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—
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The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (1530)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages on Wednesday, December 12, 2012. Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are here to study the Canadian Heritage Official Languages Annual Report 2010-2011. Minister Moore is with us, and he is joined by two officials from the Department of Canadian Heritage: Mr. Jean and Mr. Lussier.

Welcome, everyone.

We will start with Minister Moore.

Mr. Godin, go ahead.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Chair, I just want to advise you that we want to introduce two motions. The first motion is as follows:

That the committee invite the Chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Jean-Pierre Blais, for a two-hour public and televised meeting before March 30, 2013, regarding the CRTC's obligations under the Official Languages Act.

The second motion reads as follows:

That the Committee invite the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Hon. Jason Kenney, for a two-hour public and televised meeting before March 30, 2013, regarding his department's obligations under the Official Languages Act.

We are submitting copies in both official languages.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin. We will discuss those two motions when we return at the end of January. Is that satisfactory?

Mr. Yvon Godin: That is fine, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Minister Moore, the floor is yours.

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members of the committee. I am very pleased to be appearing before you today, just before Christmas. I am here for two hours, or until we are called to vote.

First, I would like to acknowledge the work of this committee, particularly the report you tabled on November 8, regarding the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. This is an important document that will be useful in our work on official languages.

Accompanying me today are Daniel Jean, Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage and Hubert Lussier, Assistant Deputy Minister for Official Languages.

[English]

Our government's commitment to promoting our two official languages is indeed a commitment that we have made time and again, and we've delivered on.

As you know, in terms of area, Canada is the second largest country in the world, but in terms of population, Canada is the 34th largest country in the world. What unites us? In my view, it's our official languages, arts, culture—being able to share our stories and our history, to tell stories one to another across this very large country.

Our official languages are an advantage and an asset to Canadians and to Canada. That's why in budget 2012 our government made a decision to protect all of our funding and to celebrate Canada's linguistic duality going forward. We did this while making sure that the investments give tangible results to Canadians.

Again, in a difficult budget, where there were reductions in spending across the government, we made a deliberate decision not to cut a dime of funding to Canada's official languages, because we made a five-year commitment to a road map on official languages, a road map that this committee has been studying for some time.

Recently I released our department's annual report on official languages in order to continue the debate.

[Translation]

As I noted in the report, the Department of Canadian Heritage manages two major official languages support programs: one for the development of official language minority communities, and the other for the promotion of English and French in Canadian society.

Our actions under these programs are yielding genuine results. Here are a few examples.

More than 240,000 young people from official language minority communities are studying in their own language and 2.4 million young people are learning English or French as a second language. Enrollment in French immersion classes has increased by 10% over the last five years

We are helping to ensure that members of official language minority communities receive services in areas such as justice, culture, municipal services, and health. For example, 15 new healthcare training programs in French have been created since 2008, and, of more than 1,500 new alumni, 86% are working in official language minority communities.

[English]

In terms of immigration, the recruitment and integration of French-speaking immigrants initiative has established 121 points of service for newcomers in 24 cities across Canada.

Our funding also helps support the work that is being done by minority media groups, community centres and schools, youth and parental organizations across the country, as well as various cultural groups that help to promote English and French.

The annual report also outlines my role in helping to coordinate official languages across federal government institutions. All of these institutions have responsibilities with respect to official language communities and linguistic duality.

My department works with institutions across government to ensure that anglophone and francophone communities receive access to programs and services in the language of their choice, services in such areas as culture, social development, youth programming, and economic development.

• (1535)

[Translation]

As you know, we are preparing for the next phase of the roadmap, which concludes in March 2013.

During my appearance before your committee last May, I was preparing, along with my colleagues, to lead the largest consultation on official languages in the history of Canada. In the summer, we visited over 20 large and small communities throughout the country, and along with our online component, we heard from close to 2,600 Canadians. Today, I am pleased to be able to give the committee an update on what I heard during these consultations.

From these consultations, I was able to hear from both English- and French-speaking Canadians about their experiences. I heard that education is a priority for communities. Many participants stressed the importance of cooperation with the provinces and territories for teaching English and French as a second language. In addition, I heard that immigration is an important matter in any discussion of minority-community growth.

[English]

As you know, Statistics Canada recently released data regarding the linguistic makeup of our country. We can see that the proportion of Canadians who have English and French as their mother tongue has decreased, even though their numbers are growing. New Canadians with another mother tongue represent a larger part of the general population than ever before. We must consider how to integrate recent immigrants into their new setting so that they can succeed and benefit from the economic advantages of Canada's linguistic duality.

Canadians also reminded me that it's important for them to have access to health care in their own language. They also brought up the subject, time and again, of arts and culture. Through their activity, our artists and artisans showcase their communities to Canada and the world and help build a sense of belonging and an understanding of the value of both of Canada's official languages.

Finally, participants addressed the issue of economic development. They were interested in support for entrepreneurship, funding for the creative economy, and training to make it easier to get a job in the official language of their choice.

In the past five years, our government's funding under the road map has helped to promote our two official languages and to support the growth of English and French in minority communities across Canada.

Our government's aim is to ensure that our funding continues to yield real, tangible benefits to communities and to ensure that our funding helps promote both of our official languages. In our next road map, we will make sure that we manage the initiatives as effectively as possible.

[Translation]

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words about the committee's current study: linguistic duality during Canada's 150th birthday celebrations in 2017.

Our country's official languages are an integral part of our collective heritage. They must also be part of the planning for anniversaries of national significance. In fact, we are already benefiting from the experience that we gained in recent years, whether during the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City in 2008 or the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler.

[English]

We are also encouraging the use of both of our official languages at events taking place between now and 2017.

For example, in 2015 Canada will host the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in Toronto. The organizers are already working with the francophone community to ensure that the games reflect Canada's linguistic duality and do so respectfully and with pride.

In 2017, Canada's 150th birthday will be a great opportunity for us to highlight the contribution of anglophones and francophones, past and present, to building our country to the strength that it is today.

I want to thank you for your attention and thank this committee for its work.

As well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me.

Like all of you, we want to ensure that the government measures and our funding have real, direct, and tangible success for Canadians across our country in respecting, celebrating, and promoting both of Canada's official languages.

Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Moore.

We have about one hour and 45 minutes for questions and comments.

We will start with Mr. Godin.

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

I would like to welcome Minister Moore to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

My first question is about Bill C-419. I am pleased that the government has changed its approach and that it has now recognized that skill in both official languages is essential for certain positions, specifically for agents of Parliament.

Mr. Minister, we remember clearly that you do not support this bill. You have even said that it is useless.

Do you think that our bill is useless, yes or no?

• (1540)

Hon. James Moore: My first reaction was to say that the bill was not necessarily useful, because, when filling these positions, government policy already provides for a search for candidates with whom each member of Parliament would be able to speak the official language of his or her choice. It is already government policy, so supporting this bill does not mean a great deal.

Mr. Yvon Godin: How can you say that it is government policy, when the government has appointed a unilingual anglophone who was forced to promise to learn French in one year, but who has not done so? If it is government policy, why not redo the process and look for a candidate who speaks both languages, in order to comply with official language rules? That is the reason why this bill was introduced.

Canadian Heritage is supposed to play a coordinating role and to encourage federal institutions to implement section 41 of Part VII of the Official Languages Act. But in recent months, we have seen federal institutions make decisions that seem to go against section 41, such as the closure of Fishery and Oceans' only French-language library at the Institut Maurice-Lamontagne, the closure of the only bilingual search and rescue centre in Canada, located in Quebec City, Industry Canada's broken promise to establish an official languages committee in companies under federal jurisdiction in Quebec. The government actually promised to establish a committee after the New Democratic Party tabled a bill. In addition, there have been cuts at Radio-Canada.

Is Canadian Heritage overseeing the budget cuts in other departments? What do you do when institutions make their cuts and close places of work without evaluating the consequences for official languages of doing so?

Hon. James Moore: As the official opposition's spokesman on official languages, you should understand the Official Languages Act better. It says that each department is responsible for making sure that compliance with the Official Languages Act is required in all programs and policies implemented across the country. As to the library, the changes we have made to the policies do not mean that we have failed in our commitment to official languages. We have fulfilled it differently. It does not mean that we have put an end to our commitment to comply with the Official Languages Act.

You mentioned Radio-Canada. Have you read their plan for 2015?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes, we can see the cuts.

Hon. James Moore: So you will have understood that one of the five paths laid out in their 2015 plan is to fully comply with their official language obligations in every region of the country, on each

of its electronic platforms and on each of its radio and television platforms. There will be radio and television broadcasting in every region of the country in both official languages. There are no cuts to that aspect.

You talk about Radio-Canada as if it were an example of an alleged failure on our part to fulfill our obligations on official languages. That is not the case at all. The fact is that Radio-Canada has set itself a new commitment for 2015. Its five-year plan is to be a public broadcaster that enjoys real success in protecting, promoting and celebrating Canada's two official languages in each one of its programming vehicles and in every region of the country. It is a real success.

Ask Hubert Lacroix, the president, to come before this committee to present his 2015 plan to you. If you get around to reading it, you will see that it is a real success story for Canada's official languages.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We are going to ask SRC representatives to come and meet with us. The fact remains that Radio-Canada is living with cuts it was told it had to live with. It is no coincidence that no national news comes from Newfoundland and Labrador or from Vancouver. The cuts have affected a number of things in the trenches, especially the journalists.

This is the national news we are listening to. Just go to the CRTC hearings. At those hearings, the Société nationale de l'Acadie, and all the other francophone groups in Canada have come to say so.

Perhaps we are not on the same planet. Sincerely, I am telling you what is happening back home. Just think of the number of times complaints have been laid. Of course, you will reply that it is because of Radio-Canada's programming. But Radio-Canada has a national mandate, and the complaints keep coming. The SRC's response is that it does not have the money because of the cuts and that it is being forced to ask if it can start looking for sponsors, which would make things even worse. This is because of the cuts that were forced onto Radio-Canada.

• (1545)

Hon. James Moore: That is ridiculous. What crisis are you talking about? As for advertising, it is up to the CRTC to decide whether there will be advertising or not. The request is coming from Radio-Canada. They are doing their homework and there is a study about it.

Listen, there is no crisis. The SRC has not closed a single studio, anywhere in the country. The SRC is completely protecting its ability to fulfill its mandate in both official languages. There is no reduction in its ability to fulfill its mandate, on radio, on television or online, with new electronic media applications. Actually, the SRC is expanding its capacity. There are no cuts to those aspects.

Look at Radio-Canada's plan for 2015. I ask you to do that because it is a significant approach that points the way to success in the future. Ask Hubert Lacroix to come here and explain it to you.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Let us go back to the matter of the maritime search and rescue centre in Quebec City. It is being transferred to Halifax and to Trenton. But it was the only bilingual centre of its kind in Canada. Are you going to tell us once more that everything is fine and that you are fulfilling your commitment differently?

Hon. James Moore: Well...

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. James Moore: Each department has to comply with the Official Languages Act and provide services in Canada's two official languages. That is the law. The fact that departments do things differently from the way they once did does not mean they are not going to comply with the act.

The Chair: Thank you.

Your turn, Mr. Gourde.

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

My thanks to the minister, the deputy minister and Mr. Lussier for being here this afternoon.

Mr. Minister, in your remarks, you mentioned that more than 240,000 young people from official language minority communities are studying in their own language, that 2.4 million young people are learning English or French as a second language and that enrollment in French immersion classes has increased by 10% over the last five years.

Is it possible for you or your officials to tell us which province has seen the greatest increase in its enrollment?

Also, are there examples that could be used to increase the enrollment in the other provinces?

Hon. James Moore: I have the figures here for each of the provinces. As you know, we work with the provinces and territories, and we have agreements with them. We have a five-year agreement under which we made a commitment to provide more money so that they can meet the expectations in education and increase the number of students who study in the official languages.

I have the numbers here.

[English]

From 2007 to 2008 in Saskatchewan, for example, they increased the number of students enrolled in intensive French and enhanced French from 400 students to almost 800, so there's been a doubling of those students in Saskatchewan.

In New Brunswick we've increased it by 36% in 2007-08 to 70% this year. It's gone from 36% to 70% of grade 10 students who are achieving oral proficiency in intermediate programs.

In Nova Scotia there's been an increase from 77% in 2008 to 85% in 2012 of students from grades 6 to 9 who are succeeding in their provincial assessments in French as their second language.

In Ontario we've added new preschool day care places in French-language schools. We've increased the number by over 1,100 new spaces.

In the province of Quebec there's been an increase in the number of community learning centres that are offering educational opportunities for kids.

Education is increasing. French immersion enrolment in English Canada has gone up 10% since our government came into office. What's really going to be essential as we move forward, as we see the Stats Canada numbers.... I think everybody in this committee is quite familiar with the numbers. In 2001, if memory serves, 4.4% of Canadians outside the province of Quebec were francophone first. In 2006 it had gone to 4.2%, and in the most recent numbers it was at 4%. However, the number of Canadians who speak more than one language is growing by a large number.

In terms of the best way for this country to continue to be a country that has English- and French-speaking Canadians both, in all regions of this country, in my view there are two main avenues to achieve that ultimate goal.

One is to have a larger focus by provincial and federal governments, but mainly provinces. We can use the investments we have, as the federal government, as a fulcrum to leverage for better outcomes on education. We have to ensure that we have an effective education system that is teaching more young Canadians, especially in English Canada, the value of learning and speaking quality French in this country.

The second-best way, that works in parallel with that, is to ensure that Canada is seen as a country that is welcoming immigrants who speak French to this country.

You know, Canada is the only country in the G-8 that had a net increase in inflows of immigrants during the recession. Every other country in the world reduced its immigration inflows. As you know, in many countries in the world, including the United States, there's a very aggressive anti-immigration political movement. In Canada we don't have that. We don't have that tradition. It doesn't exist in any of our political parties in Canada, that anti-immigration sentiment. That's an incredible benefit for this country, because Canadians realize the importance of immigration to our economic and social well-being.

For the purposes of national unity, for the purposes of official languages, it is critical for this country that we educate young Canadians in the value of learning both of Canada's official languages and that we have a welcoming immigration system, so that when new Canadians come to this country, we're attracting new immigrants who speak French and who can fully realize their professional capacities in the official language of their choice.

I think for every political party in the last campaign, part of their platform talked about how to best integrate new Canadians into the workforce. The truth is that the biggest barrier for any new Canadian in having full access to all the opportunities of Canadian society is not credential recognition, it's the language barrier. And if there's a language barrier between French immigrants to having access to Canadian society because of their capacity to speak French, that's a barrier that we should be tackling more aggressively as a country.

For those new Canadians who are coming here from Rwanda, who are coming here from the entire family of the Francophonie, we want to make sure that they have the opportunity, if they move to Edmonton or to Vancouver, to have upward mobility in the Canadian economy. We want to make sure that the language barrier of Canada's official languages is a barrier that is smaller and smaller as we move forward.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Do I still have time?

The Chair: You have a minute and a half.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: So I have time to ask another question.

Mr. Minister, you said that 15 new health training programs offered in French have been created since 2008 for minority language communities. You also said that 86% of the 1,500 new graduates work in official language minority communities. Could you tell me which provinces and communities have benefited more from that?

Hon. James Moore: We might have to come back to this issue, since I only have 10 seconds to answer.

Health was the topic of a round table that travelled across the country. There were major differences from one region to another. A large number of new students who went to school for their profession in the other language are primarily in New Brunswick and Ontario, where demand is strong.

Because of the various needs and obligations that provincial governments have, the policies, requests and expectations on the ground vary greatly from region to region. It is not surprising that there are many more requests in New Brunswick and Ontario than in the rest of Canada. For instance, in Vancouver, French is the eighth or ninth spoken language. Demand for health services in French is much lower than it is in Fredericton, Moncton or here, in the national capital region. So there are considerable differences in the number of requests and the expectations of the federal and provincial governments.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dion, the floor is yours.

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

Thank you for joining us, Mr. Minister. My thanks to Mr. Jean and Mr. Lussier as well.

First, Mr. Minister, could you tell us what your intentions are with respect to the Language Technologies Research Centre?

Hon. James Moore: I do not have any information on that issue.

Have there been changes in our policy?

Mr. Hubert Lussier (Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Heritage, Department of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Dion is probably referring to the research centre at the Université du Québec en Outaouais...

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Yes.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: ...and its employees were relocated to the National Research Council of Canada. To my knowledge, their roles have not changed within the National Research Council. Just the location changed.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Actually, the centre is still at the university. The fact is that you are taking away the National Research Council and the Translation Bureau, thereby leaving the centre only. The centre is supported by the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality.

What are your intentions? Will you withdraw from this centre, which is very important for reducing translation and training costs in the long term, allowing us to have a bilingual country?

• (1555)

Hon. James Moore: No, we are going to continue to provide services and make investments to protect essential services so that the government can do its job.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Will you do so through this centre or something else? What do you have in mind?

Hon. James Moore: We will see. I am not aware of any major changes in our intentions or in the services provided by the institutions.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Minister, I would encourage you to look into that issue. I think that this is an excellent centre that does its job very well. It seems to me that bringing everything to Ottawa is a big mistake. Pay very close attention to what the centre is saying.

The co-operative development initiative is a program that you have cut. Have you looked at the ensuing impact on francophone co-operatives outside Quebec?

Hon. James Moore: Are you talking about the changes made to human resources?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I am talking about the co-operative development initiative. You are responsible for all that. You coordinate those programs.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, but I am not the minister of all departments and all programs. Each minister in the government has responsibilities to assume. In terms of co-operatives, I know that Mr. Bélanger asked a question like that in the House. I also understand that there is an agreement between the province and the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development to be able to provide those services.

Some programs probably yield very good results and have very fine objectives for the official languages and the communities. But the government has some choices to make. I am sure that Ms. Finley and the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development have a very effective and responsible approach toward young people and co-operatives, as far as official languages and our social obligations are concerned.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Yes, but if you are not keeping an eye on that, if you take it for granted, you might have some very unpleasant surprises. That is what is happening right now with a Franco-Ontarian group that launched a co-operative. This group does not have access to co-operative development in French; it is thousands of kilometres away. If the minister makes a decision without thinking about that, it is up to you to ensure that the department is aware of the consequences.

Hon. James Moore: I do not agree with you. I am sure that you don't really know whether Ms. Finley has looked at that or not.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I see the results, Mr. Minister. I see that you are not in the loop and that you are assuming that the people from the department will take care of it. But you must not take that for granted.

Mr. Moore, when I was a minister, we had a committee and all the ministers had to show up one after the other. We could see all the decisions they were making and the ensuing consequences.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, but you cannot say that there were no complaints at that time.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, but we...

Hon. James Moore: That is not fair.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, but the complaints were forwarded to my office and I would send them to the ministers. So why don't you talk to Ms. Finley about the impact on francophone co-operatives? I feel it's your duty.

Now, if we look at all the...

Hon. James Moore: Before you say that she is not doing her job, that she is not protecting the interests of young people and co-operatives, and that official languages are being affected, it would be a good idea to go and ask her yourself about this issue and ask her to appear as a witness before the committee to discuss every aspect of the programming on co-operatives. It is a...

[English]

cheap shot

[Translation]

...to say that she is not doing her job.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I...

Hon. James Moore: I can assure you that this is not the case.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Minister, I did not say that she was not doing her job, but I see that you have not checked whether she is or not. I see that you take it for granted that she is doing her job. So you are the one not doing your job.

Hon. James Moore: That is absolutely not true. You are a former minister, and your government delegated that responsibility to the departments. You seem to think that it is my duty, as the minister responsible for official languages, to police all my cabinet colleagues and that I should hit them with a stick if they aren't doing their job. Yet you are the one who implemented this policy. Are you not supporting this policy that you yourself have implemented?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I was the coordinator. My responsibility was to ensure that, when decisions were made, neither francophones nor anglophones in Quebec were affected. That is also your responsibility. It is in the job description.

Hon. James Moore: No doubt.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: You cannot say that it is the minister's role, but that you are not doing anything about it. In terms of co-operatives, could you tell us what exactly you have done to protect communities?

Hon. James Moore: But it's your policy.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: You were not even aware of the problem, and you said that the minister must have done a good job.

Hon. James Moore: But it is your policy. You are the one who decided...

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Yes, but it takes a minister to implement the policy.

Hon. James Moore: I am doing my job and I can assure you...

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, you are not. You were not even aware of this.

Hon. James Moore: Listen, our government spends \$275 billion every year...

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Okay, I was getting to the figures, Mr. Minister. Let's talk about them now...

Hon. James Moore: I hope you don't want to go over every penny we spend and its impact on official languages. Look, I am doing my job. The Department of Canadian Heritage spends \$2.8 billion every year. We have made an unprecedented commitment to official languages. I am very proud and very confident...

● (1600)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Let's talk about this unprecedented commitment, Mr. Minister...

Hon. James Moore: Absolutely. I am very proud to be able to say that, as part of the 2012 budget, which you have voted down, we are the only government—unlike your government—to make the decision, at a time of global economic crisis, which has certainly affected Canada,...

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Minister is taking up all the time I have, Mr. Chair. He is being rude.

Hon. James Moore: ...to continue to make unprecedented investments.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Minister is not letting me continue with my questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: That is his strategy. It is clear as day.

The Chair: Okay, Mr. Dion.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: May I continue, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Dion, you have one minute to ask another question. Go ahead.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Thank you.

Now that we were able to see how little you know about the trees, let us look at the forest.

You just said that no cuts have been made. In current dollars, considering the cost of inflation, the development of the official language minority communities program was at \$238 million four years ago, and it has dropped to \$233 million. The enhancement of official languages program was at \$358 million four years ago, and it has decreased to \$340 million. And that's before the cuts and the budget plan, which is asking you to come up with \$106 million.

Are you going to stop making cuts or, given the \$106 million that you have to come up with in the next three years, are you going to further drain those two programs?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dion.

Please be brief, Mr. Minister.

Hon. James Moore: You are clearly playing with the numbers, because you are not including the other official languages programs that the government has developed. You are playing with the numbers.

I can tell you that the government has made a decision. Our roadmap was a five-year agreement, and we are going to keep that commitment. Yes, our roadmap included various commitments, but they were short-term programs coming to an end. However, our investment in the roadmap will continue for five years, and I can tell you that this represents a 30% increase compared to what you had invested when you were Minister of Official Languages. I am proud of this, because it is better.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Trottier, you have the floor.

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

Thank you for joining us today, Mr. Minister.

You spoke earlier about immigration. As an MP for Toronto, I am very interested in this issue. As you know, waves of immigrants come to Toronto from all over the world and, as a result, the make-up of the city is constantly changing.

You said that you made it possible to establish 121 points of service for newcomers in 24 cities across Canada. I know that this issue has to do with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, but could you or your officials tell us which countries most French-speaking immigrants come from? We see them especially in downtown Toronto, but also in the suburbs. Could you maybe describe those communities and tell us which provinces they settle in?

Hon. James Moore: New francophone immigrants come from the big Francophonie family. As you know, they have very diverse backgrounds. They come from all over the world, including Belgium, Switzerland, Rwanda and the Ivory Coast. The services that we provide across Canada reflect this great diversity.

When I organized a round table in Edmonton, the community from francophone Africa was in very good shape. They had access to many programs and organizations on the ground that were providing services to new immigrants.

When immigrants come to Canada, francophone officials are not the only ones to greet them. There are also people who have come here recently and who receive subsidies from the Government of Canada. Those people can tell newcomers about their personal experiences and what has worked for them. The goal is for new immigrants to be able to see their future in Canada with confidence.

Perhaps Hubert could give you the figures for the various countries which we have commitments with. As you know, we have many humanitarian commitments with Haiti and the Congo, for

instance. Many new francophone Canadians come from those countries.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: I don't have the most recent figures. It's Citizenship and Immigration Canada that could actually give them to you. Off the top of my head, I know that, for a few years, the largest contingents came from France, Haiti and Congo, but not necessarily in that order.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: As you know, Mr. Minister, we used the most recent version of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality for several months. One of the problems it was supposed to resolve was coordination between departments.

Could you please tell us how the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality helped improve coordination among the various government departments?

• (1605)

Hon. James Moore: Well, this is the best approach we have known. I'm coming back a bit to the context of Mr. Dion's question. In the past, only one minister was responsible for official languages. Like a police officer, that minister had to be aggressive toward his colleagues in the Cabinet. The Liberal government at the time decentralized the minister's responsibilities. Our government integrated these changes, and now the deputy ministers of the departments commit to speaking regularly about their obligations under the Official Languages Act in order to achieve genuine results for the francophone communities.

Daniel Jean, who is on this committee, could perhaps tell you about the meetings. Our government is committed to adopting this decentralized approach, but there is coordination among the departments. It's an effective and responsible approach.

Mr. Daniel Jean (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): We look at the objectives we are trying to achieve in the various aspects of the official languages program, whether it is health, education or something else. We have very specific objectives and evaluation processes. When the results are good, we want to continue our efforts. If adjustments are needed, each department makes them in accordance with its responsibilities. We do follow-up through the horizontal coordination of the department.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: It's not just coordination that's required or desirable; it's now in the structure of things.

Could you describe the structural changes that have taken place in the past few years that aim to ensure the linguistic duality obligations are met?

Mr. Daniel Jean: The Department of Canadian Heritage acts as a secretariat. We receive the results. There's coordination between the departments with respect to the results of the various programs.

As for our annual report and the consultation between departments, as you know, in the past, we asked 33 institutions to report. But that has changed over the past year. Now, all the institutions are required to report. Among those, 28 have a particularly important mandate. In the past, the 33 institutions were required to report, but now they must all produce a report on what they are doing to promote official languages.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lauzon, you have the floor.

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

I'd like to welcome the minister.

You said that funding for the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality had increased by 30%. Unless I'm mistaken, the number of Canadians who are bilingual is at its highest in five years. Is there a link between the increased funds and the country's increased level of bilingualism?

Hon. James Moore: We could say that's the case.

The number of Canadians who speak more than one language is increasing, but the ability of Canadians to speak in both of Canada's official languages is decreasing in parts of the country. It's certainly a concern. That's why I think immigration and education are the future. We want to talk about the need to speak both official languages, and not necessarily just to the Canadian adults of today.

The ability to speak several languages develops when we are young. It's critical to have a much more effective education system to improve the delivery of services and programming for children in immersion. Over the past 17 years in British Columbia, there has been a steady increase in the number and percentage of students enrolled in French immersion programs. There are very good examples of success across the country.

But it's difficult to encourage this type of thing without coordination with the provinces. It's difficult because the provinces must themselves juggle budget cuts and financial difficulties. The health care system in particular is costing more and more across Canada. Every one of us, regardless of our political affiliation, province or region we come from, must continue to champion official languages. The federal government must encourage the provinces to develop a serious approach toward Canada's two official languages and invest in them through policies it will be responsible for coordinating with them.

As you know, our young people are very successful when they can speak English and French.

• (1610)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I agree with you. From experience, I know it is easier to learn a language when you are young. The younger you are, the easier it is to learn a language.

You spoke about the situation in British Columbia. Here in Ontario, there aren't enough spots in schools that offer immersion programs. Is there any way to encourage the provinces to offer more spots? The parents are quite involved. In the chair's riding, the immersion rate is limited to 25%. If the rate could be 50%, or even 75%, Canada could one day be fully bilingual, don't you think?

Hon. James Moore: I'm sure you'll agree with me. Mr. Dion and Mr. Chong are former ministers of Intergovernmental Affairs, and Mr. Godin has a lot of experience on Parliament Hill. After 12 years as an MP, I am seeing more and more that we are developing an expertise in other levels of government, and they are developing an expertise in ours. We are experts in what the provinces and cities should do, and the other way around.

This is what happens in public life, and we certainly need to respect it. We can discuss and work with the provinces, but it's up to them to make their choices, taking into account their obligations, their needs, their concerns and their difficulties, day after day. I am sure that it's much more complicated than we realize. As we have done in the past, the only thing we can do, aside from our five-year agreements on education, is to work with them, speak with them and work with organizations like Canadian Parents for French and other organizations that have been successful to encourage them to continue what they're doing and to help young people become champions by creating opportunities to learn French.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Benskin, you have the floor.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Thank you.

I'd like to welcome Mr. Moore, Mr. Jean and Mr. Lussier. It's always a pleasure to see you.

As you know, this committee recently published a study on the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada is asking the government to respond to the entire report, instead of just the recommendations. Is that something we are going to ask the minister about?

Hon. James Moore: You can ask, but I can honestly tell you that our answer will be our next roadmap. I sincerely appreciate the work that your committee did, in a non-partisan way. We will certainly have a response. But our real response is our next roadmap. That's our government's policy. That's our approach. The fact that, as part of these consultations, the Minister of Official Languages visited every region of the country was, as I said, unprecedented.

Keep in mind, too, that the 2008-2013 roadmap was drafted after Ms. Verner, the former Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, asked Bernard Lord to hold consultations. He held five. They were excellent. Some very good ideas came out of them. He organized five round tables across the country and wrote a report. The roadmap was established in the wake of that report. My commitment was the 22 round tables that were held. The roadmap will be based on those consultations, on what this committee has done and on the ideas of people on the Hill.

I also met with Marie-France Kenny last week, in a meeting in my office, here on the Hill. Her ideas are great and she is very committed. She defends her points of view most energetically. We agree on the vast majority of the topics and needs concerning in the next roadmap. I am sure that she'll be quite happy with the policies in our next roadmap.

• (1615)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

It's very important to me that an in-depth answer be provided.

[English]

Moving on to arts and culture, the arts and cultural sector was an important part of the road map, and the cultural development fund expires in March 2013. Now, as I understand it, the Canada interactive fund has been eliminated. What kind of commitment can you give that arts and culture will be supported strongly within the next road map?

The second part of that question is whether access to arts and cultural funding within the anglophone community in Quebec will be a little more open. Some of the programs that were available were so specific that the average theatre company, for example, couldn't access those funds, and by the very nature of their existence in Quebec they are promoting and supporting the English language. It's a two-part question.

Hon. James Moore: There are a couple of very good points to keep in mind about this. You are right that arts and culture will be part of the next road map. I can tell you that. It's a commitment I've made to communities around the country. I found when I did round tables across the country that when we added that fifth pillar into the road map, specifically with regard to arts and culture....

As a young anglophone British Columbian trying to learn French in B.C., I had difficulties because as soon as I left the classroom, everything was English. When you leave the classroom and you actually have French experiences in film and the performing arts and music and so on, those enrich your capacity, your understanding, and your ability to properly learn French and to have a proper context for it. Also better than that is being able to appreciate not just the French language but the French language within a Canadian context, a Canadian history context, whether of Acadians or Quebeckers or Franco-Manitobans, people who are proud of the French fact and proud of the French fact within their context. Expressing that in a cultural way is very important.

So to your first point, yes, arts and culture will be part of the next road map as well, and those investments were really important. I've heard again and again that the *vitruines musicales* was a very popular component.

Mr. Chair, I know I have to move on, but this is an important part. The second part deals with funding of anglophone arts and culture in the province of Quebec. This is a concern that has been raised again and again. It's not just something we as a government are aware of and try to support and appreciate in our own funding models within the Department of Heritage. Obviously, we try to have an open application process for people to apply for funding. It's also an important component of the Canada Council for the Arts as well.

As you know, the Canada Council receives \$181 million a year from the Government of Canada, but we need to make sure that all of our cultural organizations are open to people receiving money for the first time. Very often, cultural organizations from the Government of Canada and the provinces get entrenched in giving the money to the people who have always received the money and do not tweak terms and conditions in order to open things up so that new entrants in the cultural marketplace have access to funding for the first time. We have to make sure there's that rejuvenation of our ability to provide funds to cultural organizations that are often just starting up.

In the province of Quebec, I have to say, there has been a push in order for the Government of Canada to have an agreement with the Province of Quebec to just give the Province of Quebec money. I have a problem with that, because I don't think the diversity of voices in the cultural communities will get a fair hearing and access to funding if the Government of Canada is not there to ensure that fair access.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister.

Mr. Chisu.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Minister, thank you for appearing before the committee.

I'm a new Canadian. My mother tongues are Hungarian and Romanian.

You spoke about some recent data from Statistics Canada on Canada's linguistic make-up. You mentioned that the data show that, despite an increase in both official languages, new Canadians who had another mother tongue made up a larger part of the general population, larger than ever before.

Was there any discussion of the demographic issues during the consultations? If so, did the participants mention that immigration was a priority for the communities?

• (1620)

Hon. James Moore: Yes, we have certainly seen the Statistics Canada figures. But don't forget that those numbers arrived in the third or fourth week of October, at the same time we were finishing our consultations.

Clearly, Statistics Canada's ability to provide us with figures is critical for the future of our programming. As I just said to Mr. Benskin, a number of our programs are formula-based, so on quality figures from Statistics Canada. Our approach is still to find the best possible policies so we can continue to respect our commitments.

[English]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: During the consultation, was there any discussion on how to integrate recent immigrants to Canada so that they can succeed and benefit from the economic advantages of Canada's linguistic duality?

Hon. James Moore: Yes, everybody has ideas. Of course, often what you find when you do round tables with organizations that are providing these services is that they will say, “Obviously, the solution is to give us more money and to make it multi-year.” You try to look past the obvious. Maybe there are certain success stories that you want to give multi-year funding to, and you want to provide that confidence to those organizations to continue doing their good work. I have to admit it's often difficult to find people who think beyond their local dynamic or their personal experience. We want those stories, and we want those experiences to be understood and to be told. But to find people who can think about a pan-Canadian policy that would have equal measure of value to someone in Sudbury, where roughly a third of the population is francophone or French-speaking and working in a job in the mining sector to have those economic opportunities, and to somebody who might be a brilliant young academic who is trying to be fully engaged in our sciences in Toronto...we need our immigration capacity to fully integrate people into job opportunities that are very different in different regions of the country.

How do you have a pan-Canadian policy that reflects these different things? Well, part of it is not trying to have a “one size fits all” Ottawa approach to immigration, but to set up pools of funding to support those organizations that take a flexible approach to integration and services on the ground that makes sense for Edmonton or Sudbury or Montreal or Vancouver or Nanaimo. That flexibility is something we try to recognize and to build in. You fund those things, and then you do round tables as I did—not just in Ottawa but in Sudbury and in Sault Ste. Marie and in North Bay and in Charlottetown. You go to those regions and you sit down face to face and you say, “Take me to your office. Tell me how it works. Tell me how it's going. Show me what you're doing. Let me see how it's going for you.” You get a pretty quick assessment of who the pretenders are and who the real deliverers of effective services are. You try to relay those back to the department and encourage those who have successful models to then tell their success stories to other parts of the country and to keep moving forward.

Governing is a constant exercise of trial and error and of taking the best examples and moving them forward, and that's what we try to do with official languages as well.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Madame Michaud.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éloise Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before I ask my questions, I have a very quick comment.

I'm sorry to say that I'm disappointed in what I've heard here today. Mr. Minister, I think it is naive to think and say before this committee that your department—and you, yourself—are in no way responsible for verifying whether the cuts in the departments and institutions are having an impact on the official language communities. I really think the department should show some leadership in this area. We need someone who is concerned about the communities, who ensures that they get the funds intended for them and that they receive the services they need.

I will now move on to my questions.

On May 3, Mr. Jean, who is with us today, made a commitment to send us the list of resources that will be eliminated in the Department of Canadian Heritage and from the official language support programs, as well as other information, such as a list of the department's employees working full time on official languages. Five months have passed and we've received nothing.

Can you make a commitment today to send us this information by February 2013? Yes or no?

Mr. Daniel Jean: There have been no cuts to Canadian Heritage's official language programs.

• (1625)

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I would ask that you answer with yes or no. I'm sorry, but I have several questions.

Mr. Daniel Jean: I can get you the information about the employees.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: You have already made a commitment to do this, so we hope we receive it by February 2013. Thank you very much for renewing your commitment.

I wanted to talk about something that my colleague Yvon Godin has already touched on briefly. It's the closure of the maritime search and rescue centre in Quebec City. I'm the MP for the Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier riding. A number of our communities are along the St. Lawrence River, and they have a lot of concerns. We know that the centre's closure was postponed to April 2013 and then to October 2013, because there was some difficulty in recruiting bilingual employees who met the employment conditions in Halifax and Trenton.

In addition, the proposed work schedules suggest that there will be one bilingual employee per shift. Therefore, if there are two calls at the same time, someone might get an answer in English. In this context, can you continue to say that closing the centre is necessary to save money, while putting Canadian lives in danger?

Hon. James Moore: Yes.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Really, yes?

Hon. James Moore: I agree with Gail Shea, who is currently the acting minister of Fisheries and Oceans, since Minister Ashfield had a heart attack and will not be in the House before next year. She said yes...

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I'm asking you for your opinion as Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, we will continue to do our job. The ability to search and to provide the services required in the Maritimes will continue.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: All that to say, I don't know what your opinion is, but I thank you all the same for trying to respond.

I'll move on to something a little easier.

Hon. James Moore: But I gave my opinion on the matter.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Fine.

What is your plan to ensure that, in the next Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, federal institutions will take into account the specific characters of English-speaking communities in Quebec?

Hon. James Moore: I have a meeting today with representatives from the Quebec Community Groups Network, or QCGN. I had spoken with them previously about the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. I had meetings in Montreal and Quebec City to speak with them about their concerns and their needs. As you know, the situation with the provincial government is highly charged, but I can also tell you that the QCGN supports our approach and our Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. They were pleased with it and they wanted us to renew our commitment. They also wanted us to continue in the same direction. I think the complaints and concerns outlined by the NDP with respect to our Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality—in this case with the English-speaking Quebecers—are fabrications.

Ms. Éline Michaud: That is not what I have been hearing.

I have one minute left.

Quickly, I have some questions about early childhood. Representatives of francophone and anglophone communities who have testified before the committee have stressed the importance of that issue for them. The Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality earmarked some funding for strengthening research organizational capacities. Could you tell us what you plan to do to avoid the worst case scenario and to ensure that we have all the necessary information to successfully help our communities in terms of early childhood?

Hon. James Moore: We will definitely follow up on that. We can provide you with the relevant information. As you know, this is a matter of social policy. A commitment exists between the federal government and the provinces. Mr. Jean can provide you with any information you need.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

We'll suspend for five minutes and then continue.

• (1625)

(Pause)

• (1630)

[Translation]

The Chair: We are continuing the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

We will begin with Mr. Wilks.

[English]

Mr. Wilks, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for being here today.

I want to continue with the questioning.

With regard to the 150th celebrations for Canada's Confederation, the most common request from witnesses so far has been that they

want to be assured that they are consulted for preparations for the 150th. I wonder if you could answer this: has any planning yet begun on Canada's 150th? Could you outline for the committee the milestones we will be celebrating leading up to 2017?

• (1635)

Hon. James Moore: Yes. Planning is moving forward in earnest, I can assure you. As a matter of fact, those witnesses who came before this committee with regard to 150 were not alone in wanting to speak out on this. As you know, this is a good opportunity for Canada.

Maybe I'll start it off this way. When you look around the world at other countries that have celebrated their 150th birthdays, there's actually no template. Some countries do nothing because they don't see 150 as a big deal. They celebrate the 50th, the 75th, the 100th, the 200th, or maybe the 250th or so. Some countries have taken their 150th and have done a very big celebration out of it.

In Canada, I think we're in a position to take the opportunity—and it would be wise for us—of the 150th to do something special. As I said in my prepared remarks, we're the second largest country in the world in size, but the 34th largest in population, so when we do have a moment to celebrate something that is special and pan-Canadian in consequence, we ought to take it.

This is a country that has a lot of great regional celebrations and regional moments, but I don't think people in my community understood the importance of the 400th anniversary of Quebec City. Also, in the development of our celebrations of the recognition of the bicentennial of the War of 1812, we found that when you get outside southwestern Ontario there is a diminished understanding of the importance of the War of 1812. We wanted to elevate that into a pan-Canadian understanding.

Therefore, there are a lot of groups around the country that might have some great local ideas that could be drawn to national attention for others to copy. We want to go around and talk to Canadians, like we did with round tables for the road map, which, I can tell you, were incredibly beneficial to my personal understanding and my department's appreciation of the great work that is being done around the country on official languages.

Equally, we want to make sure that, for Canadians who have great ideas on the 150th, their voices are heard as well. In the new year, I am going to be doing round tables around the country on Canada's 150th birthday, which will lead to our larger proposal on how we celebrate the 150th.

Mr. David Wilks: Thanks.

Following on that, with our study that we've been doing on the 150th, one thing I've heard is a continual reference to the 2010 Olympic Games and other major events in which Canada has done a very good job at ensuring that both official languages are used and we're quite enthusiastic about.... I wonder if you could talk about how you foresee us keeping that enthusiasm going for more than a two-week period, stretching it out throughout a whole year. Do you have any vision on that?

Hon. James Moore: I have two examples. The 400th anniversary of Quebec City is one. There was a date, but there were actually year-long events in the city of Quebec. For the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there were dates for those, but, as you know, there were the torch relay and the cultural Olympiad. There was the Place de la Francophonie. We had a number of events tangential to the games that stretched out for many, many months prior. There were legacy projects after the games as well.

Things that will go beyond July 1, 2017—stretched out—and that will be of larger consequence are really important projects as well. This is one of those projects.... I know that even in just the first round of questioning we've had, we have had good partisan debates. We can go back and forth. Yvon Godin can say that I'm wrong about everything, and I can say that he's wrong about everything—

Mr. Yvon Godin: I agree. We can both agree, yes—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Hon. James Moore: We can both agree with equal ferocity.

But also, I do think there are moments that should be, and that can easily be, if we just act like adults and draw them above partisanship and talk about them.... Partisanship has its place and its importance in our parliamentary system, but every once in a while we can also recognize and say that something is not to the left or to the right, that it is just something that should be beyond partisanship.

I think Canada's 150th birthday ought to be that. I think we can do that. I think we can talk about that. For example, our decision as a government to create the Canadian Museum of History: it's an entirely non-partisan policy to have an institution with a pan-Canadian focus to do more to influence Canadians' ability to get access to Canada's history and to talk about it more. That's what we're trying to do.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dionne Labelle, go ahead.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Good afternoon, gentlemen.

The Official Languages Support Programs are divided into two main components—the Development of Official-Language Communities Program and the Enhancement of Official Languages Program. What was last year's budget for the Development of Official-Language Communities Program?

Hon. James Moore: Hubert, what was the exact amount?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: I think it was \$224 million.

●(1640)

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Your report mentions \$232 million for 2009-2010 and \$223 million for this year. Is that correct?

Hon. James Moore: I don't have the guidebook with me.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Okay.

What was last year's budget for the other component, the Enhancement of Official Languages Program?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: When you say last year, what year are you talking about?

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: I am talking about 2009-2010.

Hon. James Moore: We are here to discuss 2010-2011.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Yes, but we are getting there. I can tell you that the budget was \$119 million.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, I have the figures.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: For 2010-2011, the budget was \$223 million for the first component. The budget for the second component was \$119 million, and it is now \$116 million. The budgets of the two programs combined have been reduced by \$11 million, but you are talking about an increase in the Official Languages Support Programs envelope. How do you explain this discrepancy in the figures?

Hon. James Moore: That is due to the fact that some initiatives or events were short-term, such as the Olympic Games.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: I see no mention of that in your table. Where is that information? Can you show me?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: The funds the minister is referring to were spread over the two programs—the Development of Official-Language Communities Program and the Enhancement of Official Languages Program. They had to do with initiatives announced as completed at the time. Those initiatives were supposed to end as of 2010-2011.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: That should be broken down. Could you give us the breakdown of all of those components, so that we can see which initiatives were one-time and which were ongoing?

I would also like to know whether the roadmap budget has been improved.

Hon. James Moore: No.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Yet, since beginning our examination of the roadmap, we have been told that the existing program was being improved.

Hon. James Moore: No, it's approximately....

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: The gentleman is saying yes, and you are saying no.

Hon. James Moore: No, no, but....

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: I will take the minister's word for it.

Hon. James Moore: That is true in the case of two-thirds, almost three-quarters. However, one-quarter is made up of extra subsidies, in addition to what we were already doing.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: So it's an improvement, as I was saying.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, but that's not all it is. That was your question.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: We see that the funding for the Centre of Excellence for Official Languages is part of the roadmap, but shouldn't that funding be recurrent, through ongoing programs?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: As the minister said, it's a combination of the two. There are some new initiatives—which were announced in 2008—and some ongoing ones. The initiative you are talking about was new.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Is the survival of the Centre of Excellence for Official Languages ensured?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: The minister answered that question earlier.

Hon. James Moore: If you want to know what will be allocated under our next roadmap, you will have to wait until then.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Yes, but I am trying to clear some things up. We are told that the budgets have increased, but I see a decrease in both components. You are saying that this is because of the Olympic Games, but that's not indicated anywhere. We are wondering about that. The information is questionable. When it comes to this, I agree with what Mr. Dion said earlier.

Hon. James Moore: You are forgetting that our budget and supplementary estimates were voted on last week. Detailed information on our investments was provided in those budgets. You could perhaps just look at the figures included in the budgets. Frankly, it's very clear.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dionne Labelle. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We now move to Ms. Bateman.

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions will be about education and about the minister's comments regarding the integration of arts and linguistic duality.

I want to begin by thanking you, Mr. Minister, for being here with your colleagues, Mr. Jean and Mr. Lussier. I am always very impressed by your dedication to linguistic duality and by the ability to integrate that duality in our country to achieve certain goals. That's in line with my interests.

You said that the number of students in immersion programs has increased. I have two children in immersion. I have seen on a daily basis the influence of their French studies on their lives. So I have seen the potential of our country targeting those investments.

For instance, you have mentioned your investments in the Canadian Museum of History. Could you tell me how investments in museums—where both official languages are used—help our children?

•(1645)

Hon. James Moore: Yes, certainly.

We had a specific approach. As a government, we said that, if we got re-elected in 2011, we would achieve a balanced budget without making cuts in our health care system, our programs for seniors and veterans, and without increasing taxes for consumers and Canadians. That's what we said. That was our position in the 2011 election.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Yes, I understand that.

Hon. James Moore: We received a majority mandate. In order to achieve a balanced budget, we have to make some decisions. As a government, we decided to make cuts in certain areas, but not in others. That was based on a significant analysis. I'm talking about the department, my office and myself. It was a matter of looking at every penny of the \$2.9 billion invested by the Department of Canadian Heritage and finding the best way to save money without affecting any issues that are very important to Canada.

We decided to not cut any money from our five-year investment in the roadmap for official languages. In addition, we decided not to cut

our investment in the Canada Council for the Arts. We also decided not to cut a single penny from our investment in museums across Canada. I think those institutions play a really crucial role in helping people properly understand our country's heritage. I am referring to our geological heritage, cultural heritage, or the heritage of aboriginals or science and technology. As you know, since you represent a Winnipeg riding, our commitment was to create the new Museum for Human Rights in that city. We also made a commitment to create the new Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, in Halifax. Those were my commitments as Minister of Canadian Heritage. That has been confirmed in our budget, and we will continue to move in that direction.

When we have institutions that do good work in both official languages and young people see the results of that, we realize that we are certainly creating a heritage for our official languages that will benefit young people in the future.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Yes.

Is the use of technology in all museums meant to make those institutions more accessible to young people?

Hon. James Moore: Yes.

For instance, the new Canadian Museum of History will have unparalleled electronic capability. In addition, as I was saying to Mr. Godin in answering one of his questions about CBC, the commitment in terms of electronic platforms to reach a new audience is also a major success for the crown corporation.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

•(1650)

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

I know the minister very well. He has been here for 12 years, and I was here before him. I would not call him an old fox, but rather a young fox. He said that we should work together and leave partisanship aside. I think that is what you said, is it not, Mr. Minister?

Hon. James Moore: Sorry, I did not understand what you said.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You said that we should leave partisanship aside and try to work towards the same goal.

Hon. James Moore: No, some partisanship is okay once in a while. It is entertaining, and I think that our parliamentary system allows Canadians to see why we disagree and why we are not in the same party. However, in the case of certain issues, there are good reasons to set aside partisanship and work on a few projects.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Are you ready to try one? Do you want to try to set partisanship aside?

Hon. James Moore: If you like.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I met with the Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Selinger. He is prepared to work on a government program. Don't tell me that this is a provincial concern or something like that. The francophone community of Thompson is asking for its own school and services from kindergarten to grade 12—including early childhood spaces, a day-care centre and preschool care. They want a place where young people can flourish in French. I asked the premier of the province what he was going to do and whether he was interested in receiving federal assistance to achieve that goal. Section 41 of part VII of the Official Languages Act provides all those rights if there is agreement between the two levels of government.

Are you prepared to help them?

Hon. James Moore: We could certainly work with the Government of Manitoba.

I would like to talk about the Jules-Verne High School in Vancouver. That is a school we invested in. I am proud of that school because it is very close to the one where my mother used to teach. She was among the first French teachers in British Columbia.

We can certainly work with Manitoba. Mr. Lussier just said that the Government of Manitoba has not yet told us that it needs funding. That is probably forthcoming, but when the province asks us for a subsidy, we will certainly be able to work with it, as we did with other provinces for similar investments.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Let's have a serious look at things. We unfortunately do not have much time to talk about this.

I was just in Labrador, where one school has 29 students. If two teachers go on maternity leave, the school has difficulty finding francophone teachers to replace them because they do not even have housing. They almost closed the school down. They need the help of their big brother, as I call the federal government. I think that's important for maintaining our communities.

I have another question for you. When did the Auditor General last conduct an audit of official languages?

Hon. James Moore: I did not understand your question.

Mr. Yvon Godin: When did the Auditor General last audit the Department of Canadian Heritage?

Hon. James Moore: We do not have the exact answer. We will have to give you that information later.

Mr. Daniel Jean: It would be nice to have the exact date, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Minister, I assume you do not object to the Auditor General having a look at what is going on at Canadian Heritage.

Hon. James Moore: No.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You talked about consultations you held in the country. I would like to remind you that the government did not want to hold consultations because it thought that the Standing Committee on Official Languages was doing that.

People have told me about your consultations. I remember that, when Bernard Lord did his consultations, everything was in camera, and we could not find out what had taken place. This time, you have

been boasting about having gone across the country. Community representatives are saying that, when they met with you, they only had one or two minutes to talk to you. Is that true or false?

Hon. James Moore: It is false.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We are talking about two minutes per organization.

Hon. James Moore: No, that is false. We did not hold only in-person consultations; we also had some online consultations, as I mentioned. We spent half a day with communities and organizations. Some officials were present. They discussed matters for over an hour. I was in a room for over an hour, and we had discussions before and after. Each organization submitted a file with funding requests.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, I am not asking whether people submitted files and whether the minister went over them later on in his hotel room.

When organizations asked you questions, the process was very structured, but they had only one or two minutes. Then it was someone else's turn. Even when organizations wanted to talk longer, they couldn't. The meetings lasted 45 minutes, not 4 hours.

Hon. James Moore: No.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Unless you are saying that's not true.

Hon. James Moore: It's not true.

Mr. Yvon Godin: It's not true?

Hon. James Moore: I was there, and you were not. That's not true.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We will ask the organizations whether it's true or false.

Hon. James Moore: You can talk to the organizations, but our meetings have to be structured. We had an approach where we....

Mr. Yvon Godin: What was that approach?

• (1655)

Hon. James Moore: I didn't interrupt you. You asked from the beginning that we set partisanship aside.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That has nothing to do with this. I wasn't talking about the NDP or the Conservatives. I asked you a question as minister.

Hon. James Moore: Let me answer your other questions before you go ahead and ask a fifth one.

There's no doubt that our approach has to be structured. In all of our round tables, no organization complained that this was a bad idea. I think they were all very happy with the efforts we had made to hold a responsible and efficient event. However, that did not end our commitment to those organizations.

For instance, today, representatives from the QCGN organization came to my office. Last week, I met with Marie-France Kenny, of the FCFA. We continue to meet our commitments and hold discussions. We will continue to have conversations with various organizations. That's part of a full commitment on the government's part. I am certain that, if you spoke to those groups, they would all tell you the same thing—that my door is always open when they need to talk about their concerns and ideas.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Gourde, go ahead.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, let's be positive and talk about the 2017 celebrations. That's a nice opportunity to highlight our two official languages and all the benefits of bilingualism in Canada.

We are headed towards 2017. Do you think certain events could provide inspiration or prepare us for that big celebration?

Hon. James Moore: I agree that it's very important to adopt a Canada-wide approach and include all communities. Official languages are an important part of the country's heritage. I can assure you that our approach will be inclusive. To ensure that the approach is very respectful, we will take into account any good ideas from the country's regions.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: The Department of Canadian Heritage has already consulted some people. In 2013, the department will begin preparing....

Hon. James Moore: Next January, I will hold my first round tables in communities. As you know, it's not always easy for people from the regions to come testify before this committee. So some people are excluded. Many organizations, across the country, cannot take the time to visit Ottawa to share ideas about the 2017 celebrations with the members of a committee—whether we are talking about this committee or the Committee on Canadian Heritage. In order to come up with ideas and get people involved in this process, we have to leave Ottawa and go to the regions and out to the field. We have to go and talk to them in the places where they do their community work. The idea is not only to establish policies, but also to adopt an approach that takes into account the ideas of people from the regions.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: The 2017 celebrations will most likely take place across Canada, and not only in Ottawa.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, and I already know that certain communities have very big dreams for 2017—such as stadiums, new bridges or new parks. Some communities are talking about passports for tourism in Canada. Certain organizations simply want a really big celebration on July 1st. There are many ideas, and we will hear them.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: There are many cultures in Canada and the provinces. Taking bilingualism into account, of course, will we be able to highlight those cultures during the celebrations? I think they are a very important part of our country.

Hon. James Moore: Without a doubt, as this is not only a date or an anniversary, but also a big celebration. I am sure that artists will come pitch projects to me. I know that the National Arts Centre has an ambitious cultural plan for 2017. I am certain that the Canada Council for the Arts is also planning some activities for 2017. Very recently, I spoke with people from the Canadian Arts Coalition. They had a plan and a request. According to their plan, we could introduce some artists that people have not often had an opportunity to see in the regions. They could appear in various regions of the country.

It's certain that many ideas will be submitted and that the number of funding requests will also be very high. We will have to keep taxpayers' limits in mind, while we organize some truly unique celebrations.

● (1700)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wish you a successful undertaking in 2017.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

Mr. Dion, go ahead.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, I was not a police officer. I was a minister who fulfilled his coordinating responsibility and ensured, along with his colleagues, that the government's decisions—with which we all agreed—would have a positive impact on communities. However, since you feel that this is not your role—even though it is part of your mandate—and you barely know what is going on in other departments, let's at least talk about your department.

In response to Mr. Dionne Labelle's question, you said that the \$11 million decrease in the Official Languages Support Programs, between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, was due to the fact that you had discontinued the funding for the Olympic Games. That doesn't make sense.

Hon. James Moore: That's not what I said. I gave an example of a short-term event. I have other examples.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: So let's talk about other examples because, Mr. Minister, your explanation doesn't make sense.

In 2007-2008, the funding for the Official Languages Support Programs was \$358 million, and it has been dropping for four years. We reached \$350 million in 2004-2005—and I am not even taking inflation into account because the amount is in current dollars. In addition, the decrease applies across the board. I will give some examples.

For community life, \$62 million was set aside four years ago, and that amount is now \$55 million. For minority language education, the amount was \$176 million four years ago, and it is now \$166 million. The amount for promoting linguistic duality was \$4.4 million four years ago, while it is \$4.3 million today. The amount set aside for second language learning was \$115 million four years ago, and it is \$112 million now.

Since you have to cut \$106 million over the next three years and you don't even know that you have made some cuts already, by how much more do you want to reduce the funding of those programs that are essential for Canada's linguistic duality?

Hon. James Moore: Is this a joke?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: This is a serious question, Mr. Minister.

Hon. James Moore: Your roadmap was about \$750 million. Ours is \$1.1 billion. Is that a cut?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: If my understanding is right, Mr. Minister, you are telling me....

Hon. James Moore: Is that a cut?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: We do not know what will happen to your roadmap later on, but what you are telling me now, Mr. Minister....

Hon. James Moore: Is this a cut?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Perhaps the roadmap is used to conceal cuts. That is what you are telling us. That is serious, Mr. Minister.

Hon. James Moore: What you are saying is not serious.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Chair, I would like the minister to stop interrupting me.

This was actually very serious. Some members may laugh, but this is a serious issue for official language communities, and my colleagues from across the table constantly voiced—during the exercise we did for the roadmap—the concern that departments may use the roadmap to fund their cuts. You yourself constantly blocked the opposition's requests—in terms of resolutions—while saying that you did not want departments to use those funds. That is what you said.

Yet the minister is confirming that this is the game that is being played. The roadmap is used as a front to conceal cuts to which the minister will not even admit when the information is placed right in front of him. That is the truth, Mr. Chair.

As for your rose-coloured glasses regarding Canadian linguistic duality, have you requested from your department an analysis of the actual figures? I will give them to you.

If we leave out Quebec—where people are more bilingual than elsewhere—the number of people who can carry on a conversation in French has gone from 2,561,000 to 2,584,000 in four years. That is 20,000 more people for a country of 33 million. In terms of percentage, we have gone from 10.8% of our population being able to carry on a conversation in French to 10.2%. That is a failure. Why is a country with so many educated people unable to increase its percentage of individuals who can carry on a conversation in French?

Hon. James Moore: What you are saying is that your roadmap was a...

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I am talking about the last four years, Mr. Minister.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, the last four years during which we have increased our investment. When we look at the Statistics Canada figures, we see that, today, over 4.8 million people—or 17.5% of Canada's population—can speak English and French. That figure is unprecedented. The situation has been improved. Our funding has been increased. We went from your lowest figure of \$750 million to \$1.1 billion.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Because you are including your cuts.

Hon. James Moore: That is an increase, Mr. Dion. If you think that our budget has yielded no results, you will now have to apologize to Marie-France Kenny, the President of the FCFA. When she saw our budget, she supported it. She said that they were very happy that the investments in official languages will remain at their current level. She said that the commitment and the efforts made by the Minister of Canadian Heritage should be applauded.

Marie-France Kenny also said, and I quote:

● (1705)

[*English*]

“Thank you, James Moore, for defending the interests of francophone and Acadian Canadians.”

[*Translation*]

You may think that she is not doing her job, but she was elected President of the FCFA. She said that we were doing our job, that we have increased our investment. If you made a mistake when you were minister, that is your problem and not mine.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Trottier, you have the floor.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

The Chair: Okay?

Mr. Trottier, go ahead.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, in principle, we are here today to talk about the annual report. Thank you for your patience. On several occasions, people went on tangents and discussed matters that had nothing to do with the topic at hand.

I would like to ask you a question that is not directly related to the annual report, but that has to do with the census that was just published after the annual report.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in terms of linguistic duality? Priorities in investments may change to ensure that duality. What are the main factors of that census, especially regarding francophonie, but also regarding the anglophone fact in Quebec?

Hon. James Moore: This shows that Canada is becoming increasingly diverse and that Canadians' ability to speak more languages is a success for the country. We will continue to invest and meet our commitments under our roadmap, but it is also important for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism to maintain his commitments towards new Canadians. In my opinion, the census figures are generally good news for Canada. They show that the number of Canadians who speak English and French is increasing. Some successes have certainly been achieved.

As for what Mr. Dion just said, it is really childish to suggest that governing the population of Canada allows the government to ensure that a specific number of Canadians can speak both official languages. It's as if it were just a matter of central economic policy, a central linguistic capacity, and specific results could be obtained simply by providing sufficient funding for our system. It is not as easy as that. Our country is complex. The country's levels of immigration and diversity are constantly changing.

As a government, we have the obligation to protect both official languages—in other words, to protect the federal government's capacity of to fulfill its mandate in both languages. In addition, we have to implement policies and programs to promote official languages and convince young people and immigrants arriving in the country that speaking more languages is an advantage, that it will increase their cultural, social and economic opportunities, and that French and English are both Canada's official languages.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

To strengthen linguistic duality, you often have to get involved in areas under provincial jurisdiction—such as education, health services, early childhood and services for seniors—and that always poses risks. Coordinating that work across the 10 Canadian provinces and territories is always a challenge.

How can we improve the way to work with provinces in order to ensure that the necessary services are provided in terms of linguistic duality?

Hon. James Moore: That is not easy because the demands and expectations are very high in some regions, but not in others. Mr. Godin and others know very well that what is affecting the New Brunswick education system, for instance, is a very passionate debate on the ground. People are voicing their opinions on the topic.

It is certainly inappropriate for a minister from Canada's west coast who works with officials here in Ottawa to tell provinces that they have to make their education system operate in a specific way if they want to receive a few million dollars a year. That is why we have agreements. There are negotiations between the provinces and my officials. We are working together to meet Canada's needs for an education system where both official languages are used, but we are not imposing a Government of Canada policy in this area, which comes under provincial jurisdiction.

• (1710)

The Chair: Fine, thank you.

Mr. Lauzon, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Minister, I have just a very brief question, then probably Mr. Wilks will take....

In your speech, you say:

Our government's aim is to ensure that our funding continues to yield real, tangible benefits to communities and to ensure that our funding helps promote both of our official languages. In our next road map, we will make sure that we manage the initiatives as effectively as possible.

Can you expand on that? How are we going to do that?

Hon. James Moore: Certainly. It's difficult sometimes. We face this question often with culture—right?—and with cultural organizations where, for example, if we have.... We put in place the fifth pillar of our road map, which is language and culture. People ask, "How do you know if you received benefits from that?" Well, we say, we set aside a pot of money of \$14 million and organizations applied for money. They qualified for the money. They spent the money. A festival happened. Kids went to it. Was it effective? Time will tell. There's no matrix to tell you whether or not it was effective: a child having a good experience, right...?

On the other hand, there are other programs where you can have more concrete results. For example, we talk about how French immersion.... And by the way, that's a very large success story. Mr. Dion pooh-poohed it, but give me a break: when there's a 10% increase in enrolment in French immersion education in this country, that's a fantastic result.

Liberals never saw that. We've done that, and we're very proud of that, but we didn't do it by bullying provinces. We worked with

provinces. We provided the funding. We make the argument consistently and proudly on the importance of both of Canada's official languages.

That's a real result: a 10% increase in French immersion enrolment by young Canadians. When you learn a language at a young age, it sticks with you for life, and you'll learn a second language and you'll learn a third language. You'll become proud of this country and proud of its heritage and its bilingual past, present, and future. That's a great thing. That's a great success story that I'm very proud of.

When you put in these investments, sometimes you can measure concrete results and success stories. There are the thousands of nurses and doctors across this country who, in an effort to service communities where a sizable portion of the population is French-speaking, go and learn French. For example, somebody phones in a panic and says,

[Translation]

"Yes, my young child is having problems with his legs. He needs help. Can you help me?"

[English]

If somebody on the other end of the phone says, "I'm sorry, but I can't help you", they need that support. In a panicked moment, people need to be able to communicate in the official language of their choice. Doctors and nurses now have a program that's available to them whereby they can learn French, so that when somebody picks up the phone in a panic and says,

[Translation]

"Yes, my child is having some kind of crisis. There is something abnormal with his legs. This is an emergency, can you help me?"

[English]

they can get an answer in French. It's helpful. Hundreds and indeed thousands of nurses and doctors have been trained in this country because of this investment. That's a real benefit. We're going to continue doing this and we're going to continue to have results. It's going to continue to work.

I think when people see the next road map, when they realize what we have done and will continue to do, they will realize that official languages in this country are doing incredibly well, and it's going to be an ongoing battle to make sure that we have these services.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I can testify to that, if I can have just a minute. I presented my Jubilee medals on Sunday past. I had 31. We did it bilingually. We had some problems in Cornwall with the English and French. Anyhow, we did it bilingually. If you were an anglophone, we read your bio in English, and we did the summary in French, and vice versa. After we did it, we had anglophones going to our francophone representatives and saying that it was so well done, and vice versa.

We need to expose people to the other language. It works. It really works. I think there are a lot of success stories, but people have to be given a chance to hear the other language and to get to know the other people. It's working. It really is working, so thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Benskin, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

You kind of made our argument for us as far as the closing of the search and rescue station in regard to.... You know, we agree on that.

My question is around French immersion. One of the fastest-growing contributors to our population is the immigrant population. I believe it was StatsCan that came out with numbers saying that it is the immigrant population that is looking for training, for access to language courses, in both official languages. The problem is, as we've heard from many witnesses, the availability of places in immersion programs and so forth is problematic.

Now, it's great that there's been an augmentation of 10%, but there are more people who are looking to get into French immersion. I'm wondering how the road map might help increase access within this country to immersion classes for Canadians in general, but particularly for the immigrant population?

• (1715)

Hon. James Moore: To be honest, it's difficult because while it is a provincial jurisdiction we do have a national goal and a standard that we want to set and an ideal we want to achieve, which is more Canadians learning more of Canada's past and learning more about our official languages and doing so effectively.

There's a challenge, because I think it would be wrong for the federal government to say to a province, "Here's money, but you only get it for your provincial jurisdiction if you do these things." On the other hand, we do want to achieve things of national consequence and value.

The answer is that we have to sit down and negotiate. As you know, some provinces are very aggressive about not having the federal government do this at all, particularly the Province of Quebec, your home province.

I'll give you another example. Last week I had a meeting with Jackson Lafferty the minister of languages for the Northwest Territories. He is a phenomenal guy, but he struggles because in the Northwest Territories there are nine official languages. When the federal government comes in and funds one of the official languages of Canada and doesn't proportionately increase the support for aboriginal languages in the north, he says the problem with that is that it creates a backlash against the French fact in the north. That's an unhelpful thing. We need to make sure we work with provinces and territories so we can support the development of our official languages—including aboriginal languages, by the way—in the north. We do so in a way that isn't sort of bullying and pushing aside their local obligation to service local needs in aboriginal languages.

Anyhow, there's no simple answer to your question, but I'm trying to express that we understand the complexity of this, and every province and community in this country has its own stresses. Therefore it's equally important that we as a federal government approach it with that understanding of the need for flexibility.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: To enter the deep, dark waters of the 150th anniversary celebrations, I have said this before and I'm sure my colleagues are tired of hearing it, but to me language is an extension

of culture. For me I think it's really, really important that we don't limit the celebrations to just having French and English events and that there's a real attempt to express to the west, for example, why French holds such an important place in the language structure. Why are we pushing—for lack of a better way of putting it—French as an official language? It's because of its heritage, because of its founding nature, because of the culture.

I think it's important that we include that in the 150th celebrations, not only as a linguistic thing but as a cultural thing. Would you agree with that?

Hon. James Moore: Yes. You said you can't separate language and culture, and it's very true. One is an expression and celebration of the other. It's saying, "Yes, I speak French, and let me show you why I'm proud of it." Whether it's Métis culture, Acadian culture, or Quebec culture, it's an expression of pride in the language you speak. We talk about it in a Canadian context, but as you know, francophones see themselves as part of a larger global Francophonie family, and they also see themselves in a very, very distinct minority in the North American dynamic. There's this sense of pride in a global context but also concern in a regional context that the French language and French culture not be lost and subsumed.

I can see the chair is doing a helicopter there with his pen.

It's very important that these things go hand in hand. Frankly they go hand in hand in a way that, I have to say, a lot of anglophone Canadians don't necessarily always fully appreciate, and it needs to be understood that way.

By the way, as a non-aboriginal I would never go into an aboriginal community and second-guess the way that language, culture, and expression is done within that community. There's a way in the French language and French cultures, as diverse as they are across the country, that arts and culture and language work hand in hand, and they need to be understood in that context.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you very much. The helicopter has landed.

Go ahead, Mr. Wilks.

Mr. David Wilks: I just wanted to continue on what Mr. Lauzon was saying. Certainly in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, French is not dominant but, amazingly, with the four national parks that are in my riding, it becomes an issue because we have to be able to supply it to those who want it.

I know that the educational system is that one that is provincially required. But I wonder if you could continue on from your opening remarks with regard to developing the official language in the minority communities based upon smaller areas such as mine in southeast British Columbia.

Hon. James Moore: Well, it's important, because if.... How do I say this? There are people of long-standing French lineage who live in communities that are seeing the francophone fact just slowly disappear and then kind of go away. You have people who might have last names like Leblanc *ou* Laframboise but who are English-speaking in their day-to-day lives because the French fact hasn't continued in operation.

That's partly why, in the *feuille de route*, for example, regional economic development agencies have funds—right, Hubert? He and I had a long conversation about that the other day.

That's one of the reasons why Western Economic Diversification, for example, is part of the *feuille de route* for official languages. They have set aside funding with the goal—frankly, the results are mixed—to support businesses that are operating in an official-language minority context and encourage them to be able to continue to provide that business experience and to continue to move forward so that we can protect the French fact.

I have to say that I don't want the experience I'm having in my home community of Maillardville to be the norm in the rest of the country. Maillardville is a community within the city of Coquitlam. The city of Coquitlam has about 130,000 people. Maillardville is the largest francophone settlement west of the Red River. It's quaint and it's cute. There are a lot of people there with French last names.

My alma mater, Maillardville junior secondary, is the best French immersion junior high school there, but Maillardville itself has almost become boutique. You go there and you see some French architecture, and you buy some bread, or you go to the Festival du Bois, but there isn't actually a vibrant French community there. It has just sort of withered away over time by population growth and the lack of a coherent strategy for the French fact there—other than for tourism: come and see what a French community lived like 200 years ago.

Well, that and fifty cents will get you a cup of coffee. I'd rather have a community that is vibrant and strong, that may be limited in numbers but that shows anglophone Canadians who live in the adjacent areas that you can live and be prosperous in two official languages; that actually you will have a bigger market for your goods; that you will have more social opportunities; that you might have better advancement in life if you are able to interact with people in more than one language; that this is a good thing, and here's a local example. Multiply it onto a global stage, and you can see that you're better off learning French.

We haven't done a great job of this in a lot of communities. Part of the road map is to do that, to have vibrant communities, not boutique communities, and have them grow across the country.

I think we're seeing results, based on my experience. And as you said, you have experiences in your riding. It's really important to try to engender that genuine health.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Thank you very much.

I'd like to talk to you about the decision your government took in 2009 to amend the funding formula of the Aid to Publishers component of the Canada Periodical Fund. This change created a serious problem for the minority francophone press, who saw their funds cut; consequently, it has become very difficult for them to do their work effectively.

Have you met with representatives of the newspapers concerned, and with the Association de la presse francophone? What corrective measures do you intend to take, if any?

• (1725)

Hon. James Moore: At the time, concerns were expressed about these changes, but before we brought them in, we held several consultations. We implemented the changes afterwards. We announced these changes over a year before they were brought in so that the newspapers could make their own internal changes. These changes have been quite a success, generally speaking. There have been some difficulties in the case of a few publications, but as you know—

Ms. Éloise Michaud: There always are, unfortunately.

Hon. James Moore: —in this program, a large number of publications existed only thanks to the subsidies. They were small publications with very small runs.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I don't think that the size of the run defines the relevance of the medium.

Hon. James Moore: It must also be noted that we reduced funds granted to large companies such as Rogers and *Maclean's Magazine*, which used to receive \$3 million. In my opinion, Rogers did not really need taxpayers' subsidies.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: The problem really affects the small media.

Hon. James Moore: We reduced this funding from \$3 million to \$1.5 million and we allocated that \$1.5 million to small and medium businesses, to minority official language publications, as it happens. So, there is more funding—

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I would ask you to conclude, please. I have other questions.

Hon. James Moore: It is—

Ms. Éloise Michaud: Could you simply shorten your answer a bit?

Hon. James Moore: Your question was about the amount of money allocated? The answer is complex, if you want a real answer.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: In that case, could you submit it in writing. We are starting to run out of time. I simply want my colleague to be able to ask a few questions as well.

Hon. James Moore: It is your choice to waste time. If you want to make a statement when you ask a question, that is one thing, but if you want to ask a question and obtain a real answer, because it is complex, that is why I am here.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: This is the time at my disposal in committee and I will formulate my questions as I please.

Hon. James Moore: Waste your time as it suits you.

Ms. Éloise Michaud: I would now ask my colleague Mr. Dionne Labelle to continue with his own questions.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Mr. Minister, we are talking about \$358,911,000 in 2007-2008, and \$340,551,000 in 2010-2011. I hope that the next time we see each other, I will have, as a parliamentarian, the figures in hand to explain where these \$18,500,000 went. I hope that we will have an opportunity to talk again and that I will eventually have these figures in hand.

Let us now talk about statistics. When Statistics Canada issued its latest data, statisticians said that since the introduction of the short-form census questionnaire, the statistics lack relevance and it is more difficult to determine the situation of linguistic minorities in Canada.

This committee asked you for a specific budget for Statistics Canada so that it could follow the development of official languages in Canada. Are you not worried about the fact that Statistics Canada statisticians say that the data are more or less reliable, and how can we remedy this?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dionne Labelle.

Briefly, Minister Moore.

[*English*]

Hon. James Moore: We have in the census report, for the first time ever, three language questions: knowledge of official languages, home language, and mother tongue. These were included on the census questionnaire, and it was administered to 100% of the population.

So actually the census data we have now is more comprehensive than it's ever been.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Why, in that case, did the statisticians say that?

Hon. James Moore: I won't speak for them.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much to all the members of our committee.

[*Translation*]

I thank our witnesses for their testimony.

[*English*]

Thank you very much to everyone for all the work you've done on the committee in the last year.

[*Translation*]

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

[*English*]

All the best for the holidays, and we'll see you back here in January.

This meeting is adjourned.

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