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—
Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (1100)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Tuesday, November 27, 2012 and we are about to start our 62nd meeting.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are here to study linguistic duality during the 150th anniversary celebrations of Canadian Confederation in 2017.

We have four groups with us today. We have Mr. Laflamme and Ms. Dupuis from the National Capital Commission; Ms. Schryer and Ms. Goger from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation; Ms. Friolet-O'Neill, Mr. Légère and Mr. Doucet from the Société nationale de l'Acadie; and finally, Mr. Morrow and Mr. Turcotte, from Canadian Youth for French.

Welcome, everyone.

[English]

Before we begin the opening statements from our four witnesses, I want to let committee members know this.

[Translation]

At 12:15, a dozen or so students from the École secondaire publique Gisèle-Lalonde in Ottawa will come into the public gallery to watch our meeting.

[English]

They're going to watch our proceedings as part of their political science class. So if you notice a group of students here, they're on a tour of Parliament Hill today to watch Canadian democracy in action.

I just wanted to let witnesses know in case they wondered why we were being invaded by students.

Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Chair, has the date of the meeting when we have to meet the minister changed?

The Chair: Yes.

[English]

He is not available December 6. Instead, he has proposed to come December 12 between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

I was going to bring that up toward the end of the meeting. We also have a couple of other witnesses who are unable to come. I'm going to set aside the last five minutes of the meeting to discuss the witnesses and how we're going to sort all that out.

[Translation]

Let us start with the National Capital Commission.

[English]

Mr. Guy Laflamme (Senior Vice-President, Capital Experience and Official Residences, National Capital Commission): Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, good morning. My colleague, Diane Dupuis, and I are extremely pleased to be here this morning. Thank you for your invitation to appear before this committee to discuss the importance of linguistic duality in celebrating the 150th anniversary of Confederation in Canada's capital.

My presentation will address three different aspects, namely, how we will incorporate, facilitate, and promote bilingualism between now and 2017.

[Translation]

To begin, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly salute a master builder who passed away a few days ago and who has greatly contributed to the sound practices that I will be speaking about today.

Marcel Beaudry was the chair and chief executive officer of the National Capital Commission from 1992 to 2006. In 2004-2005, he was awarded the Leon Leadership Award by Dyane Adam, then Commissioner of Official Languages.

Mr. Beaudry, the capital and the defenders of bilingualism thank you.

First, I will talk about incorporating the official languages. The NCC mandate is diverse and exciting. We are charged with building a pre-eminent capital for all Canadians, a capital that reflects our history, our identity, our culture and our values.

To fulfill this mission, the NCC collaborates closely with the various levels of government, departments, agencies and municipalities, as well as private sector partners and the public. We coordinate public events and activities that reflect and promote our country's heritage in both its official languages.

In order to fulfill our mandate, we recognize and, I believe, we demonstrate that official languages must be an integral part of all NCC day-to-day operations. They are at the heart of all our programs, commemorations and celebrations here in the capital and we will continue our efforts to promote official languages in all of our programming between now and 2017.

Our 2011-2016 corporate plan contains specific commitments towards official languages. Let me quote the following passage:

The NCC is committed not only to applying the Official Languages Act to all its sectors of operation, but also to preserving Canada's two official languages in Canada's capital region. In the delivery of the NCC's mandate, the importance of bilingualism is reflected in all aspects of its day-to-day operations.

In short, official languages are an integral part of the NCC's values, directions and initiatives.

Our research and surveys among Canadians—whether regarding Horizon 2067, our upcoming Plan for Canada's Capital, our plans for celebrations surrounding the 150th anniversary of Confederation, or satisfaction surveys of Canada Day participants—also confirm the importance of linguistic duality.

Of particular note, Canadians have told us the capital must be a gathering place that represents the entire country. They have expressed their desire for the capital to reflect our linguistic duality. They confirm that one of the priorities of the 150th celebrations should be to highlight the roles of the French, British and First Nations in the founding of Canada.

For Canada Day, which will be one of the highlights of the 150th anniversary celebrations, a survey of 2011 participants reveals that 87% were very satisfied or satisfied with the use of official languages in the services provided during this celebration.

[English]

Second, there is facilitating the use of official languages. The NCC facilitates and promotes the use of official languages in its day-to-day operations. Within the organization, the recruitment of bilingual employees is standard practice, and we encourage our staff to promote and use both official languages in their day-to-day work. Eighty-three per cent of our jobs are bilingual. Therefore we can say that there are about 450 employees who will contribute to integrating official languages in the 2017 celebrations.

Our programming also demonstrates our commitment to official languages. For the Canada Day and Winterlude festivities, we invite artists who come from official language minority communities. This included 14 of the artists for the 2011 edition of Canada Day, and 13 for the 2012 edition of Winterlude.

Let me share some recent examples from the main stage on Canada Day. Singer Andrea Lindsay, a native of Guelph, is an anglophone artist who sings in French. Then, performing together for the first time, we had the exceptional duet of Isabelle Boulay and Johnny Reid, two artists from different parts of the country. Only on Canada Day are such collaborations possible.

• (1105)

We expect to increase our efforts in this regard for 2017. Thanks to our encouragement and insistence, I'm happy to report that the Canada Day noon and evening shows on Parliament Hill are among

the few events where the very same content is broadcast live in both official languages across all CBC and Radio-Canada platforms. This broadcast and other broadcasts from other CBC and Radio-Canada platforms have attracted an audience of roughly eight million viewers and listeners from across Canada.

Our sound and light show on Parliament Hill, Mosaika, is another example of bilingualism. Mosaika has been presented since 2010 in a bilingual format. Mosaika promotes linguistic duality by alternating narration between the two official languages. The narration also speaks about the adoption of the Official Languages Act. Since 2010, more than 730,000 people have seen this show, and 80% of our visitors indicated that they were extremely or very satisfied with the show's bilingual format. A new bilingual edition of the show will also be launched before 2017.

The NCC welcomes visitors to the capital in both official languages with an active offer of bilingual service. The simple fact of greeting people with “Bonjour, hello”, whether it is on the exterior sites or at one of our information kiosks, communicates the linguistic duality of our services. Our interpretive guides are equipped with iPads with bilingual applications. The social networking platforms that we use have been selected not only for their accessibility and user-friendliness, but also because they are available in both English and French. This type of service will grow in popularity and scope between now and 2017.

Two new key projects will also be launched over the next few years and tested before 2017, that is, Voices of the Capital, produced with the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Rideau Canal Promenade, produced in collaboration with the City of Ottawa, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Parks Canada.

Last, our youth programs reach thousands of young people across Canada, and we offer teaching materials in both official languages, especially for schools in minority language communities.

Year after year, the NCC is working with a large number of partners from both the public and private sectors to organize its events. For example, we have nearly 60 partners for Winterlude 2012.

Despite these successes, we know there is still room for improvement. In particular, we must ensure that our partners, tenants, and others using our properties satisfy bilingualism requirements. For example, we must be diligent to ensure that a restaurant leasing one of our properties or an event taking place on our property provides service to the public in both official languages.

Rest assured that we are working on it. We continue to inform our tenants of the importance of delivering bilingual services. We especially encourage our tenants to enlist the services of Regroupement des gens d'affaires. The RGA provides entrepreneurs with a tool kit to help them deliver bilingual services. We also require the use of both official languages for partners in cultural events. All of those partners will play a key role in hosting Canadians in 2017.

Another example of proactive involvement was the NCC's role with the 2012 Juno awards organizing committee, the Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans, and Société Radio-Canada, to host an all-francophone evening entitled *Célébrons les Juno*. The 41st Juno awards gala here in the capital included a significant francophone component this year. This was a first. For the very first time a francophone show was produced and broadcast across the country as part of the Juno Awards, and we are very proud of this accomplishment.

We also chair a committee of more than 20 federal cultural partners, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Other members include all the national museums, the Royal Canadian Mint, and the National Film Board of Canada. This committee is in a position to influence programming, share best practices, and collaborate to ensure that linguistic duality will be featured as part of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Third is ensuring linguistic duality during the 150th anniversary celebrations. As 2017 approaches, we will act to ensure that both official languages are at the heart of our celebrations.

• (1110)

Although we are still in the preliminary planning stage of the 150th anniversary celebrations, the capital by its very role will be a venue in which we recount our country's history and highlight Canadian achievements, a place to facilitate exchanges among Canadians from across the country.

Whether by programming designed to inspire Canadian citizens to discover their capital or through initiatives that bring together artists from various corners of the country, we want all Canadians to experience the linguistic duality of our country right here in their second hometown, the capital of Canada, as well as through national outreach activities. Again, we will work closely with the various cultural institutions in the capital to ensure that special exhibitions and programming will underscore how linguistic duality has shaped our history and the evolution of Canadian identity.

Furthermore, we have taken note of the recent report from Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages, which states that the 150th anniversary celebrations would present an ideal opportunity to celebrate linguistic duality, an opportunity for the NCC and the entire federal family to celebrate both official languages and highlight Canada's cultural diversity. We already have tools in place to interpret history, to celebrate our culture and values, and to commemorate our important events and prominent Canadians, and all of these respect official language guidelines. Our existing NCC programs provide a solid foundation upon which we can build to celebrate the 150th anniversary. The NCC has extensive experience in motivating its partners to celebrate Canada and Canadian achievements.

In concert with the cities of Gatineau and Ottawa, we are committed to working together to ensure that 2017 will be a resounding success. We also plan to work closely with the tourism industry in order that linguistic duality is part of their action plan.

[Translation]

In conclusion, the 2017 celebrations present the ideal opportunity for the capital to play the role that Canadians expect of it; that is, to

proudly showcase Canada's values, diversity and linguistic duality. Whether it is through integration, facilitation or action, rest assured that linguistic duality and respect for official languages remain at the heart of everything that the NCC does now and will do in 2017. We will continue our efforts to welcome Canadians in both official languages during this historic year that marks the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

In closing, we thank the committee in advance for the advice and direction that will result from their deliberations. This will inspire us in moving forward.

Thank you.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you.

We now move to the representative from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation

Ms. Chantal Schryer (Vice-President, Public Affairs and Publishing, Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Members of the committee, good morning, and thank you for inviting us to make a presentation here today.

The Corporation and its museums will play a very prominent role in the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017. I have three primary goals today. Firstly, I want to speak generally about our commitment to linguistic duality and our efforts to enhance Canadians' understanding of this core attribute of our society. Secondly, I want to give you a general outline of the museums' plans for 2017. And thirdly, I want to tell you about our efforts to reach out to French and English linguistic minorities in communities across Canada as we develop the new Canadian Museum of History.

But I will begin with a brief introduction to the corporation and its museums. The Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation is the corporate parent of the Museum of Civilization (which will soon become the Canadian Museum of History) and the Canadian War Museum. The corporation also includes the Virtual Museum of New France, which exists only on the Internet. These institutions preserve and share the heritage of Canada, and they contribute to the promotion and reinforcement of the Canadian identity. They do so in both official languages.

In their permanent and temporary exhibitions, the Museum of Civilization and the War Museum tell the story of Canada and its peoples from earliest times to the present day. Among other things, our museums help visitors understand why Canada today has two official languages. Our visitors learn about Samuel de Champlain and the establishment of New France. They learn about the British conquest and the rebellions. Of course, it goes without saying that our museums also explore the history and contributions of Canada's first peoples, and those who came to Canada from around the world in more recent times.

The Museum of Civilization and the War Museum are national institutions. As such, we strive to reach out to Canadians wherever in the country they live and we do so through a variety of offerings. The most prominent are our websites, which are accessible from anywhere, and our traveling exhibitions, which are presented at venues across the country. Our websites are rich, reliable sources of information about Canadian history and culture. All the material we generate for the sites is presented in both official languages and is available free of charge.

Traveling exhibitions are another tool we use to reach across the country. During the last fiscal year, we had 11 exhibitions on the road in Canada. They traveled to 17 venues in five provinces and were seen by more than 150,000 visitors. All were presented in both English and French.

[English]

I will now turn to our plans for 2017.

Our museums will offer events, exhibitions, and activities that will engage Canadians not only in the national capital region but also across the country. We will undertake these endeavours, whenever possible, in collaboration with museums and other partners from coast to coast to coast, and we will do so in both official languages.

The centrepiece of our plan for 2017 is the development of a major permanent exhibition in the new Canadian Museum of History. It will be the largest and most comprehensive exhibition on Canada's history ever created. The exhibition will be developed in stages and is scheduled for completion in 2017.

Under its new mandate, the museum will tell the story of Canada and its people with greater clarity and effect than ever before. It will have a sharper focus on the major themes and seminal events and people of our national experience. It will bring our history to life through the display of more of our national treasures, artifacts that will resonate with Canadians, whatever their language, English or French.

Although planning for the new exhibition has just begun, it's obvious that Canada's linguistic duality will be a central focus of attention. How that theme will be explored and presented has yet to be determined. Our decisions will be informed by a process of national consultation, which is now under way.

• (1120)

We are inviting Canadians to help create this new exhibition. We have launched what is surely the most ambitious program of public engagement ever undertaken by our museums. We're asking Canadians to identify the themes, events, and people they would include in their national history museum. We are also asking how our museums can best serve their needs and interests, no matter where they live in Canada or whether they speak French or English. Through an interactive website, we are inviting Canadians to vote on earlier suggestions and to make new nominations of their own. At last count, the site had attracted over 7,000 visitors.

We are also making visits to nine cities across the country. At each stop, we are hosting information sessions and round table discussions. In every case, we're reaching out to linguistic minorities through media releases, in both official languages, through

community newspapers, via CBC and TOU.TV, and through direct contact with relevant groups and associations.

We have contacted umbrella organizations, such as the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada and the Quebec Community Groups Network. We are also contacting local groups in every city on our itinerary. We also have a portable kiosk we're taking to every city on our tour. We're asking passersby the same fundamental questions we're posing through our website and round table discussions, in either official language. The response to date has been wonderful.

In a parallel process, our historians and researchers are consulting with experts from universities and museums and other centres of scholarship across the country.

Once the outreach initiative is completed, we will be better informed on how to shape the new exhibition and other programming for 2017. This much is certain: We will invite Canadians to learn about their country, to appreciate the richness of their history, and to discuss with each other what it means to be Canadian in 2017.

We look forward to the results of your deliberations and any guidance you might offer regarding the national celebration and Canada's linguistic duality.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

We now move to the representatives from the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

Mr. René Légère (President, Société nationale de l'Acadie): Mr. Chair, distinguished committee members, good morning.

The Société nationale de l'Acadie is pleased to contribute to the collective reflection on the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017. Our organization, commonly known as SNA, represents the Acadian people.

Founded in 1881, the SNA is now a federation comprising eight member associations, including four youth organizations, a special member and six associate members. The only official spokesperson of the Acadians, the Société nationale de l'Acadie, promotes the rights and interests of some 300,000 Atlantic Acadians and Acadia around the world. In the provinces we represent, our communities are in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would like to offer you a little example illustrating the heed that the Government of Canada pays to the SNA. Practically since the beginning of the Sommets de la francophonie, the SNA has been part of the Canadian government delegation in order to represent the Acadian people.

I will now ask my Vice-President, Amély Friolet-O'Neill to continue the presentation.

• (1125)

Ms. Amély Friolet-O'Neil (Vice-President, Société nationale de l'Acadie): Thank you very much, René.

With this mandate and the resulting responsibilities, the Société nationale de l'Acadie wishes to emphasize three key points respecting the celebrations in 2017.

First, we are very aware that linguistic duality is still too often a poorly defined subject where many prejudices prevail. We would like this important anniversary year to serve as a springboard for encouraging our two communities to get to know each other better, thereby strengthening the principles of our country that underpin the Official Languages Act.

In the same spirit, we believe it is important that all activities surrounding the anniversary showcase the entire Canadian francophonie, in which the Acadians play an important role. Too often, Canadians believe that Quebec is French and the rest of the country is English, giving short shrift to the several million of us who live all across Canada. 2017 provides an excellent opportunity to correct this perception.

Lastly, from a structural point of view, we recommend the creation of a program or mechanism for communities to hold large-scale events to celebrate the anniversary of Confederation, both in the lead up to 2017 and during that year.

We now wish to further discuss the principles we believe are essential to organizing these celebrations and how the Société nationale de l'Acadie is ready and willing to play a role, and should do so.

First, this is an opportunity for national dialogue.

In testimony before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, we noted a comment stressing the need to respect the value of local history in national history. This is something to which we, in Acadia, are particularly attuned. The story of the Acadian people is unique but little known. It deserves to be highlighted during the celebrations of 2017 as one of the many rich facets of the Canadian francophonie and our confederation as a whole.

So we wish to take advantage of the celebrations to promote a real dialogue with the anglophone community. Despite the Official Languages Act and efforts to get to know us, there is still too much misunderstanding. This undesirable situation could be corrected by specific exchange and communication programs between communities speaking each of our country's official languages.

We would also like to celebrate the historic friendship that has prevailed, since the creation of Acadia, between our people and aboriginal people. This relationship is an example of cooperation, tolerance and mutual assistance, which is the very foundation of the Canadian nation and which could benefit the entire country.

Mr. René Légère: Second, it gives us time to reflect.

Throughout its history, Acadia has mobilized and has met to consider its future at national conventions that have enabled our people to establish symbols and institutions and to define their key priorities. 2017 would be the perfect opportunity for Acadia to celebrate its place in the Canadian Confederation by organizing a national convention to consider the linguistic, demographic and other challenges it faces. It would be an opportunity for young Acadians to look back at how far we have come and to look to the future with confidence.

It would also encourage pride and a sense of belonging.

The 2017 celebrations should instill in every Canadian great pride and a sense of belonging to this country we all share. It is clear to the SNA that a better understood and flourishing Acadia can only contribute further to the development of a strong and united country where the vast mosaic of our origin, our culture and our heritage is a source of permanent enrichment.

The last time Confederation was celebrated, in 1967, it touched our national psyche and gave Canadians cultural institutions such as art centres and museums that still serve us today. We are convinced that 2017 must, in its own way, leave a lasting mark on Canadians by promoting a real understanding of our country's guiding principles. Linguistic duality is a major component and deserves to be at the heart of the celebrations, which, one day, we may be able to say put an end to the two solitudes.

Thank you for listening.

● (1130)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Last, we have Canadian Youth for French.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Chair, we do not have a hard copy of this witness's speech.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just to clarify, Madam Bateman, because you've raised this a number of times before, witnesses are not required to submit any written statements in advance of their testimony to committee. They're free to submit written statements if they so wish, but in some cases they don't, and we don't require them to.

The committee operates in both official languages and it does so orally. Translation is provided for members who wish to listen to the testimony or to the opening statement in either official language. No committee requires any witness to submit their opening statement or their testimony in writing.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I understand that. But, Mr. Chair, I would like to point out that we do have the resources necessary. If a group does not have the resources it needs to have its documents translated, we in the Canadian government do.

[English]

The Chair: We actually don't have the resources to translate that quickly. If we were to receive a witness's opening statement the morning of the meeting or the night before, we don't have the resources to translate it that quickly.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: No, but we could do it in a few days.

[English]

The Chair: It's very difficult for us to get that all done in time for the committees. Some witnesses translate it in-house in both official languages. In many cases they don't have the resources to do that. I've worked on four or five committees now, and in many cases the witnesses don't have their opening statements in both official languages and, if that's the case, we don't distribute them.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: No, I know all that, but do we not have the resources...

[English]

The Chair: No, we don't.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: ...to help small organizations?

[English]

The Chair: We don't.

If I had asked translation yesterday to translate all of—

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: No, not yesterday. But if it was submitted three days or a week in advance, would it be possible?

[English]

The Chair: Normally we don't provide that service. If requested we will, but normally we don't. That's why translation is provided.

We'll continue to operate that way unless I'm given direction differently from the committee. That's been the convention on all committees that I've ever sat on.

Go ahead, Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I do not want to spend too much time on this. It is true that we have talked about it a number of times.

I think that if witness sends us a document a week in advance, the translation should be done as a matter of course, unless we run out of time. In the machinery of government, unless I am mistaken, documents are usually translated if they are sent in advance.

We do not want to put pressure on witnesses. We do not want to force them to write a brief in advance just because we want to have it. That is why we have all the services we do. The translation can be done afterwards; then we get the documents.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

Are there any other comments on this? It's been raised before.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I just want to say thank you very much to all the witnesses whose presentations were in both languages; that helps me a lot.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Morrow, go ahead.

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Morrow (Founder and Executive Director, Canadian Youth for French): First of all, I have to apologize. We were given a week and a half to prepare this presentation. Unfortunately, we had no time to translate it. We tried, but it was not possible. We did our best, given the resources we have.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, good morning. Thank you for inviting Canadian Youth for French representatives to appear during your study of the 150th anniversary celebrations of Canadian Confederation in 2017. It is a great pleasure for me to tell you about our association, our vision, and our ideas.

First, I will give you a brief overview of our organization. Then I will share with you our opinion about this study.

Canadian Youth for French is an organization whose goals are to increase the number of bilingual Canadians and to foster a greater appreciation of French in English Canada.

To do that, we start with our first project, Discover Zone. This is a web portal that provides every high school graduate with all the options open to them at post-secondary level. This may involve universities, colleges, exchanges, forums, jobs or other opportunities in French-speaking communities. We want it to be the one-stop shop for every young Canadian looking for an experience in French-speaking Canada after high school.

We will focus on Discover Zone, our fundamental project, until it is available to every student across the country. That means 310,000 grade 12 students every year. Our plan is to reach that point in three to five years, depending on our finances, but I think it is realistic. If we succeed in having Discover Zone accessible to every high-school graduate in three years, we will be able to contribute to the 150th anniversary of Confederation in a big way. But, if it takes five years, our contribution will be limited to opening our services to the general public in 2017.

The last time I was here, I told you about my personal journey. At that time, the organization was still in its early stages. Since then, we have taken two major steps forward.

First, we got our third grant from Canadian Heritage, which allowed us to develop our website and Discover Zone. It all should be online very soon—our hope is that may be today. In my opinion, that is a very good start.

Second, we have established the very first fully Canadian board of directors in our organization's history. That was two weekends ago at our AGM in Quebec City. The voice you are hearing now is no longer Justin Morrow's; it is the voice of the 11 members who represent our country's regions and communities from coast to coast. As soon as our new subcommittee defines the rules for membership, that number will increase exponentially. It is incredible to be in the heat of the action and you should all be anxious to see what is on its way.

Let us turn to the main reason for our meeting today.

• (1135)

[*English*]

How can we ensure the Government of Canada includes linguistic duality in the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation?

First of all, I would like to commend all of you on inviting Canadian Youth for French to speak to you today. More often than not, when we speak about linguistic duality, we think about defending the rights of the minority as opposed to advancing the appreciation of our linguistic and cultural dualities in the majority.

Also, linguistic duality is not only about ensuring everyone has the right to be served in the language of his or her choice, it is also about ensuring that anyone wishing to benefit from the ability to speak both of our official languages has the opportunity to do so in the setting of their choice.

Until we came along, Canadian Youth for French, I'm not even sure we can say there was a group in the majority that was devoted to advancing our common cause outside of the secondary or elementary classrooms.

As our mission implies, we exist to ensure that anyone wishing to benefit from the ability to speak both of our official languages has the opportunity to do so, and that those in a majority setting understand and appreciate our linguistic and cultural differences and our realities.

How do we ensure the Government of Canada includes linguistic duality in the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation?

On November 1 you heard from members of the FCFA, FJCF and QCGN. After reading the transcript, Canadian Youth for French finds itself in strong agreement with three main points.

Alexis Couture stated young people should be included not as tokens of youth but as valid participants with an active role in the decision-making process. With that we strongly agree.

Marie-France Kenny stated that grant and contribution agreements should not only contain a linguistic clause but a strong linguistic clause. With that we completely agree.

There also seemed to be a consensus that a distinct organization should oversee the planning of this ceremonious event, and that it should consist of members of the various communities found throughout the country: English, French, aboriginal, and immigrant. We strongly agree, but we would like to further specify that both

English and French minority and majority communities be represented on this committee as well.

Someone asked if the head of one such organization should be bilingual. We would ask that this be taken a step further. Not only should the head of the committee be bilingual, but also each member of the committee should at least be able to understand both official languages.

The final point is whether all celebrations should include both official languages. At the federal level, all celebrations should be in both official languages. At the provincial and municipal levels, we believe that where the francophone community has a strong enough presence to contribute to the celebration, both official languages should be present, but a different approach should be taken in such communities where there isn't a strong enough presence. I can expand on this during the question and answer period if you'd like.

The next question that should be asked is, how CYF can contribute to this occasion.

First and foremost, we're going to need some help from you guys and a guarantee that our organization will still be around by the time 2017 rolls around and that we will have the resources to contribute to this grand occasion.

Second, for our organization to be successful, our relationship with members of the official language minority communities will need to be extremely strong. We must understand their reality so that we can communicate it properly to our anglophone communities and so that our members have the utmost respect for the official language minority communities that open their doors to them.

This is why we recruited two members to represent francophone and Acadian communities on our board. This is also why we met with Marie-France Kenny on numerous occasions, why we will be attending a meeting with the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario this afternoon, and why we will continue to create relationships with all members of official language communities across the country in years to come.

This being said, our contribution will depend on the development of our organization. If we only reach our goal within five years, our network will be too green and we won't be able to make a substantial impact, so we're going to have to limit ourselves to supporting official language minority partners, just the support in general.

However, if we can reach our attainable goal within three years, our network of young adults who are passionate about our country's linguistic duality will not only be able to support these partners but also will be able to spread the word throughout majority communities. For example, I would be able to go back to the rhubarb capital of Ontario, where there isn't a strong francophone presence, and share my stories to let my neighbours know how valuable our linguistic duality is. That can be done across the country with our members who will be there in 2017.

To conclude, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity. By inviting us here today, you are telling our citizens that it's not only those in official language minority settings who can support and be proud of our country's linguistic duality, but citizens from majority communities can be proud of our linguistic duality as well. We are here. We are proud. Let us join in the celebration of our past, present, and future in both official languages throughout our celebration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

•(1140)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Godin has the floor.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to welcome our witnesses.

I would like to start with the people from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation.

At a previous meeting, I gave a representative from Library and Archives Canada a piece of my mind. But now, I have the right people here.

Earlier, you said that the priority of the Canadian Museum of Civilization was linguistic duality and the 150th anniversary in 2017. I do not want to trick you, but that is what you said. Let me say this clearly; I am not going to beat around the bush because I only have seven minutes and I would like to ask other people questions too. I have a hard time grasping the fact that the Commissioner of Official Languages had to get a complaint like this:

Just recently, I received a request for a financial contribution in the mail. It was written in English only. This was not the first time. I find it deplorable that an organization that operates under the Museums Act sends its correspondence in English only and the only concession made to French-speakers is a notice indicating how to get the document. It is unacceptable that this correspondence should have been written in English only, especially given that it was being sent to New Brunswick.

By the way, the name is Thibault, not Talbot.

Right at the end of the document, it says that you can get the letter in French by calling the 1-800 number shown.

I would really like to hear your response to this. There is nothing more insulting. Do you think that a letter like that sent to Alberta would be well received? Imagine if you had sent it in French to British Columbia or Saskatchewan. You would have heard about that.

From what I have heard, the Canadian Museum of Civilization does not want to cooperate with the Commissioner of Official Languages. I would like to hear your comments about that. As we move towards the 150th anniversary, it would be good to put this behind us.

It is all the more important given that the government is about to spend \$24 million to change the name of the Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Canadian Museum of History. I feel that the money would be better spent complying with the Official Languages Act.

I would like to hear what you have to say.

•(1145)

Ms. Elizabeth Goger (Vice-President, Human Resources, Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation): Good morning. My name is Elizabeth Goger. I would like to answer your question.

Yes, we are aware of the complaint. But I would like to clarify the situation. When we are identifying potential donors, we consult the lists that we have of subscribers to various magazines or other publications, in English or French. As we have no other information about people, we use those lists to determine whether the language preference is English or French. We make the assumption that people on the mailing lists of English magazines prefer English as their language of correspondence. Then we send a letter in that language to potential donors to find out if people would like to make a donation either to the Canadian War Museum or to the Canadian Museum of Civilization. So if that is not a person's preferred language—we do not know which is—the person can call the 1-800 number in the letter and we will be pleased to send the information in French.

Mr. Yvon Godin: What is the difference between that and sending it in both official languages? You could put a note for those who want the information in their language of choice. Then they could tell you, and you would get to know your customers.

Ms. Elizabeth Goger: We have met with people from the Commissioner of Official Languages' office. We are looking at the situation so that we can resolve the complaint. We are working on it.

Mr. Yvon Godin: How come this problem never happens in English? It is always in French.

Moving on. You said that you were doing national tours in minority regions. In New Brunswick, the only place you went to was Fredericton. That is not a minority region. Bilingualism is not a problem there. I do not understand why you did not go to the Acadian peninsula, or to Moncton or to Dieppe. They are right next to each other. That is where you will really find the minorities. I know that about 35 people showed up.

Why did you not go to places where the minorities really are? In your presentation, you talked about minority regions.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: Actually, in my presentation, I said clearly that we visited nine cities. I did not say that we chose the cities because of their linguistic minorities.

This is what we did in each city we went to. A week or two before we got there, we sent invitations to all groups, including linguistic minority groups. In Fredericton, actually, several people came from Tracadie and places outside Fredericton. They shared their ideas and choices with us, and told us what they would like to see in the new exhibition.

We must not forget that we have the website either. The website can be accessed by everyone, English-speakers and people in minority language situations all across Canada. We promote the website on a daily basis with all target groups.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I go back to the fact that we are talking about minorities. Minorities outside Quebec are French-speakers. Why not go to the places where they live so that they are the ones who do not have to travel? It is just a comment.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: I am certainly making a note of it. Thank you.

Mr. Yvon Godin: My next question goes to the representatives of the Société nationale acadienne.

You represent New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. But you also have members from Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, including some active ones, as well as from Maine and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. There are a lot of Acadians there. There are also some on the Gaspé and in Quebec.

Will the 150th anniversary be an opportunity to reach Acadians living outside the Atlantic region? The SNA has a role in reaching out to Acadians, surely. This is a national event.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. René Légère: In terms of the activities we propose, I can offer you the examples of the World Acadian Congresses that we have been organizing every five years since 1994. Acadians from all over the world are invited to the events. There are several hundred thousand of them in Louisiana, for example, in Belle-Île-en-Mer, France, and around Poitou. According to the latest figures, more than a million people in Quebec are of Acadian origin. You understand why. After the expulsion of the Acadians, many of them fled to the Atlantic provinces and then ended up in Quebec. That is what explains such a large number of Quebecers of Acadian origin.

Each time we organize an event, we invite them. It is like inviting an Acadian diaspora. It makes for awareness, particularly among the Quebecers. They see the very close link between Acadians and Quebecers. For Canada as a whole, it is certainly not bad to make them aware of the fact that there is another francophonie that lives, speaks and acts as part of the global francophonie beside them. For those reasons, we are going to invite people from outside, of course.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

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

My thanks to the witnesses for joining us this morning.

My first question goes to the representatives of the National Capital Commission.

In your presentation, I noticed the pride of place you give to bilingualism. I also noticed it in your programming of Canada's national celebrations, the shows, I mean. I also noticed your success in terms of television. Eight million Canadians were tuned in. Perhaps with the arts, we can go a little further with linguistic duality.

Can you give me an idea of the proportion of French to English in the show and tell me why it was such a success?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: That is an excellent question, Mr. Gourde.

Year after year, the francophone content of the show is about 30%. Thank you for pointing out the effort that had been made to make sure that we did not have a French version of the show on Radio-Canada and an English version of the show on CBC. We worked very closely with our colleagues from the corporation to make sure that the broadcast was of the same bilingual show.

It is interesting to note that, when Marie-Mai performed, the viewership went up. An event like that allows us to promote linguistic duality and also to expose people from the other culture, speaking the other language, to a cultural treasure. We are going to continue along the same lines in the future. Radio-Canada and CBC support us in that.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I am glad that Radio-Canada and CBC are supporting you. I hope that it will encourage them to include other shows highlighting linguistic duality in their programming. I feel that it is part of their mandate.

My next question goes to Mr. Morrow.

This is not your first time here. You have made it known that you belong to the new generation of Canadians who like to be bilingual, who love it. You put a lot of effort into learning French as a student in *la belle province*, at l'Université Laval.

How do you see the celebrations in 2017? Bilingualism is important to you. How do you want it to be promoted and how do you think you can best be involved in those celebrations?

Mr. Justin Morrow: Thank you for your question.

As I mentioned in my speech, the bilingual nature of the event is very important. Each federal event is supposed to be held in both languages. That is the bottom line. Take an English-speaking municipality as an example. There is the difference I was talking about. Where I live, there are no French-speaking communities. So we are not going to be telling English-speakers to include French in their speeches. But there are people like me, anglophones in those communities and from all over Canada, people from the English-speaking communities in Quebec, people from the French-speaking majority in Quebec, who support bilingualism and linguistic duality. They could all declare themselves to be in favour of bilingualism whether their communities have anglophone majorities or francophone majorities.

[English]

What does it bring? How does it work? Why is it important? What does it bring to our culture, our lives, the people we are?

[Translation]

That is how I see bilingualism and linguistic duality being included in the event. It has to be promoted with the majorities.

Have I answered your question?

• (1155)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

My next question goes to the representatives of the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

I have to congratulate you for your strength and your perseverance.

How do you want to be involved in the 2017 celebrations?

Ms. Amélie Friolet-O'Neil: I can answer that question. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say something more on the subject. My colleague René talked about it, it was at the heart of our presentation. Basically, the crux of what we want to convey to you is that the Société nationale de l'Acadie is the guarantor of an event which is crucial for our people, and the event is the World Acadian Congress.

That congress takes place every five years. For the Acadian people, the Acadian nation, it is an opportunity for dialogue. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the road we have travelled, to determine where we are and what we want to do. It is a key time in fostering and developing a feeling of belonging to our community, both in Acadia and in Canada. Those are the three elements behind our 2017 presentation. That is how we would like to take part in the 2017 celebrations as one of Canada's founding peoples.

My colleague will surely agree with me when I say that, when Acadia is present, when Acadia has a strong presence provincially, nationally and internationally, it provides a reflection of Canada in which linguistic duality is understood and strengthened. If Acadia is allowed to take an important place in the 2017 celebrations, it is for us a recognition of the place that Acadia occupies in the Canada of today and has occupied throughout the history of Canadian Confederation and of the arrival of the first settlers to the land. You mentioned New France and the date 1608. There is also Acadia and the date 1604. The history of Acadia goes hand in hand with the history of Canada. For us, the 2017 celebrations are an opportunity to reflect on the place we have in this Canada and on the way in which we can strengthen the Acadian identity. Ultimately, that will strengthen Canadian unity and the bond, not only between our French-speaking communities, but also with the English-speaking communities with whom we share our lands in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Dion.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for joining us today.

I have a general question and an additional question for Ms. Schryer. My first question is for Mr. Laflamme, Ms. Schryer, Mr. Légère and Mr. Morrow.

We have to draft a report and you have an opportunity to help us. You said some very interesting things, but I would like you to try and summarize what you would like to see in the report, in order to concretely help you achieve two things, which we should address separately. The first thing has to do with ensuring that, in your sector, the 2017 celebrations will be delivered in both official languages. Second, the priorities that you have identified as part of celebrating linguistic duality must also be met. So, in terms of the delivery of

services and the direction of the celebrations, if you had to summarize everything in a few seconds, what would you like to see in our report so that we can make those recommendations to the government? I would like to hear what you have to say.

Ms. Schryer, my additional question to you is this.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization has been changed to the Canadian Museum of History. I think the term "Canadian Museum of History" is ambiguous. Does that mean that Canada is looking at the history of the world? We are talking about the Canadian Museum of History. So that means that we are studying the history of the world in Canada, which is fairly close to what the Canadian Museum of Civilization does, as it looks at the history of civilizations. It is a fine distinction. However, are we now saying that the purpose of this museum is to study the history of Canada only? In that case, it should be called the Museum of Canadian History. We have to be specific and, if that's the case, I think it is unfortunate that we have to limit our study on civilizations or world history.

I think it is a good idea to create a museum of Canadian history, but I think it is a shame to do so at the expense of a Canadian museum of civilization.

My question is for all of you. What do you think about it, Mr. Laflamme? We are going to go in that direction.

• (1200)

Mr. Guy Laflamme: Mr. Dion, thank you for pointing this out. We feel it is important. Without taking anything away from my colleagues, this has to do with the importance of the national capital region as a window for the whole country. Without taking anything away from the other regions of the country, the fact remains that we are a second home for Canadians. In a nutshell, it is a question of determining to what extent the committee can highlight the vital role of the capital region in promoting linguistic duality and in showcasing the entire country. We have to make sure that everyone can learn something about our history and celebrate our accomplishments. We also have to look to the future to get Canadians excited about what we will be able to accomplish with future generations.

Thank you.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: At the Canadian Museum of Civilization and at the Canadian War Museum, we feel much the same as my colleague Mr. Laflamme just said. Given that we are telling the story of Canada's history and in light of this new mandate in particular, we need the support of each and every one of you to promote this museum across Canada in both official languages. In addition, what I would like to see in the report is support for smaller museums and institutions across the country that do not really have the money or the resources to tell their history in both official languages.

Thank you.

Mr. René Légère: As to the place of both official languages in the celebrations in Acadia, it is definitely non-negotiable.

You have to understand that living in Acadia means living with the anglophone community. We are a minority on the territory of the Atlantic provinces. On a daily basis, we have to share our experiences, we have to better understand the anglophone community and we have to get that community interested in us. To do so, we are increasingly reaching out through our francophone and anglophone artists. In most of our events, we try to bring them together, so that, as Canadians, we realize how rich this diversity is in all our regions.

You are going to say that, in New Brunswick, that is a given. No, it is not a given. We have to constantly work at it. There is no time for rest. I think it is sort of the same for the anglophone side. The anglophones in the Atlantic provinces are also faced with the challenge of constantly trying to get to know the Acadian community better, as they share their lives on a daily basis. We get married. We have a high percentage of exogamous marriages between francophones and Acadians. Our hope is to live in both languages, not just in English. We really want that aspect to be shared.

In terms of the second question, which had to do with Acadia's affirmation within Canada, I feel that the 2017 celebrations will be a unique opportunity for us to make ourselves known and to share all our positive experiences. In Acadia, we have accomplished some rather interesting things in education, health and culture. The dialogue we have established with the anglophone community shows that there is an interesting model somewhere that has worked well, that works well and that could be used in the rest of the country.

• (1205)

[English]

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Morrow.

Mr. Justin Morrow: Regarding the delivery of the service, we think there should be a committee that consists of the various communities with young people who all understand both official languages. That committee would receive demands for all the applications, all the grants, from all the different communities across the country, and it should be their responsibility to decide which projects get approved. It should be a central thing.

We recommend, first and foremost, a strong linguistic clause. If a minority francophone community wants to be part of a celebration in a majority anglophone setting, there shouldn't be two distinct celebrations. They should work together, the anglophone community and the francophone community, to do something together. They should definitely not do it apart. If any French community wants to do that, they should automatically be paired with one of the English communities.

For the communities who don't have a francophone voice, there should be something that promotes an understanding of our linguistic and cultural duality. Somehow, the group or project that gets approved by the committee must demonstrate that they have the resources and a creative way to include the understanding of both dualities. We hope that we will be there to play that role.

[Translation]

The Chair: I would like to invite our witnesses to eat with us.

[English]

We'll suspend for five minutes.

• (1205)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1215)

[Translation]

The Chair: We are going to continue the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Trottier.

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

My thanks to the witnesses. It is always a pleasure to have you at the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

My questions today are for the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation.

I would like to hear about your findings on long-term trends. We are comparing the 2017 celebrations to our experience from 1967. Do you think that Canadians are more interested in and more familiar with their history than they were in 1967 or even 25 years ago? What is the long-term trend when it comes to people's interest in and knowledge of Canadian history?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: What I can give you is the results that we have obtained so far from our consultations. This is what Canadians are telling us right now.

To date, we have held consultations in five cities, including Vancouver, St. John's, Halifax and Fredericton. You will find this information on our website. At the museum, we feel that Canadians are showing a renewed interest in the history of their country. If you are asking me whether we will see the same interest as in 1967, I am not sure. However, I think that each of us has a role to play in reaching out to Canadians, in developing programs and in creating dialogue with Canadians—in our case, we have exhibitions—to rekindle Canadians' desire to know more about their history and the way their country was built.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: One of the important aspects of our history is this linguistic duality. Are there specific exhibitions at the museum that deal with the history of bilingualism?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: At the Canadian Museum of Civilization, which will become the Canadian Museum of History, the Canada hall will be redone, and so will the Canadian personalities hall on the fourth floor.

People love the Canada Hall, but contrary to what many believe, this hall does not tell Canada's history. In this room, there are a number of vignettes that give people a look into events that took place at a specific time somewhere in Canada. Of course, we mention the rebellions and conquests, but it is not what people really expect to find there. That is why this exhibition is going to be completely redone.

• (1220)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What will you do to bring this history to the other museums? The other museums will probably not have the necessary infrastructure to put on exhibitions. You also need to have people who can explain things or who can organize visits in both languages. How can we help those museums, if we want to have exhibitions at the national level?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: At our museum, we are developing partnerships with museums across Canada. Among the new exhibitions, we will have a room fully reserved for exhibitions from other museums in Canada. For example, the New Brunswick museum will be able to come and present the history of New Brunswick in this room. At our museum, we would be providing visitors with the opportunity to learn about the history of Canada's various regions, and this room will be complementary to the major exhibition on Canada's history. We are also going to develop exhibitions or modules that can be presented in other Canadian museums.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What is the significance of 2017 for your organization?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: It is very important to us. Since we represent two museums dedicated to Canada's history, meaning military history and the history of the Canadian people, it is certainly a priority for us.

I would say that practically each and every one of my colleagues is working on it. This is our major project for the next five years.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What will you do differently in 2016 or 2018? What will happen?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: In 2017, we are going to unveil this new major exhibition. We are going to launch our Canada-wide programming. We are going to promote our partnerships with other museums. New modules are going to be put on our websites.

Actually, I cannot give you all the details now because we are currently discussing this with Canadians across the country to help us define the exhibition and the programming.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you.

My question is for all the groups. What are the major themes that your communities or your corporations would like to focus on for the celebrations? I would like to get an idea in just a few words.

This is to help our committee do our planning, and to also help Canadian Heritage and other branches of government, of course. So could you summarize in a few words the main themes that we should address during the celebrations?

We can start with Canadian Youth for French.

Mr. Justin Morrow: I am personally giving three presentations on the following themes. The presentation for bilingual people is called "A Canadian Ideal/*Un idéal canadien*" and it takes place in both languages. The English presentation is called "French, it's not that bad". Finally, in French, the presentation is called "Français, la langue seconde de millions de Canadiens partout dans le pays".

Those are the three themes.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you.

A representative from the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

Ms. Amélie Friolet-O'Neil: Clearly, we are going to make some changes in terms of Canada's francophone history in order to include Acadia in the history of Canadian Confederation. René and I mentioned this earlier. We often talk about francophones in Quebec and anglophones in the rest of Canada. So, we need to use the 2017 celebrations to set the record straight in terms of francophone communities as part of the Canada-wide francophonie, especially in terms of Acadia's role as a founding component.

Also, in our community, we would like 2017 to be an opportunity for us to reflect on Acadia's role. Just now, I made a mistake, a slip of the tongue by saying "World Acadian Congress". I actually wanted to talk about the Acadian national convention. This is a time for us to reflect on Acadia's place, as well as on Acadia's role in the Canadian project and in the Canadian francophonie.

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet (Executive Director, Société nationale de l'Acadie): I would also like to add something. The Canadian identity is made up of a multitude of communities and groups that work together for the prosperity of our country, which we love.

I think that the 2017 celebrations will be a success, if all these communities—Aboriginals, Acadians and various groups—celebrate their contribution to Canada and show how happy they are to be part of this big family.

There has to be a mechanism that allows them to contribute. It could be sort of like the mechanism for the War of 1812 commemorations. It created a space for dialogue for people who wanted to take action, to promote their contribution and commitment to Canada.

It would really be the collective success of all Canadians.

• (1225)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lauzon now has the floor.

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

My thanks to all the witnesses for joining us here this afternoon.

I am going to address my questions to the youngest witnesses first.

Welcome, Mr. Morrow. You mentioned that the goal of your organization is to promote bilingualism among young people.

Is that really your goal?

Mr. Justin Morrow: Our mission is to increase the number of bilingual Canadians and to foster a greater appreciation of the French language in English Canada. That is part of the promotion.

For us, young people are those graduating high school, so people in grade 12. They are between 18 and 25. I feel that we will get the best results with that age group.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You want to give them an opportunity to learn French or...

Mr. Justin Morrow: Yes. We are simply an intermediary. We make their task easier by helping them find all the opportunities that are out there for them.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: May I ask you what city you come from?

Mr. Justin Morrow: I come from a small village in Ontario, called Shedden. It is just outside London.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: There are not a lot of francophones in that town.

Mr. Justin Morrow: None. I had not heard a word of French outside the classroom until I turned 22.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I was born in a similar village and I experienced assimilation. You must have experienced the same situation. You are among francophones here.

I do not agree with you. You said that you felt that the celebrations in your village have to be conducted completely in English, because everyone is anglophone there. A number of anglophones have learned a bit of French because of the sports broadcasts on CBC. At one point, CBC was bilingual. We used to watch TV shows like *La famille Plouffe* and sports, including hockey. Sometimes, it was in English, sometimes, it was in French, and I think that, at one point, the broadcast was in French for a while and then in English. It alternated. As a result, the anglophones learned French. As for francophones across Canada, the way they learn English is by listening to it. If we do not give anglophones an opportunity to learn and to listen to the French language, how will they manage to become bilingual?

Mr. Justin Morrow: I think that depends on the type of activity. If we make a presentation and the translation is not available, we are going to try to include as much French as possible.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You are talking about translation, but I think you have to be exposed to the second official language. Francophones are exposed to it. That is the way things work. That is how most young francophones learn English, through music, sports, cinema and so on. We need to try to do this the other way around.

Mr. Justin Morrow: If it is something that lasts all year round, it should be conducted in both official languages, of course. But if it is a specific event... Yes, it is important to have both languages, I am not saying it is not. It would be better to do it in both languages as much as possible. However, I am not sure if it is reasonable to think that every village in the country has someone who speaks French.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I understand, but if you don't have the opportunity to expose anglophones to the French language, that will never happen. If we are trying to have a bilingual country, we have to understand that the way most people gain an appreciation of the other language is by listening to it.

Mr. Justin Morrow: I completely agree with you, but I thought we were talking about the 150th anniversary celebrations, which are going to last longer. The purpose of our organization is to make sure that anglophones are listening to French.

• (1230)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Thank you.

I think my time is up.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Benskin, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): I thank all of you for coming here.

I love discussions and I love debate. I love learning things, and I learned something today, or became more aware of something.

[Translation]

I spoke with Mr. Légère, and this is the first time that I have managed to really understand that Acadians are a different people. Somewhere in my mind, I have always seen francophones outside Quebec as small extensions of Quebec across Canada.

Mr. Légère, it really moves me when you talk about the coming together of Acadians.

[English]

It's a question for both the museum and the association. I've said throughout the discussions, even on heritage, that this is more than a discussion on representation of the language. This is more than a discussion on

[Translation]

the delivery of services in French and in English. It is really a discussion on the celebration of history, cultures and the peoples of Canada. We are talking about Acadians, Quebeckers, anglophones and even the black loyalists who participated in the founding of Canada with the United Empire Loyalists.

[English]

I would ask you, Mr. Légère, to comment on that.

I would also pose a question to the museum.

With the change of title and the change of mandate of the museum, how much energy is going to go toward beginning to reflect the history of Canada, not from the victor's perspective, but as a true representation of what it took to build this country?

[Translation]

Mr. René Légère: I think it's a unique opportunity to celebrate the successes, the journeys, and the accomplishments. Whether it's the Acadians, the Quebecois or the aboriginal nations, we will be able to celebrate Canada's wealth and cultural diversity and take advantage of this 2017 celebration to make people aware of these little stories that people do not know about.

Today, for example, I spoke a little bit about the journey of the Acadians. It's a very important part of Canada's history. I think that, in the context of these celebrations, the events, the activities and the meetings will be a unique opportunity. For example, I'm dreaming of seeing educational exchanges between young people from Lethbridge and Shippagan, in New Brunswick, or between young people from Saskatoon and others from Gaspé. They would first get to know each other better and recognize the diversity that characterizes this country. This celebration could enable us to move past the boundaries we have put up between us and share the success stories. Sharing between the official language communities where this works well, it exists, but we need to be able to acknowledge it and celebrate it.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: That's exactly why we are crossing the country now. We are asking people what they want to find out about their history, about the founding and founding peoples of their country, in this new exhibition. There are two aspects. One is more popular, so our website, round tables, and the kiosk where we meet with average citizens. For the other component, our historians, archeologists, ethnologists and anthropologists cross the country to meet with academics and museologists, in particular, so that they can help us determine exactly what should be represented in this new exhibition that tells the story of Canada.

• (1235)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Chisu.

[*English*]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much.

There are approximately 200,000 new people coming to Canada every year. In the last 15 years, which is approximately half a generation, approximately three million people, or 10% of the population, came in. They are not necessarily bilingual. How are we involving them in the 2017 celebration, and in emphasizing our bilingualism?

[*Translation*]

My question is for all the witnesses.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chisu.

Monsieur Laflamme.

Mr. Guy Laflamme: That's an excellent question, and this is something I had written down for Mr. Trotter's question.

It is important to use 2017 to engage new Canadians, as our country is being enriched by an increased presence of new Canadians. How can we expose new Canadians to our history, our identity, through the celebration in 2017, especially in the capital? The capital is a place where we showcase Canadian history through what the NCC and other federal cultural institutions are doing. We should use the capital as a stage, as an outdoor museum in addition to what's inside our heritage preservation institutions, to celebrate and to showcase our identity.

Surveys have demonstrated that one of the things Canadians are looking for in 2017 is to learn about what we have accomplished, to learn about the greatest Canadian achievements. With new Canadians, this is an opportunity to make them aware of what we have done. I hope you had a chance to see our sound and light show, Mosaika, on Parliament Hill, which pays tribute to the role played by new Canadians throughout history.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: I'm also really pleased that you asked that question.

We have a fantastic program at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, at the Canadian War Museum, and, in fact, in other museums in the national capital and across Canada. If you are a new Canadian, you have access to the museums free of charge for one year. You can visit the museums with your family. You can visit the

exhibits and take part in the special programs we are developing. This is certainly something we will pursue and promote as we move toward 2017.

As well, as I said, when we're in the nine cities across Canada where we're having round table meetings and our kiosk, we also target people who are new immigrants to Canada. We certainly want them to come and interact with us. When they do so, they always do so in both official languages. What we produce and present is always in French and English.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Ms. Friolet-O'Neil, you have the floor.

Ms. Amély Friolet-O'Neil: Obviously, the Acadia that looks to the future, the Acadia of today and the Acadia we want to showcase during the 2017 celebrations is an Acadia that is plural and inclusive. The duration and presence of our communities in the Atlantic region depend in part on the integration of newcomers and immigrants. We have many success stories of people who immigrated to the Atlantic region and who integrated into francophone communities. I think the francophone community, the Acadian community across the Atlantic region, is well aware of the reality that new immigrants face when they decide to settle in our communities, which are increasingly aware of the role they have to play in establishing relationships with these people. Needless to say, when we talk about Acadia at the Société nationale de l'Acadie, we are talking about a more real, inclusive Acadia that includes and welcomes with open arms these new Canadians or new Acadians to our communities.

• (1240)

The Chair: Mr. Doucet, you have the floor.

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet: Good afternoon. I'm Éric Mathieu Doucet, executive director of the Société nationale de l'Acadie. Your question strikes a chord with me because I am married to a newcomer. It's a reality I live with every day.

I'm one of those people who thinks that we are also building our history on a daily basis. Every day, we make decisions that, in 10 or 15 years, will become our history. In my opinion, the 150th anniversary of Confederation is a very important anniversary. In 150 years, we have accomplished a great many things.

It should not just be an occasion to think about the past and what we have accomplished, but to think about the future and what we want to accomplish together. Newcomers are a part of these decisions. Give us the time to think as a group, as Canadians, as members of this great country, about where we want to be in five years, 10 years and 150 years. I think that the contribution of newcomers will be very important in this respect and that this will allow us to build the society we will want to live in.

The Chair: That's great. Thank you.

Mr. Morrow, you have the floor, but briefly.

[English]

Mr. Justin Morrow: New Canadians play a huge role in our country, obviously. This is why we recruited somebody to be on our board of directors to represent new arrivals. We have somebody who has been in our country for two years now. She came in with a totally different mentality from ours. We don't know much about the reality of new arrivals yet. We're still trying to figure out, as an organization, the reality of the French-speaking minorities and the Acadian groups and what is going on in Canada. We want to know that, which is why we included somebody on our board who could tell us what that is.

I also don't think it should necessarily be our responsibility to tell new arrivals what Canadian bilingualism is. I think they have a great idea of what Canadian bilingualism is before they get here, and they are kind of shocked when they arrive because it isn't what they had in mind. I think we should ask them what they think Canadian bilingualism is and how we can become their vision. They think in utopian ways.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Madame Michaud.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you very much.

First, I want to thank you all for your presentations.

I have a few quick questions for Mr. Morrow. I would like to come back to a discussion you started with Mr. Lauzon. Could you clarify your comments? In your presentation, if I understood correctly, you said you would like the national celebrations to be held in English and in French at all times. However, in the provinces, the municipalities, you would be more flexible by requiring that there perhaps only be a mention of linguistic duality or an explanation of duality. Can you elaborate a bit about what you mean?

[English]

Mr. Justin Morrow: If a French-speaking community wants to play a role in their community, whether they're a city, they're a municipality, or what have you, then that should be at the same level as the federal government. Everything should be bilingual. They should work on a way to do that as much as possible.

If there's a community that is 100% anglophone and there are no francophones who will say that they want to be a part of it, that they need to be included in it—for example, where I come from, there's nobody who is going to step up and do that—then there should be something to indicate that if it's not going to be totally bilingual, there needs to be something in there that demonstrates that we're a bilingual country. It could be somebody who speaks French. One of the options could be to have it fully bilingual. It could be somebody who comes and shares their experiences on how important it is to have both languages in our country, on how that duality is reflected and what we can learn from a culture and from our different realities. It could be something along those lines, but something definitely has to touch bilingualism in every single project that takes place across the country.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Yes, that clarifies your position a little more, I think.

Your organization, Canadian Youth for French, was it not invited to appear as part of the study that was done by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and that dealt with the same topic or a similar one?

Mr. Justin Morrow: No, we haven't heard about that.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: At least we have the chance to hear from you today. This also applies to Mr. Légère and Ms. Friolet-O'Neil.

My question is for the representatives from the Société nationale de l'Acadie.

Earlier, in your presentation, you recommended creating a program or a mechanism that would help communities to carry out large-scale activities during the 150th anniversary.

Could you please give us some details about the plan or program that you would like to see adopted?

• (1245)

Mr. René Légère: I'll let Éric Mathieu answer that question.

Mr. Éric Mathieu Doucet: We are thinking of a program that would enable groups and communities that are interested to contribute significantly to the 2017 celebrations, be it in the years leading up to the celebrations or during 2017 itself.

As for the mechanism that would make it possible to take part, a fund and programs could certainly be created. You could specify the main objectives of that. Certain existing programs that already meet these objectives in part could also be improved, but there should be a special envelope for large-scale projects as well.

Since we need to celebrate, there will no doubt be more activities of this type in those years. People need to be able to contribute. It's all well and good for groups to want to contribute, but it's another thing when we're talking about a collective, about families who band together to organize something, to celebrate with people in their region. In those cases, we're talking about people who really believe in it.

People sometimes wonder what the difference is between a chicken and a pig. The chicken contributes to your breakfast, but the pig, the pig is fully invested. It gives its very life. It leaves a part of itself on your plate. We want people to be able to contribute something to the festivities. That's sort of the case with the Société nationale de l'Acadie. We are thinking of organizing a kind of national convention of Acadia to determine what direction we want to take in the coming years as part of a collective Acadian project, what our involvement is in the national identity and how we contribute to collectively moving our country forward.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Thank you very much. I hope you will be heard. It's fairly early in the process. No major plans have really been undertaken at this point. But we hope to be able to include your recommendations in the process.

This question is for the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation.

I went to the website earlier and saw that some interesting things happened as part of the public consultation you're holding. There have already been a wide range of suggestions, including ones involving historical figures that people would like to see in the museum. I was very pleased to see Louis Riel mentioned. Perhaps the names of many patriots will be added in time. I hope you will find an interesting way to highlight their contribution because they are important figures in our history.

You are also trying to increase the accessibility of the information that you want to distribute across the country. Do you have a specific strategy for rural areas?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: In fact, we have this opportunity to do our pan-Canadian tour right now, which is what will help us develop an outreach and interaction strategy with Canadians across Canada.

Ms. Éline Michaud: For the moment, only large municipalities are involved in your tour.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: You are absolutely right. We had to keep with our budget. We were able to visit nine cities. They were easy cities to get to, and were cities where we could reach the maximum number of people. Everyone across Canada has access to our website. That's why we developed it. We wanted to give people in rural communities or in the far north the opportunity to take part in this pan-Canadian consultation.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Perhaps you could add Quebec to your list of cities because...

Ms. Chantal Schryer: We're going there; we're going to Montreal.

Ms. Éline Michaud: It's not the same thing. I'm talking about Quebec City. There are a lot of small, rural communities there, and some of them are anglophone. They are minority communities and deserve to be consulted. I strongly suggest it.

Ms. Chantal Schryer: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

Ms. Bateman, you have the floor.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses.

I have a quick question for Ms. Schryer. First, I would like to thank you for mentioning your travelling exhibitions. That's very important. I am not from Ottawa; I'm from Manitoba. It is very important that we share the experience of museums here across Canada. Do you have any plans for the celebrations, particularly for the very small museums and even for the larger ones?

Ms. Chantal Schryer: That's the case. We are working on two aspects. We are developing partnerships with museums, like I said, across Canada so that they come and present their exhibits with us. We want to offer smaller museums the opportunity to come to us and present the history of their region and their city. We get 1.2 million to 1.3 million visitors a year. That's one part. We are currently in the process of developing a number of partnerships. In addition, presenting our exhibitions in smaller museums across Canada is a priority for us.

For example, we have the *1812* exhibit at the War Museum, but we have also developed two different exhibition formats so that it can be presented in small and medium-sized museums.

We have also created 3D and 2D exhibits that involve a kind of kiosk where the history of the War of 1812 is told. There has been a lot of positive feedback about it. This exhibit is in demand across Canada in the next two years, and we are very proud of that. We plan to do the same thing with all the major exhibits we have between now and 2017 and in time for 2017.

• (1250)

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you.

Mr. Laflamme, you mentioned your responsibility with respect to both official languages at a restaurant that rents one of your buildings. What percentage of your revenue comes from that kind of source? Are we talking about 10%, 2%?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: Rental income is a significant part of the commission's budget. Overall, it's about...

Ms. Diane Dupuis (Senior Vice-President, Public Affairs, Communications and Marketing, National Capital Commission): ...20%.

Mr. Guy Laflamme: About 20% of our revenue comes from rental activities, but not just for restaurant services. That is part of the rental portfolio.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: What is your total budget, approximately?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: The commission's total budget is about \$100 million, and that includes funds from the Treasury Board Secretariat and self-generated amounts.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I've also heard that you mentioned initiatives for artists across Canada. You mentioned artists from various areas of the country. Is that a large part of your expense budget? What is the percentage for artists?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: For all the commemorations, interpretation, major events, we're talking about 25% of the commission's budget, but that percentage doesn't represent what is allocated through contracts with Canadian artists.

Whether it's for events like Canada Day or Winterlude, we need to acknowledge that producing a sound and light show also involves people from the artistic field. For commemorations that we carry out and that involve visual artists, for example the public art program, we are probably talking about 10% to 15% of the budget, whether it is performance art or visual arts that are involved.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Dionne Labelle.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

My questions are mostly for the representatives from the National Capital Commission.

I must admit that, before being elected, I did not come to Ottawa regularly. However, I have been struck by the poor level of bilingual services offered to unilingual francophones arriving in Ottawa. I looked at where the Commissioner of Official Languages went, which is in his most recent report, and I saw that his path looked a little like mine. He went to the Byward Market, the Rideau Centre and Sparks Street. He observed that 74% of restaurants or people who offered services could not do so in French and, in the case of restaurants, the menus were not bilingual.

You made a commitment to require certain provisions with lease renewals. Can you explain to us what these provisions are and how they will be applied?

●(1255)

Mr. Guy Laflamme: That is an excellent question. I must point out that the commissioner applauded the level of bilingualism for services provided by commission staff, namely, 100%, and the very high level of active bilingualism of those same employees.

As for public establishments that have leases with the commission, we conduct checks with them every three months. The company that takes care of the maintenance and management of these rental buildings on behalf of the commission is required to do the checks. Should signage and service obligations not be met, a verbal warning is given. Then, a written warning is provided. If they still do not comply, the requirements are increased.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Are these requirements in the lease?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: Yes. There are clauses in the leases. I would be pleased to provide you with a copy of one.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Could you also send us the outcome of those inspections, so that we can see how the application of these clauses develops?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: We have seen an improvement, but I'll be honest that there is still progress to be made. The commission considers it a very important issue.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: If you could submit that information to our committee, we will take a look at it.

Mr. Guy Laflamme: No problem.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: We spoke about tenants of government buildings, but let's talk about private companies now.

An initiative from 2000 aims to raise awareness among private companies, restaurant owners and hotel owners about linguistic duality and offering services in French.

Where is this project at? To what extent is the private sector working with you?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: Together with the Coalition of Businesspeople, we are going to encourage groups to use translation services, which can be supported by the Coalition of Businesspeople. You spoke about private sector organizations, but the ones holding events in the region on commission land, especially for the 2017 celebrations, are also important players. Still, there is a clause in black and white in the agreement for using our land. Under that clause, the signage and services of those organizations must be bilingual.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: That is sort of what I was wondering. Thousands and thousands of tourists will invade Ottawa for the 150th anniversary, and a good number of them will be francophones.

How do you intend to respond to this increased demand for services in French? Are you going to hire more bilingual employees? What is the plan? Do you need financial resources or are you able to operate with the resources that you have?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: In our case, I think that we can have a big impact when we show the advantages of providing bilingual services. We have best practices, and we show leadership with stakeholders to influence them, among other things, in the tourism industry in the region.

Of course, Canadian Heritage also plays a role in that respect, by providing support to the Coalition of Businesspeople in the funding of translation services.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Will you be able to deal with the increased demand for services in French?

Mr. Guy Laflamme: For interaction with the organizations that are in our buildings or that use our property, we are able to manage that demand. As for an increased demand that would put pressure on the Coalition of Businesspeople, that would come under the Department of Heritage.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Thank you to the witnesses for their testimonies.

I have four quick things to say.

First, our next meeting, on Thursday, will take place in Centre Block because we need to make sure it is accessible to all our MPs.

Second, representatives from CBC/Radio-Canada told me that they will not be available as witnesses. So, they will provide us with a written brief. They are currently before the CRTC to renew their mandate. They don't have enough resources to appear before us, which is why they will give a written brief.

●(1300)

Mr. Yvon Godin: They only need to bring the president. He isn't before the CRTC, so he can come.

[*English*]

The Chair: They don't have the resources to prepare a full briefing for us in front of the committee, so I think we need to let them give us a written submission. I can understand it's been all-consuming. They've been in front of the committee for weeks now for their mandate, so they are very much consumed with that.

If you demand, and if the committee wants to, I will demand that they appear, but I think to be accommodating to them—

Mr. Yvon Godin: I think they should, really, because this is public broadcasting and they play a big role in it. I honestly believe that.

The Chair: What would the committee like to do?

I could go back to them and demand that they come, but they are really, really stretched. They've been appearing in front of the commission for weeks with respect to their mandate renewal, which happens once every five years or so. They've told me they are stretched and that they are going to have difficulty coming in front of our committee.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Would they be available in a month, towards the end of our study?

The Chair: Our study finishes on December 4. They're available at the end of January, early February, if it's the wish of the committee to extend the study.

Is it the wish of the committee to extend the study?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Maybe not extend it, but maybe when we come back, they could come for our first meeting and it would be part of our study we do at the committee.

The Chair: Is it the wish of the committee to have
[*Translation*]

CBC/Radio-Canada before us at the end of January, so at the first meeting? Is that what the committee would like? Yes.

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. I will invite them to come at the end of January for our first meeting back.

[*Translation*]

Third, briefly, we need another meeting for our study. Our study finishes on December 4, but we need to hear from Parks Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission. Otherwise, I won't have enough time for those two witnesses.

Would the committee like to have another meeting on December 6 to hear from those two witnesses? Okay.

Four, the minister will be able to discuss the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages. He's available on Wednesday, December 12 in the afternoon. It would be after question period. Is that okay?

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay, I'll invite him for that date.

Without further ado, this meeting is adjourned.

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