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Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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•(0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Tuesday, March 27, 2012, and we are here pursuant to Standing Order 108 to study the Evaluation of the Roadmap: Improving Programs and Service Delivery.

We have four groups making presentations today. First, we have representatives from Public Works and Government Services, namely, Ms. Achimov, Ms. Lorenzato and Mr. Olivier. We also have Mr. Moore and Ms. Anzolin from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Welcome.

We also have Ms. Perkins and Mr. Rotheron, representing Canadian Parents for French.

[English]

Welcome.

Finally, we have Mr. Morrow, of the group Canadian Youth for French. Welcome to everybody.

We'll begin with a statement from the Department of Public Works and Government Services.

[Translation]

Ms. Donna Achimov (Chief Executive Officer, Translation Bureau, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Good morning and thank you.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, I am pleased to be here today to speak about PWGSC's progress with respect to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality.

I am joined today by Diane Lorenzato, assistant deputy minister of Human Resources Branch.

[English]

It's a real pleasure for me to be here addressing this committee for the first time.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Francine Kennedy, for her dedication and hard work in implementing the department's initiatives in response to the road map. I'll also talk about these initiatives shortly.

[Translation]

I'd like to begin by describing the role the Translation Bureau plays in promoting linguistic duality.

[English]

The Translation Bureau is the second-largest translation institution in the world. In 2010-11, the bureau translated more than 1.7 million pages in all areas of federal government activity, as well as provided translation and interpretation for over 2,000 parliamentary sittings and parliamentary committees such as these. The bureau also manages TERMIUM, the Government of Canada's terminology and linguistic databank, which contains almost 4 million English and French terms. The databank is used by teachers, students, writers, and translators, among others, in Canada and all over the world.

[Translation]

I would also like to highlight the recent efforts by the Translation Bureau to modernize its activities.

To achieve this objective, the Translation Bureau has adopted a transformation strategy that involves the use of new language technology and streamlined business processes.

[English]

In order to respond rapidly to the changing needs of Canadians and their government, the Translation Bureau is fully leveraging technology to provide its services via new channels such as social media.

[Translation]

Returning to today's main topic, I am pleased to report that, in response to commitments made by the federal government in the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, the Translation Bureau launched the Language Portal of Canada and implemented the Canadian language sector enhancement program in 2009.

[English]

The portal funded by the road map—and we'll be showing you a short demo momentarily—provides free Internet access to the national collection of Canadian linguistic resources, such as online dictionaries, writing tools, and quizzes that help users improve their English and French skills. Canadian Internet users can go to the portal site and find anything they need to study, work, and communicate more effectively in both official languages. The portal currently contains more than 2,800 Canadian language resources, including about 1,800 links, 600 articles, and 400 linguistic games. The portal received over 29 million hits in the last 11 months alone. This is a significant increase from the 14 million hits recorded in the previous year.

[Translation]

To date, 14 Canadian partners have signed cooperation agreements, including the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick. These partners have authored close to 50 articles that have been posted on the portal.

[English]

The portal is also receiving positive feedback from visitors. In fact, it was listed as one of the 10 best websites for French improvement by the Centre collégial de développement de matériel didactique in its web directory for 2011-12. We're very proud of that.

[Translation]

This Canadian organization produces print, digital and online materials for teaching staff and students throughout the Quebec college system. Its mandate is to ensure that students in the system have access to quality educational materials in both French and English.

• (0850)

[English]

The Translation Bureau also promotes linguistic duality through the Canadian language sector enhancement program. Its purpose is to support the development of a skilled linguistic labour force, and strengthen the capacity of the language industry in Canada. Funding for this program was given to Public Works and Government Services for five years, and that will end on March 31, 2013.

The program has two components. First is the university scholarships in translation program, which is intended to help post-secondary institutions increase the number of graduates in the field of translation. The second,

[Translation]

the language industry initiative, which helps strengthen the language industry's promotion and workforce development capacities and ability to integrate language technologies.

I am proud to note that, under the Canadian language sector enhancement program, 16 projects were funded.

[English]

At its conclusion in March 2013, it's expected that the program will have achieved its performance objectives. So far we have

achieved the following impressive results. There were 1,200 scholarships awarded for a total of more than \$2 million; student registration has already increased by 50% at the Université de Moncton; 145 internships in private enterprises were financed for \$1.3 million; three college and university programs are being developed—online translation, a master's in interpretation, and a para-language program—and a campaign promoting translation careers through the Atlantic provinces was created. We will be showing you that as well.

[Translation]

This concludes my opening remarks.

Mark Olivier, manager of the Linguistic Services Division in the Translation Bureau's Terminology Standardization Directorate, will now give a demonstration of the Language Portal of Canada.

[English]

I will be pleased to answer your questions along with my colleague, Ms. Diane Lorenzato.

Merci. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Olivier (Manager, Translation Bureau, Linguistic Services Division, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Thank you, Ms. Achimov.

The Language Portal of Canada currently contains more than 2,800 Canadian language resources, including language news under the heading "Headlines", articles and games under the heading "Well Written, Well Said" and many links under the heading "Discover".

Here are a few examples of resources. Teachers or students can quickly find a list of useful links, including exercises and games, under the heading "My Portal at school".

[English]

We are proud to say that we have published, so far, more than 50 articles from our partners, like this one from the Government of Manitoba entitled "Court interpreting in Manitoba". One of the major improvements we have made since 2009 is to offer users the option to share useful information by e-mail or through social networks like Twitter and Facebook. So if I want to share this interesting article with my friends, I just click on "share this article" and I can share it by e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter.

Our most popular online tool is TERMIUM Plus, the second-largest terminology bank in the world, with close to four million terms in English and French. So if I want to know how to say "House of Commons" in French, I just type "House of Commons", click from English to French, and find the French equivalent, "*Chambre des communes*".

[Translation]

As Ms. Achimov mentioned, we will be launching a mobile application of TERMIUM Plus in spring 2012 to allow users to consult this very popular data bank quickly on their BlackBerry smartphones or their iPhones.

That ends this very quick overview of the portal.

I will now show you the advertising message.

[English]

This is a television commercial that was created in English and French by New Brunswick Translation. This commercial is a direct result of funding received for the Canadian language sector enhancement program.

• (0855)

[Translation]

This ad has aired in movie theatres, on the radio and on television.

[Audiovisual presentation]

[English]

That was the French version. I'll now show you the English version.

[Video Presentation]

That's all. Thanks.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was exactly 10 minutes.

[English]

We'll now have an opening statement from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

[Translation]

Mr. Jeff Moore (Vice-President, Policy, Partnerships and Performance Management, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the role of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, better known as FedDev Ontario, in regards to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013.

My name is Jeff Moore, vice president of Policy, Partnerships and Performance Management and official languages champion at FedDev Ontario. With me here today is my colleague Susan Anzolin, director general, Innovation and Economic Development.

FedDev Ontario was created in August 2009 when our government recognized the challenges facing southern Ontario in terms of the economy. The agency works to stimulate economic development and growth in the region by expressly meeting the needs and priorities of our workers, businesses and communities.

Our headquarters are in Kitchener, and we have offices in Ottawa, Toronto, Peterborough and Stratford. Our personnel are out in the field, ideally positioned to be in tune with local concerns and needs. Our employees work together with businesses and communities in

southern Ontario to ensure the delivery of programs and services pertaining to the agency's role.

I am pleased to speak to you today about how the agency is working with the francophone communities in southern Ontario on projects funded through the roadmap's economic development initiative, as well as through other agency programs.

As FedDev Ontario is a newer agency, I thought I'd take a few minutes to explain our role.

During its first year, FedDev Ontario focused its efforts on targeted investments for creating jobs and for meeting immediate needs given the economic challenges being faced by the region.

We also took on the delivery of existing national programs, such as the economic development initiative, the community futures program, the eastern Ontario development program and infrastructure programs.

During this time, we had an opportunity to listen to what business, industrial and community leaders throughout our region had to say regarding productivity, competitiveness and innovation challenges.

We also learned, in particular, about other challenges facing the francophone communities in southern Ontario: low rates of entrepreneurship and education; high rates of youth out-migration; accessibility barriers to business counseling information in French and accessibility barriers to business financing, especially micro loans.

That is why, in our second year, the agency launched an array of initiatives aimed at strengthening the economy of southern Ontario and positioning the region to increase our competitiveness at the international level. Our objective is to develop the tools needed to make sure that our businesses and communities can continue to innovate so that the economy can continue to prosper today and into the future.

We are building on the region's strategic advantages to strengthen innovation and competitiveness through seven initiatives: Youth STEM (for science, technology, engineering and mathematics); Graduate Enterprise Internships; Scientists and Engineers in Business; the Applied Research and Commercialization Initiative; the Technology Development Program; Investing in Business Innovation; and the Prosperity Initiative.

Finally, we are fostering partnerships between research and innovation organizations, the private sector, post-secondary institutions, and not-for-profit organizations to accelerate technological advances and to bring new products to market.

• (0900)

Since its creation, the agency has invested more than \$800 million in projects aimed at stimulating the economic development of communities in southern Ontario.

I would like to point out that all FedDev Ontario programs are available to the francophone community. Thanks to partners such as Heritage Canada, we have created geographic maps identifying the location of communities that have a high percentage of francophones. We have also developed an analysis grid for projects as well as clauses regarding official languages for contribution agreements. These tools help us enormously in determining if a funded project will have an impact on the francophone community.

For example, Ivaco Rolling Mills in L'Orignal, one of the key employers in this region, will receive \$10 million as part of a prosperity initiative for an expansion project. This project will have numerous benefits for the region, from the creation of approximately 200 short-term construction jobs to the addition of approximately 50 new permanent positions within the company itself.

A large number of beneficiaries from our youth STEM initiative hire francophone students in their activities in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Thanks to our applied research and commercialization initiative, francophone businesses are working with post-secondary institutions such as the Cité Collégiale here in Ottawa.

Of course, as part of the roadmap, the agency is responsible for delivering the economic development initiative in southern Ontario. The original budget from the Treasury Board proposals was for \$8.9 million for all of Ontario, representing 29% of the national budget of \$30.5 million for the economic development initiative.

FedDev Ontario received \$4.5 million for delivery in southern Ontario for the 2009 to 2013 period. Of this amount, \$500,000 was set aside to cover operating and maintenance costs, leaving \$4 million for contributions.

To date, 30 projects across southern Ontario with a value of about \$2.6 million have been approved and are either completed or in the process of being completed. This represents approximately 64% of the total announced budget for EDI.

Projects range from the development of strategic plans, to marketing initiatives, to youth internships, to the new microcredit investment fund recently announced.

All of these projects are helping to meet the needs of the francophone communities in southern Ontario.

As a new agency, we had to develop both the infrastructure and the relationships to effectively deliver our programming. So we did experience some challenges in spending our budget allocated to the economic development initiative. Despite our outreach activities and relaunching the program with a continuous intake process, we still faced challenges in receiving a sufficient number of proposals. Unfortunately, this resulted in lapsing \$1.4 million of the \$4 million budget.

Since then, we've made strong progress in reaching out to key francophone organizations and funding strategic projects. For example, the agency took a proactive approach and met with three key francophone economic development organizations to discuss how to better support the region's official language minority communities. They were La Fondation Franco-Ontarienne; the

Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de l'Ontario; and the Association Franco-Ontarienne.

I will conclude there. Mr. Chair, members of the committee, I thank you once again for this invitation to appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

• (0905)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Moore.

[English]

Now we'll have Canadian Parents for French.

[Translation]

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins (President, National Office, Canadian Parents for French): Mr. Chair, members of the committee, my name is Lisa Marie Perkins, and I am the president of Canadian Parents for French.

[English]

I'm accompanied today by my executive director, Robert Rotheron, and we are very pleased to have the opportunity to present to you today.

The road map for Canada's linguistic duality has provided Canadian Parents for French, or CPF, with an opportunity to promote FSL education in Canada. In this manner, CPF has also helped Canadians appreciate the road map's breadth and its depth. We've taken part in the mid-term consultations on the road map, and are pleased to be here today to follow up by speaking to its successes, and by helping conceptualize a possible successor.

One of the objectives of the road map is to allow all Canadians to enjoy the benefits that English and French have to offer. From our perspective, parents' increasing interest in choosing an FSL program—French immersion in particular—for their children is the most significant grassroots expression of support for linguistic duality in English Canada. In other words, anglophone and allophone parents are demonstrating their support for linguistic duality by opting to give their children the chance to be bilingual in both French and English.

With our French immersion numbers growing in the provinces of Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia—to name four—the road map's impact on FSL education can be deemed a true success.

CPF is a not-for-profit parent organization now celebrating our 35th year. We value linguistic duality, and we work to create, support, and promote opportunities for non-francophone youth to learn and to use French. Our three-tiered structure allows over 25,000 members across Canada to engage actively with the school system from top to bottom, and with the francophone minority official languages communities outside of Quebec.

In the latter case, CPF is more often than not a preferred point of contact between the broader English-speaking community and the francophones, especially in the west. CPF is seen to represent the point of view of francophiles—which is currently a popular designation for anyone who speaks French as a second or other language—as minority francophone communities increasingly warm to the idea of integrating French second-language speakers into their core communities.

Preliminary data from Ontario suggests that there may be a correlation between the higher enrolment in FSL programs and the presence of strong francophone communities, so the relationship is clearly mutually beneficial.

On one level, the greatest significance of the road map is a strong public statement of intent on the part of the government to support and enhance Canada's linguistic duality. When you consider that in 2006 over three-quarters of Canadians stated their support for bilingualism in Canada, a successor to the road map with an FSL focus is not only politically desirable, but also provides an opportunity for government to define its legacy in nation building through the enhancement of our linguistic duality.

At CPF our research, advocacy, support, guidance, and youth programs have paved the way for parents to complement and protect their children's linguistic education at every level of our three-tiered structure. Nationally, CPF helps inform policy-making through its biennial “State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada” reports, its FSL database, and targeted youth initiatives. The policies that support language education don't just enable parents to make the right choices for their children; they also help educators better access supports and teaching aids that benefit students; improve and define relationships between an educator, student, and parent; and help ensure that the overall teaching environment is one that is adaptable to all student needs.

CPF National also voices a unified national perspective on FSL education, first by providing leadership to the entire CPF network, and subsequently through dialogue with our other national organizations like the FSL Partner Network, which includes SEVEC, ACPI, CASLT, French for the Future, and Canadian Youth for French.

Provincially and territorially, CPF branches support and encourage ministries of education to enhance or increase their support of FSL. They also undertake socio-cultural initiatives such as Bilingualism Rocks, which was a specially commissioned piece highlighting the shared historical experiences of official language communities in B.C., Alberta, and the Yukon. This program alone gave 69 school performances in B.C., Alberta, and the Yukon. In fact, we still have a waiting list of schools looking for this presentation.

At the school district level and even within individual school communities, CPF chapters are parents right on the ground actively supporting FSL through programming activities. For example, our Camrose, Alberta, chapter reported that, last year alone, its activities for students reached approximately 954 children.

● (0910)

[*Translation*]

One of the most unexpected results of this growing fervour in anglophone Canada for linguistic duality through French as a second language school programs is the intergenerational transmission of French as a second language. The first generation that went through immersion is now putting their children through the same school program and we're seeing that, in some families, this is even the third generation of learners going through immersion.

[*English*]

I am proud to say that I am one of them, and as one of the first immersion graduates, I have, myself, chosen to put my child in French immersion.

[*Translation*]

In our opinion, this phenomenon raises learning French from personal choice and individual accomplishment and puts it in a broader socio-cultural trend, meaning the emergence of an institutionalized culture of learning a second official language by an increasingly large part of the Canadian population. There is a parallel phenomenon here with respect to teachers, where individuals who went through the immersion program are themselves becoming immersion teachers.

Moreover, this intergenerational transfer of French as a second language shows the commitment of anglophone Canada toward this language, its cultures and its households in minority situations, which could lead to positive reflection about how we, in Canada, define the linguistic identity of each citizen.

[*English*]

Younger Canadians who became literate in both official languages see their ability to communicate and participate in both languages as normal.

CPF sees the need to develop legislation, policy, and practices that started and should continue with the road map as an opportunity to bring us closer to this reality for all Canadian youth, and to the expectation that these opportunities should be available to all students.

[*Translation*]

It is through this passion and dedication of the CPF parents that a number of school boards across Canada continue to offer, if not broaden, the offering of French as a second language programs, at a time when boards are facing serious financial pressures that elsewhere have led to the consolidation of schools or the straight out elimination of programs.

In many cases, the actions of CPF, which are to help school superintendents better understand the use of the funding guide for bilateral agreements and information sharing to facilitate dialogue between the school system stakeholders, have led to solutions that keep teaching programs in our Canadian schools.

Along those same lines, and in relation to the roadmap, CPF acts as a volunteer custodian of federal interests when it comes to using funding for bilateral agreements stemming from the Official Languages in Education Protocol.

[English]

For us, what would a successor to the road map look like and what should be its goals? The Commissioner of Official Languages has written that official languages rests on the notion that a majority of all Canadians will remain unilingual. That may have been true 40 years ago; however, we are coming to realize that it may be time to rethink this assumption.

Parents increasingly seek to ensure that their children have the opportunity to learn both official languages by demanding or choosing that learning opportunity. Through a process of grassroots appropriation, many Canadians now interpret official languages, and the underlying notion of linguistic duality, as meaning individual official languages bilingualism. That is, to be truly Canadian is to be bilingual in both French and English, and that access to programs like French immersion should be seen as a right.

However challenging from a legislative and a policy perspective, this last notion provides an unparalleled opportunity for government to display leadership and to continue to display this leadership on a number of fronts and to advance an ambitious agenda.

There are some pragmatic arguments to be made, as well, for a successor to the road map, such as the recruiting of bilingual candidates to the public service renewal, building support for official languages among new Canadians, extending our success with FSL into the post-secondary area, securing an adequate supply of qualified FSL teachers, and using official language bilingualism as a springboard to individual plurilingualism, in order to position our youth in a multilingual, global economy.

In sum, the road map for Canada's linguistic duality has helped contribute to public recognition of the importance of official bilingualism. Support for Canada's official languages is on the rise, with more youth engaging with linguistic duality across the country. This support is starting to be manifest as support for individual official bilingualism.

We recommend that the federal government plan a successor to the road map; that a successor to the road map build on the latter's successes in FSL education; that future OLEP agreements focus on increasing the proportion of official language bilingualism; and that the overarching goal of a successor be the gift to all Canadian children of the right to learn both official languages through the most effective programs.

CPF is proud to be a supporter of the road map, and indeed the embodiment of what the road map is trying to achieve. We encourage you to build upon the road map's success by ensuring that every young Canadian has the opportunity to fully engage in the Canadian experience of our linguistic duality.

[Translation]

Thank you.

• (0915)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Perkins. I'll tell you that both my children are in French immersion, so what you said rings very true to me.

Finally, we'll have a statement from Canadian Youth for French, Mr. Morrow.

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Morrow (Founder and Executive Director, Canadian Youth for French): Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is Justin Morrow. I come from Shedden, the rhubarb capital of Ontario.

In Shedden, we are taught to recognize those who help us in our lives. You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours, as the saying goes. I have always interpreted this expression in a broader sense. I have associated that way of life to both things and people. I could give you many concrete examples, but I wanted to say this because that is why I founded the Canadian Youth for French organization.

Five years ago, I could not speak a word of French. I was recruited to play football at Université Laval, in Quebec City. I was not a good student, I did not have a lot of self-confidence and I was constantly afraid of falling in depression. Learning French has completely changed my life.

In less than three years, I won two national football championships, I had the best marks I've ever had in school and my career took off. In addition, I had an incredible international experience and I developed so much self-confidence that I believe nothing is impossible. I owe all that to speaking French. I feel indebted to this language and I feel obliged to share my experience with other young people so that they can also benefit from learning French, just like I did.

[English]

You have called upon Canadian Youth for French to share our opinion with you regarding the road map for Canada's linguistic duality, and it is my privilege and honour to be here representing both the organization and the demographic. Thank you very much for allowing me to be here.

A few points before I get started.

First, I want to apologize for not having any material for you. The week's preparation that I had for this meeting, combined with the fact that we don't have an executive staff right now, and I'm working full time toward my CA, didn't give me much time to concentrate on anything but this presentation to you now.

Second, I want to clarify that I don't have any expertise with regard to minority situations. I don't know the reality and don't feel comfortable speaking on their behalf. Ever since we began dealing with the official languages portfolio, we've strictly been involved with the promotion of linguistic duality. That being said, if there's one thing that I know about our official languages program, it's that a large majority of young Canadians want to be able to communicate in both of our official languages. This is a fact, and our experiences in the schools have proven that time and time again.

Keeping this fact in mind, I want to try to get you to dream a little, and think of a country in which the majority of all of those young people, who want to speak both the official languages, can speak the other official language. Would we even be here right now? How much better off would we be, if everyone spoke the other language? This ideal is unbelievable, and I dream about this every day before I go to bed, and I'm not kidding you.

Back to reality. The title of this meeting is "Evaluation of the Roadmap". I can't really fathom how you'd want to hear about our experience with the road map seeing that we've only received two small grants over the past three fiscal years.

So, if we were not invited here to talk about the past, we must be here to talk about introducing you to our present—where we're at, where we're going, and where we see this road map taking us. So I'll tell you a little about who we are now, and where we think we're going to go.

Canadian Youth for French is a youth-led, not-for-profit organization that exists to increase the number of bilingual Canadians, while inspiring a greater appreciation for French throughout English Canada.

We accomplish this mission through two main activities. The first is the CYF discover zone, which is an interactive, web-based tool that gives senior high school students a place to discover the post-secondary French as a second language learning opportunities that best suit their individual needs and interests. The second is our unique presentation model, which introduces students to some of the many benefits of speaking French via first-hand experiences told by our presentation staff.

The long-term vision of Canadian Youth for French is one of a country in which the majority that we speak of is no longer French or English, but rather officially bilingual. Again, I love thinking about that ideal; it's just too beautiful.

To realize this we've simplified it into a six-step process. The first four steps have been looked at for years, and they're tweaked as much as possible, almost to their full potential. Canadian Youth for French has come in to take care of the fifth step. We're looking toward our government for a little direction with the sixth step, and with your help we can achieve this.

It starts with informed parents who understand the competitive advantage their children will be able to have by speaking more than one language. Then we need to maximize the number of students who are enrolled in French immersion classes. Then we need to ensure that we have enough able-bodied and professional teachers to properly supply the demand for French in school, and then we need to maximize the number of students who take French all the way through to grade 12.

But even if we are successful in getting 100% of the students all the way through to grade 12, a little more work needs to be done. We still won't be able to achieve our goal if those students don't know where to go to use their French after high school. How are they going to incorporate French into their post-secondary lives? So CYF has arrived to fill this void. We communicate on the ground, we're measurable, and we're driven to realize our ideal.

Now take it a little further. Even if we are to be 100% successful in getting 100% of all young Canadians into post-secondary experiences in French, we still won't be able to achieve our goal because of one fundamental problem. There is no recognized space for those of us who are bilingual to just be bilingual.

To give you a little more information about what I mean, I'm talking about English Canadians having their space in our society, French-Canadians having our space in society, but bilingual Canadians unfortunately have a quasi-space, and it's kind of here and there, but we would like it to be more prominent.

● (0920)

So to give you an example of what I'm talking about, if an English Canadian wants to watch TV he turns on his TV to CBC, or any other English TV station, with all the English content that they want. A French Canadian turns on the TV station Radio-Canada, or any other French TV station, with all the French content there that they want. A bilingual Canadian turns on the TV, and they must either suffer through dubbed voices or flip back and forth between CBC and Radio-Canada to get information and to hear something in the language of their choice.

Now if we go back to our ideal for a second, it would be pretty amazing to be able to watch TV for any of us who are bilingual and not have to deal with dubbed voices, and not have to flip back and forth between the two. It would also be pretty ideal for us to wake up and read the paper in the morning and be able to read an article in French, and an article in English. I know I'm speaking of an ideal, but if we're going to go towards something I think it should be an ideal.

The bottom line is this: if we are ever to come close to living in a country where two official languages live in harmonious bliss, we are going to need to create a space for somebody to be bilingual, a space that bridges the two solitudes and the first step to making this a reality will be through the next road map. So how should this road map be implemented? We have a few suggestions for you.

First, it was extremely difficult for me to get this organization off the ground. For me to be here today, there was a lot of sacrifice, blood, sweat, and tears that went into this. So I would suggest an innovative fund for young individuals to foster the growth of new ideas, to make it easier for us to come and bring forth our creative ways.

Second, we need to have a standard language proficiency test that is used throughout the country everywhere.

Third, successful project applications should have a strong communications marketing component. The general public should know that the money you'll be spending through this road map is an investment in their future and something we should take pride in.

Fourth, accountability and measurability should continue to be pillars of the road map, and we strongly believe there is a way to measure anything and we should be firm in setting that standard and not be afraid to set it high.

Fifth, there should be a preference towards projects that promote the collaboration between French Canadians and English Canadians who are trying to become more proficient in their second language.

Lastly, there is the creation of a bilingual space, one that doesn't take away from our two already existing English and French spaces—just a space where those who choose to communicate in both languages at the same time can do so.

● (0925)

[Translation]

Canadian Youth for French is the perfect example of a project to fund. Communication is at the core of our organization and of what we do. We spread the word directly to students. Our actions are measurable. Our client certification system enables us to see how many students have heard about our organization and to follow them until they become bilingual.

Furthermore, we are actively looking for opportunities for young people to learn French and to practice speaking in minority situations, without forcing them, of course.

When we launch our new website in the spring, you are also going to see the space we have created for people who want bilingual information. You are going to see the words “English”, “*français*” and what we call “*Canadien*” or “Canadian”, or “*Canadien*” with the “a” and “e” joined together. We can pronounce it like the word “Canadian”.

[English]

or Canadian. That's our way of doing that.

[Translation]

To conclude, let me remind you that our ideal is not unattainable.

Canadian youth wants to be bilingual. A Canada where the majority of people are bilingual by choice is possible; it is a beautiful ideal. All they need is their own space.

Thank you for your time and for inviting me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Morrow.

We will now move to questions and comments.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

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

I would like to thank our witnesses.

[English]

It's really good to hear what you have to say, Justin, and congratulations.

I want to tell you this. When I started, I went to northern Ontario. I didn't know one word in English. I started learning it at the age of 16. I remember my first job was at a gas pump. My boss came to me and asked if my restroom was clean. I thought she was talking about the restaurant and I said, no, not here, across the road. I almost lost the first job I had. The little bit I have today I'm so proud of, and I want to translate that to my children.

I really believe our country is a bilingual country, and it should be bilingual. The services should be. We're not asking all the anglophones to become French. We're not asking all the francophones to become English. But we have to give services in both

languages. We created and fought hard and worked hard to build this country with the aboriginals, and to be in peace instead of dividing ourselves. Your message to me is very positive.

And for you, Madam Perkins, it is the same thing. You did learn and it's not easy. It's not an easy task and I really believe you're proud of it. Parents for French, I lift my hat to you people because you're doing a great job.

In New Brunswick, for the first time in my life, I saw anglophones rally in the streets because they wanted to learn French. They did that in Fredericton. There were about 350 people in front of the legislature. When the government decided to start immersion at grade 5 instead of grade 1, parents were not happy. The government was not listening to the parents. The government of the only officially bilingual province in our country—in the Constitution—told parents that they were not allowed to have their children in immersion until grade 5.

I saw that in your report you gave to us this morning, you spoke about four other provinces, but you didn't speak about New Brunswick, except to say that New Brunswick is not doing its job. Now, this morning, the Premier of New Brunswick will hear Yvon Godin tell him that they are not doing their job. They should listen to the parents, work with the parents, and help them to do what needs to be done. I hope it gets done and I want to say that.

Now, Madame Perkins, I want to hear more about the road map and the money put into the provinces. The Commissioner of Official Languages says that he cannot go in the provinces and see where the money is spent. You know that money is going to the provinces. It's supposed to put money towards the language, to help francophones be able to stay alive and keep their language. At the same time, anglophones would be able to learn the other language. Do you feel that there is enough transparency in this, or do you just not know where the money is going?

● (0930)

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for your question regarding the transparency of road map funding, or funding for official languages in the provinces.

Across Canada we have, I would say, different degrees of success of being able to follow where the money goes, from the national right down, in some cases, to the school boards themselves. Our branches and our national office has been working with Canadian Heritage, with ministries of education, and indeed with local school boards to increase that transparency. Most important for us is knowing where those funds go, because I think it celebrates some great success of what those moneys go for, and translating that into those outcomes. However, it is a current challenge that our parents are facing across the country.

Robert, do you have anything to add?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Rethon (Executive Director, National Office, Canadian Parents for French): I would like to mention that transparency in terms of how those funds are used is always somewhat problematic, given that it depends on the province. Some provinces have rather tough reporting requirements, other less so.

I come from British Columbia and we have one of the most developed systems where school boards have to fill out a form and then post it on the website of the Ministry of Education. However, the ministry does not have enough staff to check those expenses. So the system is sort of based on good faith, but it is not really verifiable. If I were an accountant or an auditor, I would not be very happy with it.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Let me go back to the immersion programs in New Brunswick that they wanted to offer starting in grade 5, but are now offered starting in grade 3.

[English]

Parents for French was saying at that time that it should be grade 1. It should stay there.

Do you still believe today that it should be grade 1, right at the beginning? At that time, we brought people from the University of Toronto. We spoke to people at the Université de Moncton. We spoke to experts, and they said no, it should be right at the early age.

I'd like to hear your opinion on it.

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: Mr. Chair and members of the committee, the position of Canadian Parents for French is, first of all, that parents should have that choice. If in New Brunswick parents want immersion starting in grade 1, then that's the program that should be offered. We also have a lot of research that demonstrates that early immersion is the most effective way of giving our youth and children the ability to be bilingual.

Having said that, I was also very pleased that the New Brunswick government has been in discussions about that decision. The president of CPF New Brunswick has been participating in that discussion at the strategic level, and is helping to inform the New Brunswick government's decision with respect to offering immersion programming.

• (0935)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: At the Department of Public Works and Government Services, in 2010-2011, after the third year of the roadmap, 30% of the funding was spent on the university scholarships program in translation and only 39% was spent on the language industry initiative. Could you tell me why?

Ms. Donna Achimov: Yes. Although launching the program was a challenge, we spent the money and we had some good results. We had some momentum and we already have the numbers to demonstrate that we have used the money well.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

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

I would like to thank all the witnesses for being here. It is really very interesting. I think it is one of those mornings with high-calibre witnesses.

I was really moved by Justin Morrow's presentation, because he made us see a new reality.

By the way, Mr. Morrow, let me congratulate you on studying at Université Laval in Quebec City, which is a very good university. Those who had the chance to play on the Rouge et Or team were considered stars by the people in the Quebec City region.

I think it is the first time a witness has told us about this new reality. Of course, it is often a matter of francophones living in anglophone communities, or vice versa, but there is a new reality in Canada, and I think it marks the growth of our linguistic duality. It is hard for bilingual individuals to find their own space. As you said, they only listen to English channels on TV, or just French channels, whereas truly bilingual people switch from one language to another with their friends. It is a new Canadian reality. It is really interesting and I think you are the first one to raise our awareness of this new reality. You have helped the committee move forward without realizing; it is something we need to tackle.

New tools have been developed by the Department of Public Works and Government Services. I am thinking of the Language Portal of Canada. I think you talked about it last year when you appeared before the committee. It is really a wonderful tool for bilingual people and for those who wish to learn the other language. At some point, we need tools and we all have to make an individual effort to learn a second language. Could you tell me about how this tool has evolved since last year's presentation? Do you know how many people might have used it? How have you been promoting it?

Ms. Donna Achimov: Thank you for your question.

We have had a lot of success with this tool. We started with 14 million recorded visits and this number has since gone up.

[English]

It has had 14 million hits.

We did some really targeted advertising. We worked on search engines in terms of keywords so that we were able to increase our hits for a very small amount of money. This is a really good lesson learned.

[Translation]

It is a good lesson for people who want to advertise through search engines. It is worthwhile increasing visibility through search engines. We have also benefited from great publicity on university campuses where there are a number of minority communities.

[English]

We had word of mouth and used community newspapers.

We found that once people start to use the portal, one friend tells another friend. As Mr. Olivier mentioned earlier, the fact that we now have the ability to e-mail, or to send a tweet, has allowed us to really have an incredible explosion and I think a positive explosion of usage of the portal.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I think the interactive component of the Language Portal of Canada and its almost daily updates are useful. This tool is constantly being improved.

If I were to ask you whether this tool has to be maintained year-round, I am sure that you would say yes. But could you give us an idea of how much money it would cost to maintain this tool in the future, year after year?

Ms. Donna Achimov: That is a good question. It really depends on future improvements and on our users' expectations. It becomes expensive when people want to create other ways of communicating. For instance, we are working on creating an iPhone and BlackBerry app. That's a bit expensive. It will be a bit difficult for the first app because of all the experiments. But, once the first app is developed, it will be easier to do the others.

In our view, it is worthwhile sharing the information and lessons learned. That helps to continue in the future. We are in the process of studying the best way to have partners, to reduce our costs and to ensure the portal and other tools are sustainable. We have formed alliances and partnerships with other organizations. Our philosophy is that it is not just up to us to create applications and to improve the portal. I think that will make it a lot easier to keep the portal alive in the future.

● (0940)

[English]

We're working with other partners. We're no longer looking, and we haven't been looking, at being the only ones creating content on the web. Because of our many partnerships across the country with different organizations, we are using the portal as a window and allowing people to share their content.

We're looking for effective ways to continue to keep the portal alive, fresh, and moving forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I have one final question for Justin Morrow, since I only have one minute left.

How do you see the future? How would you like your organization to help people like yourself, bilingual people who are new to Canada and who want to stay in our country?

Mr. Justin Morrow: Are you asking me how I see our organization?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Yes, your organization. And what tools do you need?

Mr. Justin Morrow: Mr. Chair and members of the committee, we need one thing right now and that is a web-based platform. That would bring people to our site.

[English]

to bring students in and match them up with the post-secondary French-language learning opportunities that exist. That's the one thing we need right now.

Over the past three years we have focused, and we've had tons of amazing great ideas. Thanks to the wonderful support of Canadian Heritage, we've brought that into one activity that we're going to concentrate on for the next three to five years.

The only thing we need is that information, a web-based platform, that we can start to measure and connect young people with the experiences. Once we have that established, then we can start

looking into different options, but that's going to be in about three to five years.

We don't really need much right now but that one web-based platform, and then we will be in business and we will make things happen.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

It is now Mr. Bélanger's turn.

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

Thank you for being here this morning. I would have liked to see the two groups take turns. We could have gone into depth with each of you, from the agency and the department's perspective and then from the perspective of Canadian Parents for French and Canadian Youth for French. I think we should have done the two exercises separately. I am a bit disappointed that we don't have the time to go more in depth with each of you.

I am going to ask questions without expecting any answers today. However, I hope that you will send the information to the clerk of the committee, who will then forward it to the members of the committee.

I am talking to the people from Public Works and Government Services Canada. Madam, I am not familiar with the program you are talking about, which allows 145 students to do an internship in the private sector and in which \$1.3 million are invested. I would like to become familiar with that program. What are the criteria, how is it promoted, who has access to the program, which companies participate and how are they chosen, and so on? I would like to have a rather detailed definition of the program, since I must admit that I am not familiar with it.

As for TERMIUM, I am happy to see that things are progressing well. But I am sort of wondering about the other languages. I see that there are 200,000 Spanish terms and 18,000 Portuguese terms. I have no objection to that, but I would like to know if the plan is to include other languages. If so, which languages and how quickly, and where would the money come from for those languages? I am curious about that.

This question is for the representatives from FedDev Ontario. How many employees do you have?

● (0945)

Mr. Jeff Moore: There are about 200.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: When you say that 22% of your employees have bilingual positions, does that mean that 22% of your employees are bilingual?

Mr. Jeff Moore: They are bilingual based on the definition—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: What level?

Mr. Jeff Moore: They have the BBB level.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Not the CBC?

Mr. Jeff Moore: Some employees have the CBC level and others have the BBB level.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: For you, is being bilingual equivalent to a BBB level?

Mr. Jeff Moore: That's right.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: And as an official languages champion, do you think that's enough?

Mr. Jeff Moore: That's a good question.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So what's the answer?

Mr. Jeff Moore: I think that—

[English]

there are different ways to evaluate bilingualism, of course, so we follow the public service process in terms of...

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You said you made targeted investments during your first year. Could you provide us with a list of those investments? I am curious to see what they were.

Mr. Jeff Moore: For all the programs?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In your presentation, you said that, in your first year, you did not focus on languages, but that you made targeted investments. I would like to know what those investments were. Is that okay?

Mr. Jeff Moore: Okay.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You also said that an amount of \$1.4 million had not been spent. What will happen with those funds?

[English]

Will they lapse?

[Translation]

Will they be reinvested later?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Moore: My understanding is that when the

[Translation]

roadmap

[English]

comes to an end, those funds will lapse.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Can you do something to make sure money will not lapse?

Mr. Gourde will correct me if I am wrong, but I think the government allows funds left unused from one year to be used the following year. Is that true for you?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Moore: In our case, what happened is that when the agency was first created, we were actually created halfway through the fiscal year of 2009-10. EDI was actually operating at the beginning of the fiscal year, so we lost half a year's time, given the fact that it was FedNor that was delivering the program, as opposed to FedDev, so there was some transition that occurred in that first fiscal year in terms of the programs.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Please try to make sure that the funds don't lapse, and let us know if you can succeed.

Mr. Jeff Moore: Absolutely.

We've been trying to do that. We actually reprofiled money from 2009-10 to 2010-11, and we've been trying to keep doing that.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In that case, I am going to make another suggestion. I am not comfortable with the idea that you are only contacting existing organizations such as the foundation, the RDEE and the AFO. That's good, but there are other organizations, at another level, that you could consult and that might be able to help you use those funds. There are also the regional ACFOs. I am obviously not talking about the north, but in the east, we have Prescott-Russell, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, Pembroke and Ottawa. You could ask the regional ACFOs that fall under the AFO to help you get the job done. That is my suggestion and I would like to know how you are going to follow up on it, if possible.

Lastly, the following passage really surprised me. It is in your text, but you did not read it. It says the following: "In September 2010, at the invitation of Heritage Canada, the agency also self-designated under Section 41 of the Official Languages Act." What do you mean by "self-designated"?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Moore: We actually received a letter from the Minister of Canadian Heritage with respect to the Official Languages Act, asking if we wanted to designate ourselves as a designated department under the act.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is it possible to get a copy of that letter?

Mr. Jeff Moore: I don't know if it's possible or not, but I'll certainly bring that question back.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: My understanding of the Official Languages Act is that you have no choice, you are subject to it. You don't auto-designate yourself to be subject to it, so I'd love to see a copy of that letter. Please, I'm requesting it.

● (0950)

Mr. Jeff Moore: Okay.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Please be quick.

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: With regard to Canadian Parents for French, I share your dream, Monsieur Morrow, but the reality, unfortunately, sends us in another direction.

In the action plan followed by the *Feuille de route* the objective was to double the number of young francophones learning the other official language in our country. When we started, the overall number for the total age group was 22%, and after 2006 we were at 21%. We don't yet have the results for 2011.

For the 15-to-19 age group, Monsieur Corbeil of StatsCan, who came to see us a month ago or so, said that we were at 16%, and we're now at 13%.

So as much as I share your dream—and I am one of these *Canadiens bilingues*—you're going to have to do a hell of a lot more to get us there.

The Chair: Okay—

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have confidence in you, Mr. Morrow.

[*English*]

Let's blacken and blue them a little while.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger. We don't have any time left.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: There will be a second round, correct?

The Chair: Yes.

It is now Mr. Trottier's turn.

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

Thanks also to our guests for being here.

I would like to talk about FedDev Ontario; I am an Ontario MP, so I have a great interest in it. This is also federal budget week. So we are thinking a lot about the economy and about jobs.

Could you tell me the difference between FedDev Ontario's mandate and the mandate of the other economic development agencies across the country? I am thinking about Western Economic Diversification Canada, for example, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency or the Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. Does FedDev Ontario have any unique features in its focus or a special way in which it invests funds?

Mr. Jeff Moore: Yes, I can do that.

Regional agencies have essentially the same goal and the same mission. But our programs are possibly a little different.

[*English*]

I think that depending on what's going on in the region, and on the circumstances and challenges and opportunities, we tailor our programs to try to address those particular situations. In our case we have some programs that deal very specifically with commercialization issues that some small and medium-sized enterprises might have—innovation issues and that sort of thing—whereas other regional agencies might focus their efforts more on the communities and on what's going on in the communities and might support not-for-profits more than our organization does, which has a real focus on the private sector.

It's not to say that one approach is wrong and the other one is right. It's just that they're taking different approaches based on what the challenges are in those regions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Trottier: You gave Ivaco Rolling Mills as an example. That is a company I know well because I have worked with their people before.

Are points given to companies like Ivaco that hire francophones or that work in a more or less francophone area? Is that part of the evaluation? Do you give points when you are providing loans or making investments?

Mr. Jeff Moore: That is a very good question.

[*English*]

We do a substantive amount of due diligence with respect to each of our projects. One of the things we do is to use a bit of a filter or a tool to try to assess the impact of those projects on official language minority communities, particularly when we're actually dealing with a third party. In those cases, we try to assess what the impact is going to be on the community and how many francophone communities or how many francophones might be impacted by that project. So it really does become a factor in our decision-making process when we're looking at funding projects.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Do you give other points to other groups, such as aboriginal communities?

Mr. Jeff Moore: I would not say that we give points, but we do consider those things when we are looking at people's proposals.

[*English*]

Of course with aboriginals we have to take into account duty to consult and those sorts of things. But absolutely, we will look at groups like aboriginals as well when we assess our projects.

● (0955)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Trottier: When we think of Ivaco, we think about steel and steel production. That is not inherently a francophone product. Could you talk about other sectors like tourism? Do you focus on tourism, which is likely the biggest industry in the world when you consider all the money and all the jobs tourism involves? What is FedNor doing in tourism? How big a factor are French-language considerations in your approach?

Mr. Jeff Moore: I would not say that we focus on tourism directly, but several of our projects support tourism indirectly.

[*English*]

I'll give you a couple of examples, particularly in the economic development initiative program that we deliver.

I mentioned that we have three strategic projects in place with organizations that are located here in Ottawa, but with the RDÉE, through that project, there is the potential to support small and medium-sized enterprises that are involved in tourism, and also the Fondation franco-ontarienne where they partner with caisses populaires. There we've allowed them to create a microcredit fund to provide loans to SMEs. In that case, there is the potential for microcredit loans to be provided to those SMEs that are involved in tourism.

It is the same thing with our other partnership with the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario.

[*Translation*]

It is an internship program.

[English]

In that one, there is always the potential for *les stages* to actually get some experience working in organizations that have

[Translation]

a specialization in tourism.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: You mentioned the importance of youth. As you know, in linguistic communities, young people are an absolutely critical factor. They represent the future of those linguistic communities, especially in the regions of Ontario. Could you tell us about the work you are doing with youth to get them involved in economic development in Ontario?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Moore: Probably the most key program we have is our YSTEM program—youth in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—where we work with not-for-profit organizations and enter into partnerships with them. The whole idea is that we're trying to raise awareness and get kids engaged in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The particular focus is on kids in kindergarten up to grade 12.

Actually, when we look at the projects we support under that program, we use that analysis tool from a francophone perspective to assess whether or not these projects are actually impacting or involving francophone communities. We have particular clauses in our contribution agreements as well that ensure that these third parties deliver their services in both official languages.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Trottier and Mr. Moore.

We are now going to take a two-minute break.

[English]

- _____ (Pause) _____
-
- (1000)

[Translation]

The Chair: We now resume the 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[English]

We'll begin with Monsieur Aubin.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly support Mr. Bélanger's proposal to have fewer witnesses at each meeting. It seems like I have to ask thousands of questions in five minutes, and it is almost getting ridiculous.

I have some questions for the people from Public Works and Government Services. I also have some for Canadian Parents for French and Canadian Youth for French. Your presentations were very enjoyable and I am looking forward to discussing them with you.

My first question goes to the representatives from the department of Public Works and Government Services. Perhaps you have read,

as I have, the report entitled “Highlights of the midterm consultations” – there is some great bedside reading material for you – produced by Heritage Canada. It contains really interesting statistics on 29 programs, some of which are yours, and which are looked at in terms of how familiar minority language communities are with them. So the object was to find out whether those programs of yours are well known. Of the 29 programs described in the report, only seven received a familiarity rating over 50%, meaning that more than half the people in a given language community said that they knew about the programs.

In the programs that are more directly yours, the language industry initiative seems to be little known by official language minority communities. Only 15% of respondents said that they were familiar with it. Then only 14% of respondents said that they knew about the university scholarships in translation.

Can you explain those less than stellar results?

Ms. Donna Achimov: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are working very closely with language associations and with associations and organizations that train translators and interpreters to make sure that the promotion is ongoing, available all across Canada and targeted to minority communities. Our target is really university students. We always try to target our programs to, and promote them in, minority language communities. That actually helps us to reach young people, and, we hope, to interest them in the profession.

We have held discussions and consultations on the best way to do that promotion but we depend on organizations that do it specifically. For example, Translation New Brunswick has created ads for television, radio and movie theatres. They decided that that is the best way to deliver their message to Canadians in general and to minority communities.

Mr. Robert Aubin: In terms of the Translation Bureau, could you tell me how many jobs have been lost in the bureau in the last five years? If you cannot do that, could you perhaps send the figures to us?

Aren't you afraid that you might suffer the same fate as the School of Public Service?

Ms. Donna Achimov: I cannot comment on the School of Public Service, but I can tell you that there has been some attrition in the Translation Bureau in the last five years, caused by people retiring or leaving. That is about 120 or 130 people per year. There was one exception.

- (1005)

Mr. Robert Aubin: Those people have not been replaced?

Ms. Donna Achimov: They have been strategically realigned. Given the current reality of budget cuts and decreasing revenues, our approach to replacement has been more strategic. Of course, we have a human resources plan to replace people in key positions. Attrition gives us the opportunity to change what I like to call our skill mix. For example, we now need people with skills in social media. This is a style of translation that is quite different from the one we have been familiar with up to now.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Aubin and Ms. Achimov.

[English]

Mr. Weston.

[Translation]

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

I would also like to thank our guests. It really is a pleasure to hear from you. This is probably the first time that guests like Ms. Achimov and Ms. Lorenzato have come before us to testify with such pride and such confidence in their work. Thank you.

Ms. Perkins, may I ask which province you are from?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: Mr. Chair, members of the committee, I am from Red Deer, Alberta.

Mr. John Weston: Canadian Parents for French has a number of supporters in this room. I come from British Columbia. My children have been in immersion programs there since grade one. Last week, we went to the premiere of a film about the francophone contribution to the history of British Columbia. Super! It is a wonderful piece of work.

Congratulations, Mr. Morrow. I don't know if it is the Ottawa air, or the pressure that a football player knows so well, or bilingualism. But congratulations!

If you caricatured members of Parliament today, you might have, on the one hand, those who do not care about facts or social programs or bilingualism, but who are just concerned about money and costs. Then, on the other hand, you might have those who believe that social programs and bilingualism are so important that they cannot be allowed to fail. I don't think that either picture is a real one. Our work is often about bringing those two extremes together.

My first question is for Ms. Perkins. How can we foster bilingualism while at the same time facing the challenges of economic development? Is there an answer to that question?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: How can we foster bilingualism and consider economic development at the same time? We in Canadian Parents for French see that, in school systems and education ministries,

[English]

we're very creative in terms of developing opportunities for children to be bilingual. Some of that is by working with our partners and some of that is through supporting each other.

Primarily we're here to offer information and support to parents to make the right choice and to encourage, through the school system, our teachers and the education system to take care of the rest, with us standing on the side, sometimes encouraging and cheerleading, and sometimes, I don't know, giving them a little shove or a nudge in the right direction, I would say.

But I will ask Robert to give you perhaps some concrete details from some of our strategic planning—

• (1010)

Mr. John Weston: Can I interject? It has certainly worked in our family. Our kids have better and more promising careers because of what your association has done.

But go ahead. I hope to hear from Mr. Morrow, too, on this one.

Mr. Robert Rothon: I'll try to be brief. To come to your question, one of the better ways, I think, of positioning official languages in education is the fact that it's a wonderful long-term investment for Canadians in their youth. In fact, our feeling is that if you.... This is not an official CPF position, but it's a discussion we're having within our network and with our partners but I'd say that if you....

It's our feeling that official languages bilingualism should naturally lead into plurilingualism. There's a lot of talk about the impact of globalization. Coming from B.C. as I do, people often ask why we aren't teaching our children Mandarin, a useful language, a useful international language, and why we are teaching them French

Mr. John Weston: Well, certainly our kids are learning Mandarin too, and I think because they learn French, they have more confidence, for sure.

Mr. Robert Rothon: That should be the case. They should be complementary processes. I think these have to be viewed as investments and that the economic arguments made are long-term arguments for these sorts of programs. But in the long term, they'll pay off.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Weston and Mr. Rothon.

Madame Michaud.

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): First, thank you all for your presentations. You have given us some quite interesting insight about the importance of bilingualism all across Canada, and it is refreshing to hear.

Welcome, Mr. Morrow. Given our age, for one thing, I feel that we have some concerns in common. I did all my studies at Laval too. But I was not a football fan and, to be perfectly honest, I never followed the Rouge et Or. But congratulations anyway.

My questions go to Ms. Perkins to start with. You mentioned that Canadian Parents for French had participated in the midterm review of the roadmap. Could you tell me exactly what form the consultations took and which aspects of the roadmap you were consulted on?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the members of the committee.

We were able to take part in a teleconference with members of the FSL Partner Network and with Heritage Canada representatives in order to evaluate the midterm successes of the roadmap.

Ms. Éline Michaud: That was mostly a question of evaluating various successes. Were other aspects considered? Were any problems or improvements mentioned during the evaluation too?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: Mostly, they were the same kinds of comments as the ones we have just made. Canadian Parents for French received

[English]

two hundred thousand dollars from the road map directly. With that we produced,

[Translation]

with the Commission nationale des parents francophones,

[English]

a board game called *Amuse-toi bien!* that was distributed across the country. So we were also giving them an update on the status of that project.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: You also rightly mentioned how important it is for everyone to have access to programs that teach French as a second language. You mentioned that for allophone and immigrant populations, as an example. Could you talk to us a little about the access that immigrant populations might have to those programs? Do you think that it is as easy for other anglophone populations in Canada?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: I will start the answer, Mr. Chair, but Mr. Rotheron has all the statistical details about that.

[English]

For Canadian Parents for French, two years ago the main focus of our research, as part of our state of French second language, was on allophones, and to what degree allophones—or people who come to Canada and English or French is not their first language—would want to use and be enrolled in French second language programming.

You can correct me if I'm wrong, Monsieur Rotheron, but I believe it was 80% of the parents we spoke to who were allophones said that if they had been given the opportunity, they would have also enrolled their students in French immersion. The primary issues were, number one, they were not informed that there was French second language education offerings in the education system for their children, and number two, from the perspective of school administrators, they think of ESL first and foremost, whereas we would say, and what our research proves, is that they succeed just as well as anglophone students in terms of being successful in the French immersion programming.

• (1015)

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: There is a lack of promotion of the program as such at the time immigrants are getting their orientation.

Mr. Robert Rotheron: It must also be said that some provincial policies prevent a child who is taking courses or training in English as a second language from signing up for a program of French as a second language. So the two priorities are being set up in competition, which is a real shame, in our opinion. Studies actually show that a young allophone can take courses in both French and English at the same time and succeed very well. So there is some

awareness to be provided to, and some lobbying to be done with, ministries of education.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Let me turn quickly to Mr. Morrow.

You told us that the roadmap had only invested in two projects with Canadian Youth for French in the past. Is that correct? Could you briefly explain what those investments were?

Mr. Justin Morrow: The first one was for \$45,000, which we used to hold two youth conferences with a goal of getting a better understanding of their reality.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Did you say \$45,000 or \$145,000?

Mr. Justin Morrow: It was \$45,000.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Okay.

[English]

Mr. Justin Morrow: It's to better understand our audience. They taught us a lot, those two conferences. The second one was for \$60,000, in which we rolled out a presentation tour. We went to 13 schools in southwestern Ontario and spoke to more than 5,000 students, of which 53 called upon our services and asked to be put in touch with the post-secondary French language learning experiences that were best suited for them.

The Chair: Okay. *Merci.*

Mr. Williamson.

[Translation]

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): My riding of New Brunswick Southwest is probably the one with the fewest francophones in all of New Brunswick. One thing surprised me when I started my job as their member of Parliament a year ago. There were applications for positions and applications for money that the government gives to various groups, and Canadian Parents for French was at the top of the list. That showed me right away that there really is a demand. I imagine it will be the same this year when summer applications are signed.

Mr. Morrow, you are an example for young people and for all Canadians. I would really like you to give us some ideas for a platform on which a bilingual space would be possible. I feel that one of the marvellous things about being able to speak both languages is that you can live in French or in English. Maybe it is already up and running and maybe your ideas are further along than mine, or different from mine. You talked about a medium, about a platform where the two languages can come together.

[English]

Mr. Justin Morrow: So the bilingual space that I spoke of would be created. That is still in development within our organization. We have a lot of great ideas, but they're still in the idea stage right now. More research needs to be done to determine what that is and what kind of space that is. I don't really feel comfortable giving you all the ideas right now until I speak with the board and our demographic—

Mr. John Williamson: Let me give you some things to think about, because one thing is that I tend to think that news and newsgathering in today's digital era are very personal. The news stations you watch could be entirely different from the ones I watch. I wonder if your focus on this is going to be one where it's going to be commercially driven, so you would be looking for advertisements to support it. What I would fear—and I'll ask you to respond to this—is the idea of government deciding what should be on this platform and what news content would be there.

With tablets today, you can almost do what you're talking about. Every morning, I go to a site called National Newswatch. It's all in English—well, it's 99% English, but you occasionally have something from *Le Devoir* or *La Presse*—but it gives me a great cross-section of news from across the country. In a way, you can do it already with tablets. You can go from *Le Devoir*, *La Presse*, and CBC/Radio-Canada to the Saint John *Telegraph-Journal*.

Can you even talk about or comment on some of the broad thinking? Or do you think I'm off base in suggesting that there are areas where government can't provide content because society is just too diverse, even if you're speaking both languages?

• (1020)

Mr. Justin Morrow: I think you're right. I think we are pretty diverse and it would be difficult to implement something through the government, through a government process, but I do think it's possible. I think we can be creative enough to find a way to make that happen.

With respect to already having the different tools and tablets in place, we can switch in that. I don't think it's where we're going. I don't think it's at a level that satisfies the needs of the new bilingual generation. We still have to switch from one program to another—it's still 99%, so....

Mr. John Williamson: I agree with you. I don't particularly like it when I watch the news and get someone speaking French or English and it's dubbed, it's translated. I find it distracting.

But I also would say I also don't watch just one station in English. I mean, there's nothing inherently wrong with.... That's one of the great things about today's television universe—the choice that's there. I can see kind of collecting a station, a specialty station where you might have it, but I don't think it's offside to suggest that people can't switch stations to get the television they want. I mean, heaven forbid if the CBC had the power to shut down all the other networks and force us to watch their one station.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Williamson: Anyway....

I appreciate your comments. Thank you.

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

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

Thank you, everyone.

[English]

I share the same lament, perhaps, as Monsieur Bélanger, that the group is not split up a little bit more so we have more time to ask questions. Certainly, I would love to meet with folks at a later time. As well,

[Translation]

Mr. Morrow, congratulations for all your hard work. You have really committed yourself to learning the language, as the quality of your French attests. As a Franco-Ontarian from Toronto—and there are not a lot of us—I feel that practising French is something we always need to do. Since being elected, I have been lucky to be able to speak it here all the time. After leaving school, I frankly did not have that opportunity.

Today, we also spoke with representatives from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario who have targeted

[English]

kindergarten to grade 12—I mean, what happens after grade 12.

If you're in southern Ontario, this is a big problem. There's one francophone university, which is Glendon College. Unless you are in a very specific stream, there's nothing available to you. I wanted to go into IT and computers, and that meant I had to go to an English school. Again, looking at the programs that FedDev is targeting in science and technology, again, all that is going to go

[Translation]

go by the wayside after grade 12 because you can't continue your studies in French in those programs at university.

[English]

I'm sorry, I mean to thank you. Immersion schools certainly in the GTA are the destination that parents want to bring their kids to because they see that economic advantage. Keep working on that, and we will have more and more opportunities for parents to put their kids into those immersion programs.

Moving right over to the other side, I was looking at the text and translated text in both languages. Then, of course, the issue came up with the portal. Ms. Achimov, you were speaking about the hits to the website. I had to do a quick search because being in IT.... When I was in high school and doing computer classes, it was in a francophone school, but it was the one place where they taught us all the English terms as well as the French terms, because there was very little use of the French terms in the business world.

But looking at the text,

• (1025)

[Translation]

I see that, in French, it says “*visites enregistrées*”.

[English]

In English, it says, “hits recorded”. Both of these terms don't mean the same thing. This is a translated document in Translation Services. “Hits” is a very broad term. I mean, does this mean unique site visits, clicks, or hits? There are any number of terms go into the word “hits”, whereas

[Translation]

“visites enregistrées”

[English]

is site visits. There's an issue there.

Then, I went onto TERMIUM, and then tried to do a search for “hits”, or

[Translation]

“visites enregistrées”,

[English]

and I couldn't find the translation. Keep working on that, but there is certainly a lot further to go when talking about technical terms. I couldn't help but jump into that, because with my background, it's specifically what I noticed.

Going back to FedDev, where I will now ask some questions. You mentioned the tools for impact on minority languages. Is there a methodology that was used? Would it be possible to provide that to the committee?

Mr. Jeff Moore: I'll actually turn that question over to my colleague, if you don't mind.

Ms. Susan Anzolin (Director General, Innovation and Economic Development, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario): Thanks, Jeff.

Yes, we do have an impact assessment tool that is based on the metrics that we have identified for each of the programs. The methodology varies in terms of what we are trying to achieve with each of the programs. If the committee members want, we could definitely share the basics of the impact assessment tool and how it identifies where we can determine the impact on official language minority communities.

Mr. Dan Harris: I think that is important for us to be looking at.

Also, going back to FedDev, the targeting of the money being spent seems to be largely in engineering, science, and technology, which also happens to be that the minister responsible for FedDev also happens to be the Minister of State (Science and Technology). Of course, myself being deputy critic for science and technology, on the surface I have no problems with that. Why, specifically, is FedDev targeting just those areas?

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

Mr. Moore.

Mr. Jeff Moore: We actually target more than just science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. We also have a number of other programs that we deliver like the EDI program under the road map. We have the community futures development corporations program, which provides assistance to communities on a number of

levels. Also, under our southern Ontario advantage initiative, we have the prosperity initiative, which also targets fairly broadly SMEs and not-for-profit organizations involved in productivity enhancements and innovation, as well as regional diversification. So we do quite a bit more than just the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics areas.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Boughen.

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Welcome to the panel. Thanks for taking time to share your morning with us.

It may have been said and I may have missed it, but Donna, I'm talking about your program. Has that been made available to schools, or do you have some relationships, some interface with elementary and secondary schools that utilize that material?

Ms. Donna Achimov: Mr. Chair and committee members, yes, we work very closely with the school system. We deliberately set up the portal to be accessible to students. We have a great deal of content that we've been able to gather, as you can see, that deals with students, in particular, at various levels. So it is a really good resource, and certainly we work with our partners to make sure that the information is shared and readily available through the school system—with universities as well as across the board.

Mr. Ray Boughen: That's good, because I can see that it certainly has a place in schools across Canada, particularly those that are in isolated parts of the country, where there's no access to people who can work through that area.

I have one question for Mr. Morrow. Did you say you only had funding for two projects?

• (1030)

Mr. Justin Morrow: That's what we have so far.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Why was that? Did you just run out of money?

Mr. Justin Morrow: No, that was just the timing, the way things go. We have to prove ourselves. I have nothing against the fact that we've had only two, except that there was one whole year where we missed out on funding because we had just started and we didn't meet the deadline. That was why I suggested an innovative fund for individuals with good ideas so that somebody can do that.

Our first grant was there at the beginning. That allowed us to test. For our second grant, we had these grand ideas and they gave us \$60,000. We wanted more, but this is what we started with, and with that everything changed again. Those two grants allowed us to streamline our processes to the point where we now have one solid, concrete thing that we hope we're going to be able to roll out. We have two applications on the table right now that we hope will get approved, and then we can start to go forward with something concrete and feasible.

So before we might have been a little too much in the clouds, but those two have really streamlined us into doing something concrete.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Good. Thank you.

Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Aubin.

[*Translation*]

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

I said that I would have questions for the representatives of Canadian Parents for French, and here we are, in my second round.

I really appreciated what I have heard from you this morning. I am a former teacher from Quebec. In 25 years of teaching, I found it quite easy to see the students' motivation for learning a second language, which was English in our area. It's obvious if you want to surf the Internet; it is the language of business, of research, of science. Learning English is almost second nature; it is more than a second language for us, it is a necessity. But my students were also interested in other languages; they talked to me about Spanish and Mandarin and so on. How do you succeed in promoting French as a second language in an English-speaking environment?

I find what you are telling me to be refreshing, but the statistics tell us that we have not reached the targets we set for ourselves. Is French really the second language? Are people not tending towards Spanish, or Mandarin, or German, and so on, for a second language? How do you see things in your communities?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: Thank you.

We feel that you have to give parents and school systems the information they need to make the choice.

[*English*]

I have many parents who come and ask me exactly that question of why French, why not Spanish, or why not Mandarin or something else. I think that has a lot to do with misinformation, or perhaps a lack of information, on our part, as to the benefits of French.

First of all, as I tell them, French is the only other language, besides English, spoken on every continent. It is truly another international language.

[*Translation*]

They always ask if French is harder to learn than Spanish or Japanese.

[*English*]

My answer is always, no, a second language is always a second language.

The benefit of learning French is that we have the opportunity to be immersed.

[*Translation*]

We have resources like Radio-Canada, TERMIUM and the activities that

[*English*]

that Justin Morrow and Canadian Youth for French offer students. They're getting the benefits of an enhanced program that we, only in Canada, can offer.

Three, from a purely nationalistic perspective, French is our other language, and it gives us the opportunity to participate fully in the experience of being Canadian.

As Robert said earlier, we see it as the springboard to being plurilingual. By learning both languages, we are open to learning more. By being diverse in both, we are able to be diverse in the world.

I think it's our bilingualism, in reality, when immigrants are choosing Canada. They know that we work hard—sometimes maybe not as successfully as we would like—at embracing both sides of ourselves. They know that we can accommodate others in a very comforting and nice way. We have a lot of practice at it.

I think that's a big part of our economic advantage to the world.

● (1035)

Mr. Justin Morrow: Just as they say, French is a springboard to other languages, and we strongly believe that. Start with French and then expand your horizons after that.

In Canada we're extremely fortunate to have the network already in place. We have the teachers, the radio stations, the TV stations, the Internet—all of the resources are already in French. If we are to learn a second language, it should be French first.

Then, once we've established that second language, learning a third language is so much easier. As Canadian Parents for French said, French is a springboard to other things. With the network that's already in place, it just makes sense.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

You said earlier that you received money for two projects. The first was for \$45,000, but you did not have time to talk about the second. You look like someone who has very concrete ideas. Have you had any funding projects turned down?

Mr. Justin Morrow: No, we have not.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

The Chair: Did you have another question, Mr. Aubin?

Mr. Robert Aubin: Do I have any time left?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Robert Aubin: I thought that my time had run out. But if I have some left, I have a lot of questions I could ask.

The Chair: Fine, but be quick.

Mr. Robert Aubin: This is for the representatives from Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Given the attrition you mentioned earlier, departments are having more and more of their translation work done by private companies. Do those companies have to be registered with Public Works and Government Services Canada?

Ms. Donna Achimov: All companies that do business with the Government of Canada have to go through a procurement process.

Mr. Robert Aubin: That is all the questions I have now, really.

The Chair: Your turn, Mr. Menegakis.

[English]

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also would like to welcome all of you, and thank you for your presentations and for being here with us today. I found all of your presentations to be very interesting. In fact, there are a lot of good things happening.

As you know, we're studying the road map. The road map is an investment by our government of more than \$1 billion. It's at the 60% point of its life, if you will, so we want to evaluate what the progress has been to date, and your presentations today certainly have shed a fair bit of light in that regard. We also want to see where we're going with the road map in the future, because as you know, its expiration is coming up in 2013.

I was very encouraged to hear from you, Ms. Achimov, and particularly to see the good work that has been done with road map money on the Language Portal of Canada. There have been 29 million hits. You can call them anything you want, but the bottom line is that there are 87,879 visitors per day on the site. That translates to 3,661 per hour. I did a little bit of a calculation on that. I think that's very impressive, especially since it has gone from 14 million to 29 million in a year, and we still haven't finished the numbers for this year. That's for only 11 months. Excellent work has been done on that.

With regard to FedDev, I think the seven initiatives you outlined and the work that's been done in southern Ontario in a very short period of time are certainly very impressive.

Regarding Canadian Parents for French, Mrs. Perkins, I have to tell you that it's wonderful to hear from you, particularly, a resident of Alberta. It's interesting that you brought up how some people say to you, "Why French and why not another language?" I suppose the best answer for that is that we have two official languages in this country. The French were founders of this land and of this country, and we want to promote linguistic duality throughout the country. That's the purpose of the road map. It's nice to know another language. I speak another language. My parents came here from Greece. It's great to be able to speak another language, but I think the priority is French, and that's the simplest answer we can give somebody.

Mr. Morrow, your personal story is very impressive. In a short period of time you've done very well. It seems to me as though there was this little box inside of you that one day—boom!—opened up, and you were able to be so successful.

I know I spoke a lot, but I have just a couple of questions.

The first is for you, Mr. Morrow. Tell me a little bit about your organization. You mentioned you don't have an executive right now, so you weren't able to do some of things you would have liked to do, although your presentation was very impressive. How big is your organization? How do you market your organization across the country?

● (1040)

Mr. Justin Morrow: Right now, we're waiting. We have our board of directors. There are five of us on the board. We have no executive staff. We have no membership.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: How were they elected?

Mr. Justin Morrow: They were appointed. They were there from the very beginning. When we first submitted our papers to Corporations Canada, they were the ones who were there, and Mr. Andrew Molson was added to our board at a later time.

We have those. We haven't started a membership yet, because we've spent the past three years building a plan.

If we are accorded our next grant, which I hope we'll get the approval for soon so we can start to work, we're going to search across the country for a national board of directors of probably about 13 young people, who will be able to put us in contact with a select number of schools and school boards within their areas. We will market our services through those board members and put the schools and the school boards in touch with our executive staff through our board members. That's how we'll market our services to the students.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: You founded the organization. Who did the appointing of the five people who are on there now?

Mr. Justin Morrow: I did.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: You did. Okay.

My next question is for everyone here.

If we were to continue with the road map—we're looking at the next phase, and a lot of good work has been done so far—where would your focus be? What would you like to see happen with the renewal of the road map?

Perhaps we can start with you, Ms. Achimov.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

Go ahead.

Ms. Donna Achimov: We've built our plan to create momentum. The momentum is launched. I would like to see the discussions take place with the communities and the users who receive the funding to see where they would like to take it. Certainly for the portal, we'd obviously like to continue with the momentum we've started there.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Moore.

Mr. Jeff Moore: I have a similar answer in that I think it would be important to consult with the communities and all the other organizations that are involved to see where they would want to go with respect to the challenges they have in economic development and how we could best serve them through the road map.

Even beyond the road map, there's also making sure that our general programs meet their needs as well. We think that's very important to our agency.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Perkins.

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: We have highlighted some very concrete examples in our brief. The one that I would highlight for you right now would be the development of proficiency benchmarking and a national standard for our youth in Canada, so that we understand what bilingual means and our students are able to be proud and confident of their language proficiency in their second official language.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bélanger, you have two minutes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You are so generous, Mr. Chair.

Not a lot can be done in two minutes. So I am going to ask Mr. Morrow and Ms. Perkins a theoretical question about ideal situations.

[*English*]

Do you think there would be an advantage for Canada if all graduates of, let's say, universities, or perhaps all post-secondary educational institutions, speak Canada's two official languages as a prerequisite for graduation?

Ms. Lisa Marie Perkins: First we would like to see, at a minimum, that the French-language proficiency of our high school graduates be recognized at the university level, which it currently is not, unlike some other types of programs, and that it be celebrated so that our universities are actually using those language skills.

Again, as I earlier alluded to, we see the economic benefit to the country of having our youth become bilingual in terms of our being positioned as a nation as a welcoming, inclusive community for all, and also in terms of our young people being able to participate in the world. The only other international language is French. If you have students who want to go and work at the OECD or at the International Olympic Committee, it is of true economic benefit to them individually that they learn both languages.

The natural correlation is that the more people who have the ability to participate fully in Canada's two official languages, there's a community spinoff as well.

•(1045)

Mr. Justin Morrow: Personally speaking, I'm not really for forcing people to do something, especially if they don't really have any use for it. If somebody were to study something where they had no use for French, I don't think we should oblige them to have to graduate with something in French.

That being said, I think there are some jobs within our society where being bilingual should be a minimum and a prerequisite.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: As a follow-up to that, would you favour the availability, online, of courses that Canadians can study autodidactically, courses that give the self-taught ability to pick up Canada's other official language? Would you favour that?

Mr. Justin Morrow: That they pick it up on their own?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes, but free; if you could access the Internet, through a school, through a library, through your home, and have access to a course load, a *cursus*, that would allow you to pick up Canada's second official language—or both, in the case of immigrants, because I value the point that you brought up, very much—would you support that?

The Chair: Can you give a one-word answer, Mr. Morrow?

Mr. Justin Morrow: I think we'd have to look at the cost benefits of it first.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Thank you to all our witnesses.

We have no further time, so without further ado, this meeting is adjourned.

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