get a chance to read these documents—they're actually quite important—you'll find the summary of expenditures for the road map is not readily available. It's very difficult reading the estimates and departmental summaries to actually figure out where the spending is taking place. Madame Lecomte has done a great job of amalgamating all that information into this document. We should keep this handy, because it's actually quite useful.

On the issue of the Canada-Saskatchewan bilateral agreement, it touches many constitutional issues and is quite fundamental to official languages in Canada. It's a good summary of the constitutional setting.

Thank you very much for doing the work. We very much appreciate that.

Mr. Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I want to join the number of those thanking Ms. Lecomte for the work she has done. These documents are important for our work.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Without further ado, this meeting is adjourned.

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