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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015**

—  
**Chair**

**The Honourable Michael Chong**



## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

• (1530)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)):** Welcome to the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages on this Tuesday, May 12, 2015. Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are going to discuss with the Commissioner of Official Languages his 2104-15 annual report, which was referred to the committee on Thursday, May 5, 2015.

Before I give the floor to Mr. Fraser, I will give it to Mr. Nicholls, who would like to give notice of a motion.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to give my notice of motion, which reads as follows:

That the Committee begin, before the House rises for the summer, a study to determine whether CBC/Radio-Canada has the financial, human and real property resources to adequately meet its obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and specific aspects of the *Broadcasting Act*; that it place special emphasis on official language minority communities, and that the study's meetings be televised.

This has to do with some parts of the report that pertain to CBC/Radio-Canada and the case of Windsor. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nicholls. We will discuss your motion at the May 26 meeting.

Mr. Fraser, you have the floor.

**Mr. Graham Fraser (Commissioner of Official Languages, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages):** Thank you, Mr. Chair

[English]

Mr. Chair, honourable members of the committee, good afternoon.

I am accompanied today by Ghislaine Saikaley, assistant commissioner of compliance assurance; Mary Donaghy, assistant commissioner of policy and communications; and Johane Tremblay, general counsel.

I am pleased to appear before you today to present my 2014-15 annual report, which focuses mainly on immigration in official language communities.

[Translation]

The report also describes complaints that we received and audits that we conducted over the past fiscal year, as well as court cases in which I was involved as official languages ombudsman. Because of the election timetable, I am tabling this report just seven months after

the one I released last October, which is why it is shorter and more focused.

[English]

Despite the commitments made by the federal government, by communities, and by certain provinces, only 2% of immigrants who settle in provinces other than Quebec speak French as their first official language. That figure is too low to ensure the vitality of French-speaking communities outside Quebec. I acknowledge the commitment of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to promote the development of official language minority communities, but I also expect to see tangible results.

[Translation]

The new express entry system, which aims to speed up the permanent residence process for economic immigrants, was launched last January. However, there are currently no incentives that encourage employers to recruit French-speaking immigrants. Government agencies must focus their efforts on using francophone organizations to receive, train and provide integration support for immigrants.

[English]

So that all of Canada's French-speaking communities can become host communities, I've recommended in my annual report that long-term tools and incentives be developed for Canadian employers to assist in the recruitment and selection of French-speaking and bilingual workers outside of Quebec; that the federal government, in concert with provinces and territories, develop a substantive action plan that includes a timetable and targets for Francophone immigration; and that the federal government rely principally on francophone organizations to help French-speaking newcomers settle into their host communities.

[Translation]

My annual report also addresses the issue of anglophone immigration in Quebec. Some communities, especially those outside urban areas, are having difficulty attracting a sufficient number of English-speaking immigrants to revitalize their institutions over the long term. English-speaking immigrants who choose to settle in the province's English-speaking communities need support to be able to integrate successfully into Quebec society. This is why the federal government must work with the Quebec government to provide enough resources for that purpose.

•(1535)

[English]

In 2014-15, my office received 550 complaints that were deemed admissible. This is an increase of 74 complaints, or 16%, compared with 2013-14. We also followed up on two audits involving Air Canada and Industry Canada that were conducted in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

In 2014-15, in *Thibodeau v. Air Canada*, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the quasi-constitutional status of the Official Languages Act, which provides for a court remedy.

[Translation]

With respect to CBC/Radio-Canada's budget cuts at CBEF Windsor, the Federal Court determined that part VII of the act is a categorical, non-negotiable imperative. That decision is currently under appeal.

Again this year, we have seen that when it comes to respecting official languages, successful institutions plan their actions. However, a few institutions have shown by their actions that they still do not understand the concept of official languages being equal.

[English]

The very foundation of the act is the equality of our two official languages—not that one of the two languages is an accommodation. That equality must be reflected in every government announcement, on every communications platform. Success requires planning and planning requires leadership.

[Translation]

In addition to honouring the principle of equality of English and French, federal institutions have a duty to protect the vitality of official language communities and not to hinder them. If these two principles were better understood, respected and applied, the issues surrounding the vitality of official language communities would be less critical.

[English]

My 2014-15 annual report is available on our website.

Thank you for your attention.

I'd now like to take the remaining time to answer any questions you have.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fraser. We now have 50 minutes for questions and comments.

[English]

We will begin with Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

Commissioner, we all know that English is not threatened in North America and that francophones in North America have a very real fear of assimilation. This is known as the Louisiana effect—

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** You mean “Louisianization”.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Thank you.

In addition, in 1991, the Conservative government negotiated the Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens with the Liberal Government of Quebec. The accord puts responsibility for settling and integrating immigrants squarely in the hands of the Government of Quebec.

Can you tell the committee more about that? You talked about settling and integrating anglophones. How can that work when the accord negotiated in 1991 clearly gives the Government of Quebec responsibility for that?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Let us be clear. Quebec has control over recruiting, receiving, integrating and settling immigrants. There is no mystery there. However, the federal department continues to play an overall role. One of its roles has to do with research. We discovered that there is much less research on anglophones in Quebec than on the experience of francophone immigrants outside Quebec. That is why our recommendation is directed not at the Government of Quebec, but at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, to ensure that research is more responsive to community needs.

There is already some purely statistical research that we used, and it is very useful. We based some of our findings on that research. More qualitative research is conducted through a contract process rather than through grants and contributions. Consequently, institutions that conduct research that better reflects the needs of anglophone communities have a hard time accessing that money.

Currently in Quebec, there are some things being done to receive anglophone immigrants that work very well. We wanted people to know that, and I quoted Mayor Labeaume at a forum on integrating immigrants to Quebec City. From what people told me, immigrants integrate very well into Quebec society. They talked about the importance of having anglophone institutions in the community to facilitate their integration.

•(1540)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Your answer is very timely because you talked about research. Because of the changes to the census, some witnesses say they lack reliable data.

I will now move on to something else.

In 2010, the Conference Board of Canada released a report that painted a picture of the economic potential of immigrants to Canada in terms of innovation, not official languages. The report reveals that the economy loses \$5.9 billion every year because the immigrants who come here are underemployed in relation to their skills.

Do you feel that we do a good enough job of preparing people who want to come to Canada? Do we paint an accurate picture for immigrants who come to Canada? Could we do better?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I think we could always do better. In speaking with groups of immigrants, I discovered that before leaving their country, they had not been as well informed as we would have liked about job opportunities and what our country is like. I talked to some francophone immigrants to Toronto who told me that they were surprised to discover that French was not spoken everywhere in Toronto. I asked them why they thought it would be. They told me that the federal government's websites are all in both languages. That was the first time I realized that admirable respect for linguistic duality could mislead immigrants before they leave their country.

It is very important that immigrants be better informed before they leave. In fact, that is one of our recommendations.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** I would like to share a personal experience.

From 1998 to 2003, I lived in Turkey. I noticed that our country was the only G7 nation that did not have a cultural centre in Istanbul. That is true around the world. I wrote to the then minister, Bill Graham, who told me that the government did not have the necessary resources. France has the Alliance française, Great Britain has the British Council, Italy has a network of cultural centres, Japan has the Japan Foundation, Germany has the Goethe-Institut and the United States has cultural centres all over the world.

It is shameful that a country like Canada is unable to showcase its culture on the world stage. How can we succeed in doing that if we do not allocate the necessary resources to setting up a human infrastructure instead of creating websites and print propaganda?

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

Mr. Fraser.

• (1545)

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I will not comment on the nature of the communications on the government's websites in general, but I would say that the information on the website is very individualized. It is useful to individuals, but not to communities.

I think that that was one of the pillars of Canada's foreign policy in the past. Cultural diplomacy pays off in a big way in terms of showing Canada to the world. However, since this is somewhat outside my mandate, I will not comment any further.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Gourde.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for joining us today, Mr. Fraser.

Last week you submitted your report, and certain parts of it were criticized by the French-language media in Quebec. Would you like to provide any clarifications in response to that criticism?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** There is a rumour going around that I apparently recommended an increase in anglophone immigration to Quebec. That is not the case. Nothing in the report suggests increasing anglophone immigration to Quebec. I am very aware of Quebec's responsibility in the area of immigration, and my recommendations were intended only for one federal department, namely Citizenship and Immigration Canada. I recommended that the department focus more effectively the research it has already

committed to do to ensure that its efforts are better aligned with the needs of the community, and that it recognize and assume its responsibilities by taking positive measures to promote the vitality of the anglophone community, as stipulated under the act, across all government institutions.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you, Mr. Fraser.

Let us now move to the other side of the country.

You spoke about incentives that are available to Canadian entrepreneurs to attract French speakers to western Canada. Can you give us more details on what could be an incentive? How can we encourage more French speakers to settle in our official language minority communities across the country, other than in Quebec?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I think that we have to encourage employers to participate in job fairs organized by Destination Canada and to make them more aware of the importance or the benefits of having bilingual employees who are able to communicate with francophones. I know, for example, that western companies want to penetrate the Quebec market. However, to do that, they need people who speak French. We can already see that in western Canada francophone immigration has become a considerable asset for official language minority communities. Newcomers account for 30% of francophones in British Columbia, 20% in Alberta, 15% in Ontario and 17% in New Brunswick. In other words, immigration already plays an important role for communities and their institutions. I think this is important, since only 2% of immigrants settling outside Quebec are francophone.

It would really be very important to bring this proportion up to at least 4%, which is the national percentage. There are, however, some differences to consider in this regard. In New Brunswick, for example, where French speakers represent a third of the population, that 4% figure would not be helpful. Any government initiative must recognize the specific needs of the provinces and communities, which are quite distinct.

• (1550)

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** I have one last question for you, Mr. Fraser.

Do you think that western Canada entrepreneurs offer internships to young francophones, whether they are from Quebec or from other French-speaking countries? Often these are post-secondary and university students, who might later be recruited to work in their company. They could live the French experience in western Canada through short-term jobs and work placements of two, four or even six months. In your opinion, is this a practice that is already in place or that would be desirable?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** That would be a very desirable practice. There have already been similar programs. For example, there is a network of hotels and inns in Manitoba that signed an agreement with a school of hospitality in Belgium. Students come to Manitoba every year to work in small inns. All this is connected to a francophone tourism campaign organized by the CDEM in Manitoba. This is one of the Société franco-manitobaine's initiatives to support such exchanges. In addition, journalists were hired to work in minority newspapers in western Canada.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you.

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

Ms. St-Denis, you now have the floor.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Mr. Fraser, thank you for joining us today. I would like to thank your team as well.

All of us here certainly support the existence of our two official languages and consider it important to develop communities in both official languages. Do you feel that the government has a similar desire, namely a willingness to do that?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** In that regard—

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** I am talking about the government in general.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I did notice one thing. The current government has renewed the previous government's action plan to produce a roadmap that was again renewed. This program is now more focused on education, immigration and support for communities. This represents a significant commitment on the part of the government.

With regard to the departments and their commitment to the delivery of services, language of work or positive measures, that depends on the department. I have found that when the leaders show a desire to succeed, results follow.

Often, a deputy minister arrives in a department and discovers that our assessment of that department is negative. He then decides that that has to change. He comes up with an action plan to make changes and we see the results. If the deputy minister, the minister or both convey to employees that this is an important value for the department, there is an immediate change.

This also works the other way. If the message conveyed is that this is not very important, it is not a priority and that there are other things that are more important, then there is an almost immediate disengagement.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Do you have some power in that regard, apart from submitting a report? As we know, a report shows that you support a number of things, but do you have a slightly broader and substantial power in this area?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I do not have the power to impose penalties, but I hope I have some influence. The discussion focuses on how to get results and the best strategy to follow.

I think I have used all the tools at my disposal, whether in face-to-face conversations with deputy ministers or discussions with the departments' executive committee, or still through legal action in the courts. Each case is different and requires a strategic analysis to find the best way to get there, but I do not have the power to impose fines, for example.

• (1555)

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** I will ask you a specific question, since you want to bring this up.

The government has decided to transfer 34 federal employees in my riding to Miramichi. We know that Miramichi is an English-speaking town. Everyone knows that federal jobs are good jobs. We are taking federal jobs away from a community already facing many

financial and employment difficulties to send them elsewhere. Is this not a sign of a certain who-cares attitude? The government said this was happening because it wanted to renew the file, gather the problems together in one place and all of that.

In my riding, francophones represent 99.5% of the population, but the government thinks that it is not a big deal to take very specialized officials and encourage them to leave their French-speaking world. They could be given the choice of going to Miramichi. The government says that it will meet with these employees and maybe find them a job, but not in their community. It could be anywhere else.

What do you think of the government's attitude towards francophone communities?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** This is always a decision that makes it more difficult to deliver services, hire francophone employees and retain a certain level of francophones. The same thing happened during the transfer of the Canadian Tourism Commission to Vancouver. Regarding the transfer of employees in Miramichi, this is not just about people in your riding—

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** It happens pretty much everywhere.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** There are also employees in Ottawa and Gatineau who are affected and who are facing that decision, namely whether to relocate or seek other employment in the area.

This is part of a policy. There is a regional investment policy and a regional restructuring policy.

The problem that occurs when a department undergoes regional restructuring is the following. Employees who until then had the right to work in French and who reported to French-speaking supervisors start reporting to a supervisor in a region that is not designated bilingual. The right of these employees to work in French becomes more complicated and theoretical. There are departments where this restructuring has caused a real problem in terms of respecting the right to work in French.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Daniel, you have the floor.

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Commissioner, for being here with your team. It's always good to see you here, obviously to put you in the hot seat a little bit.

In your report, you mention that only 2% of immigrants coming to settle in provinces other than Quebec speak French as their official language. You go on to say that this is too low to ensure the vitality of French-speaking communities outside of Quebec. I would fully agree with you on that.

One of the things that concerns me, as an immigrant myself, and one of the reasons that I and many other immigrants have come here is jobs, prosperity, and moving things forward. In many of these communities, they don't have the businesses to be able to do that. In fact, we've had witnesses here who have told us that many of the younger French-speaking people have to leave for education and that they don't generally come back, because there aren't jobs there.

Can you comment and tell me your feelings on that and how that impacts the immigration status of getting more people in?

• (1600)

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I think it depends very definitely on the region that you're talking about. If you're talking about Saskatchewan and Alberta where employment is booming, or has been booming—we don't know what the latest employment results are going to be—that's one thing. If you're talking about immigration to the Acadian peninsula, that's something different. It is a continuing challenge to attract immigrants to certain provinces. Immigrants usually do a certain amount of due diligence on the economic health of the regions they chose to move to.

I think one of the things that we have observed, which is reflected in our recommendations, is that it's much easier for immigrants who come from francophone countries and who do not necessarily have French as their mother tongue but speak it as their first official language. I'm thinking of people who come from Senegal and their mother tongue would be Wolof or people who come from the Maghreb and their mother tongue would be Arabic.

Unless the organizations that are welcoming those people have been made aware of the institutions that exist in the French-language communities that can welcome those people and help their adaptation to the community, they're going to be directed to English-language institutions.

I visited a community centre in Hamilton and people in the francophone community centre said that they run into immigrants quite regularly who have been here for a couple of years and say, if we'd only known that there was a French-language school, if we had only known that your clinic offers services in French, we would have joined but our kids have now been in school for two years, they like their teachers, we like our doctor. Unless those people are informed before their departure, and accompanied better when they arrive, and supported by minority language communities, then they and the community lose out.

There are certainly some communities, francophone and anglophone, in which the challenge is one of exodus. But you'd be surprised at the number of highly creative immigrants to Canada who are doing artistic and creative and imaginative and innovative work in communities where you would not think there were immigrants at all.

When I was in Métis-sur-Mer, just down river from Rimouski, I had a conversation with a group of artists, a significant number of whom were immigrants and had chosen to move to this beautiful part of Quebec and were being supported by English-language artistic community organizations that helped their integration into Quebec society as a whole.

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Okay, thank you.

We've also had interesting information from one of the councillors from Moncton, I believe, who came here. They are clearly going out in a very proactive way to set up francophone-related businesses to create an environment for all of that. They are performing way above the average in attracting francophone people, etc.

Why can't that model be expanded to some of these other communities so they can generate revenue? As I said, immigrants

generally come here for economic benefit. They want jobs whatever the field is, whether it's the arts, engineering, or whatever. If there aren't those jobs there, they're not going to stay there. Right?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Absolutely.

I think it is at discussions like this, discussions that I hope our studies and reports can foster, that will lead to a better understanding of best practices. You mentioned Moncton. I often talk about Winnipeg where there was also a very active process welcoming immigrants and refugees at the airport, accompanying them to temporary housing, registering their children at school, finding them francophone medical facilities, and also providing them with English lessons, but in the context of a francophone organization, because there was a real recognition that if they're going to be working in Winnipeg, they're going to need English.

I think that often the most creative solutions to problems are found in community organizations, but often the challenge is to ensure that those best practices are shared and understood across the country.

• (1605)

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

Mr. Chisu.

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

Thank you very much for coming in front of us again.

I was really interested in your report. You are basing the report, as you said, on the concerns you have about anglophone immigration into Quebec and francophone immigration outside of Quebec. Could you tell us what your concerns are based on?

Following that I will continue with another question expressing my concerns.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** My concern, in a nutshell, is that if you average across the country, francophones outside Quebec represent 4% of the population and are only receiving and welcoming 2% of the immigrants, and 98% of the immigrants are joining the English-speaking majority. At that rate it will be very difficult for francophone communities to reproduce themselves and to thrive and prosper.

It is an unfortunate reality, and this speaks to another piece of legislation that I talked to earlier in another committee. I think it is unfortunate that the decision on the level of services designated for communities is based on percentages, because if a francophone community or an anglophone community in Quebec drops below 5%, it loses the same level of services it had previously. That can be damaging, and I think it is damaging to the vitality of that community. This is one of the reasons why I'm supporting the idea of using other indices of vitality rather than percentages, because if you use percentages you're allowing the rate of growth of the majority to define the services and the rights of the minority. I don't think that's appropriate or fair.

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu:** As you know, this issue is also connected with jobs and exercising your profession. I am telling you this from my own experience. I'm a licensed professional engineer in the Province of Ontario. To be licensed in the Province of Quebec, I must pass the language exam, not vice versa.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Yes.

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu:** If I go into an anglo community in the province of Quebec, I will not be able to exercise my profession until I've passed the French examination.

It's the same thing, but in a much different way in the Province of Ontario, where the language is not so important. Of course, you need to be able to converse in English, but the level of conversation in French is a much higher requirement in the Province of Quebec than English in the Province of Ontario.

That is also true around the country.

Speaking about interprovincial barriers that affect the minority linguistic community in this way, if you are looking at not only engineering but also at other trades and professions that are regulated provincially, I think they are not just looking at Immigration Canada and how they can increase the 2% of services. I say this because these are professions. If you are not able to exercise your profession, then you will go to where you will be able to work in your profession. If it is difficult to exercise your profession in any of the provinces, even in one in which you would like to establish yourself, like the Province of Ontario, or Quebec if you are a francophone, you will have a problem with that.

I think that speaking with a professional association, in health or in nursing, it is important to contribute to the vitality of the minority languages. I don't know if you have ever thought about that.

•(1610)

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Only insofar as I have looked at some of the figures that show that a high proportion of health providers in Ontario are coming from francophone immigrants. I don't dare to try to quote you a figure off the top of my head, but francophone immigrants are making a significant contribution to the provision of health care, in French, in Ontario.

In terms of those interprovincial barriers, you're right. Another problem that the English community faces in Quebec—and I am fully cognizant of this reality and am not criticizing this or recommending that it be changed—is that anglophone immigrants who move to Quebec are not going to be able to send their children to English school. That is a similar kind of obstacle to the one that you represented, and to the extent that schools are important institutions for the minority language communities, that is a challenge.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you.

Mr. Gravelle.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank the witnesses for appearing before us today.

My first question is about the cuts that were made to CBC/Radio-Canada. In my town, Sudbury, seven or nine French-speaking employees—I do not know the exact number—were laid off, while on the English side, only one person was thanked for his services. Personally, I do not find it fair that francophones are losing so many jobs. I believe the broadcaster can no longer provide the service that

francophones are used to. Many francophones live in northern Ontario. For them, the only radio station that is available in French is the Radio-Canada station.

Do you think it would be appropriate to verify which services Radio-Canada provides in northern Ontario?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** That is a very interesting idea. For a long time now, I have been talking about the importance of establishing stable and long-term funding for CBC/Radio-Canada. I think it was last year that I pointed out that, of 18 public broadcasters in the developed world, Radio-Canada ranked sixteenth when it came to funding. In my view, the fact that hockey games are no longer broadcast on CBC/Radio-Canada has dealt a huge blow to the financing of this institution.

We went to court to demand that the CBEF Windsor programming be maintained, and we were successful. The Federal Court stayed part of its decision before the licence renewal by the CRTC. The latter took up our licence renewal arguments with respect to CBEF Windsor. The other issue was whether we had jurisdiction over CBC/Radio-Canada. A Federal Court judge said that we had indeed shared jurisdiction. We filed an appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal, and I can assure you that this will end before the Supreme Court. Indeed, the party that is not successful before the Federal Court of Appeal will file an appeal to the Supreme Court.

It would be fascinating to do such a verification but before the legal process has determined whether I have or have not jurisdiction over CBC/Radio-Canada, I cannot audit this organization. This matter is currently before the courts.

•(1615)

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** In other words, we have to fight to be able to speak our official language, namely French, across the country.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** That is the fate of any minority: to fight for recognition and equal status. The most difficult words in the Official Languages Act are “the equality of status and use of English and French”.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Thank you.

My second question has to do with Air Canada.

I read and re-read the French version of your report and I thought I did not understand it. I then read in English, and I understood quite well. As part of your audit, you made 12 recommendations to Air Canada.

The company has implemented only one of them. Can you tell me a little about the remaining 11 recommendations and the specific reasons why they have not been implemented? Was that too much to ask of Air Canada?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Air Canada has implemented recommendation 4, which asks it to “develop a new directive or policy that takes into account its structure and its realities, and and that covers all of its responsibilities as set forth under Part IV of the Official Languages Act”, namely services to the public.

The following are the recommendations that have been partially implemented. I will read them out.

Recommendation 2

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada ensure it has the necessary human and financial resources to implement Part IV of the Official Languages Act.

Recommendation 3

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada establish a new action plan on the effective implementation of Part IV....

Recommendation 5

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada take concrete and effective measures to raise awareness among managers, service directors, flight attendants, lead agents, and customer sales and service agents....

Recommendation 7

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that, when negotiations begin, Air Canada fully examine all collective agreements for the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada....

Recommendation 9

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada develop a strategy to ensure that flight attendants and customer sales and service agents understand the importance of bilingual greetings and that they make an active offer of services in both official languages on board aircraft and in airports where Air Canada....

Recommendation 12

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada institute structured monitoring mechanisms in order to ensure the availability and quality of services in both official languages in all its areas of activity, as well as those of Jazz, both inflight on designated bilingual routes and in airports....

The following are the recommendations that have not been implemented:

Recommendation 1

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada develop and implement an accountability framework for official languages....

Recommendation 6

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada include a section on implementing Part IV of the Official Languages Act in its mechanisms for evaluating the performance of senior managers....

Recommendation 8

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada carry out an analysis of its bilingual service signage in all service areas in which passengers circulate, and subsequently establish consistent standards....

Recommendation 10

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada thoroughly examine:

- a) the number of bilingual service directors, flight attendants, lead agents, customer sales and service agents, and managers required to ensure that services of equal quality are provided in English and French...
- b) the planning for the provision of bilingual services for all its activities, as well as the assignment of bilingual agents to various service areas....

Recommendation 11

The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that Air Canada consult official language minority communities in order to take their specific needs into account....

• (1620)

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

[English]

Mr. Leung, you have the floor.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC):** *Merci, monsieur le président.*

Thank you, witnesses.

My questions are directed at Mr. Fraser. One of the tasks of parliamentarians or government is to ensure that we maintain our

global competitiveness into the 21st century and that we also position Canada in the best possible position to be competitive in the 21st century. For most immigrants who come to Canada for that, we would look at things like whether Canada offers the best educational institutions, especially in light of the past where the Jesuit institutions were some of the best.

We also look at whether Canada offers that economic prosperity that, probably a generation ago, the province of Quebec supplied, from the mining industry, the forestry industry, and also from manufacturing. But in today's world, we're looking globally and we need to be competitive. Can you comment on how maintaining that fluent, bilingual environment in Canada allows us the opportunity to address our competitiveness, especially in light of the fact that we also need to be addressing languages in Asia—Chinese, Japanese, Korean—and in Latin America, Spanish, and perhaps in Africa, where there are more than a few official languages.

Perhaps you can share your comments and thoughts with us on that.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** My answer is twofold.

I recently read two studies on the economic advantages for Canada and New Brunswick in terms of bilingual nature, in terms of increased trade with francophone countries, and for New Brunswick in terms of the degree to which its ability to offer services in both languages has resulted in major economic advances measured not in millions but in billions. Not only for those who are bilingual, but also for those who are unilingual, it has become a service centre for call centres. That is because they have a bilingual workforce in which they have a sufficient number of bilingual employees who can do service calls in French, but also they hire unilingual English employees who serve the English clientele.

In terms of knowledge of other languages, other than Canada's two official languages, one of the things that I have observed is that knowledge of the other official language is often a stepping stone to learning third languages. Speaking anecdotally, giving examples of the friends of my children and the children of my friends, I can literally name for you young people who have gone to China and learned Chinese, who have worked on water projects in Vietnam and learned Vietnamese, who've taught English in Japan and learned Japanese, who've worked on development projects in Central America and learned Spanish, and expatriate musicians who are living in Berlin and have learned German. They all learned the other official language first.

Learning French is not a barrier for anglophones. Learning English for francophones is not a barrier to the rest of the world. It is a bridge to the rest of the world. There is one amazing thing I've learned from all those young people I have met over the years who have, in many cases, gone through immersion, or in the case of francophone Quebecers have learned English often outside the classroom. It's that learning a second language at a young age demystifies language learning. It becomes, for a young person, fairly natural that if you find yourself in an environment where people are speaking another language, you set to work to learn how to communicate with the people around you. In terms of multinational corporations that have jobs and offices around the world, I have read that one of the values that Canadians bring to those positions is often language skill, and with that, a greater cultural sensitivity than is often true for the unilingual person.

• (1625)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Fraser and Mr. Leung.  
[Translation]

Ms. Day, go ahead.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would first like to welcome all of the witnesses.

Mr. Fraser, I know that you have been bombarded with some very interesting questions for the past few minutes. I will try not to be too abrupt or aggressive in asking my questions, but we do have a number of things to clarify.

If a person is an engineer and is going to go work in Germany, it's best if that person speaks German, even if he or she speaks a second language. The situation in Quebec is completely different from that in Canada. In Quebec, the anglophone minority represents between 13.5% and 14% of the population, while francophone minorities in Canada represent 6% of the population.

Moreover, 42% of francophones in Quebec speak English. The rate of bilingualism is close to 50%. Canada-wide, bilingualism is at just 6%. Some 87% of francophones outside Quebec are bilingual. I feel that we're comparing apples and oranges. The two situations are not on equal footing.

Is there a comparative study of the treatment of linguistic minorities outside Quebec and those in Quebec? Did you base the recommendations you made on a rigorous study?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I based my recommendations on a statistical study conducted and published by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It is a statistical profile of anglophone immigrants in Quebec. The numbers in that section of the report are from that statistical profile.

Personally, the number I found for bilingualism among Quebec francophones is actually 38%.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** That's from 2011.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Yes.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** This is 2015.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Since there is no annual census, we have to use the numbers from the 2011 census.

It is clear that we live in a country with some asymmetry in terms of immigration from a linguistic and a resource perspective. Thanks to the Cullen-Couture agreement, which was negotiated with Quebec 35 years ago and has become the Canada-Quebec agreement relating to immigration and temporary admission of aliens, Quebec controls its immigration. I make no recommendations about the number of immigrants to Quebec. That is entirely up to the Government of Quebec.

My recommendation has to do with the federal department's responsibility. That's my mandate.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** I would now like to talk about the express entry system.

When the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration appeared here on March 31, 2015, he said that there are 22,000 people in the express entry pool. Of those 22,000 people, just 200 are francophone, which amounts to 0.09% of the total. According to the preliminary data, do you believe that the express entry system is a good way to achieve the 4.4% target for francophone immigrants outside Quebec, which was established in 2013?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** The numbers I've seen really concern me too. Programs that encouraged francophone immigration were terminated and replaced by express entry.

Given that express entry was implemented in January, it's too early to draw any final conclusions, but the numbers you mentioned are very troubling.

• (1630)

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Minority francophone communities outside Quebec came up with recommendations to make it easier for francophone immigrants to join their communities, but those recommendations are not being acted upon.

For example, communities have recommended that Canada continue to participate in events in Tunis, Paris and Belgium to recruit francophones who could fill certain gaps and that the express entry questionnaire include a question about spoken language to find out if a person's first or second language spoken is French; that would be worth a few extra points. Francophone communities outside Quebec have made all kinds of recommendations.

What do you think is the best way to get Citizenship and Immigration to adopt those recommendations and set them up as goals?

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

Mr. Fraser, you have the floor.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I mentioned in the report that eliminating support for employers to participate in job fairs had a harmful effect on the recruitment of immigrants and employees to work for employers in anglophone communities. For one thing, the francophone significant benefit program was terminated. I can't talk about that because we have received complaints and are investigating.

I think there is a series of measures under consideration, and I do not doubt the minister's good faith when he says he is committed. He created a francophone immigration secretariat in his department, but what I'm interested in is results.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fraser. Thank you, Ms. Day. Thanks to everyone.

We will suspend for five minutes.

• (1630) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Order, please.

We are resuming the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. In accordance with Standing Order 81, we will discuss and vote for or against the main estimates 2015-16, specifically vote 1 under "Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages", which was referred to the committee on February 24, 2015.

[English]

We're here with the Commissioner of Official Languages to discuss and to vote on the estimates for the amount of \$18,556,100. The remaining \$2,277,425 was previously approved by Parliament under statute.

We will begin by giving the Commissioner of Official Languages the floor for an opening statement.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and honourable committee members.

Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to appear before you today to present the main estimates for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

In addition to Madam Saikaley and Madam Donaghy, I am accompanied at this hearing by Mario Séguin, interim assistant commissioner in the corporate management branch, and Colette Lagacé, director of finance. I am expecting that they will answer all the hard questions.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** My office has a budget of \$20.8 million to carry out its mandate during the 2015-16 fiscal year. This amount includes \$13.556 million in salaries. Our workforce consists of 160 full-time equivalents.

[Translation]

In 2015-16, I will continue to encourage key decision makers to make linguistic duality an integral part of Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations in 2017. I will also take on a leadership role with other language ombudsmen to increase the promotion of linguistic duality in Canada.

[English]

For some time now, my office has recognized certain recurring issues of compliance with the Official Languages Act. In 2015-16 my office will address this by investing in identifying solutions to these systemic problems. We will develop a strategy to address active offer and services of equal quality to the public in English and French. We will also prepare a report that will cover my office's accomplishments to improve compliance with the act, including our interventions before the courts, over the 10 years that I will have been Commissioner of Official Languages.

[Translation]

My office will continue its work to support the vitality of official language minority communities. Specifically, we will intervene with federal departments and other partners to follow up on the recommendations made in our report on francophone immigration and in my 2014-15 annual report.

We will monitor the implementation of the recommendations made in the study on the bilingual capacity of the superior court judiciary, and intervene as necessary. We will also work with key partners to develop an intervention strategy for early childhood development.

[English]

Finally, we will continue to manage change as we optimize our business processes while ensuring that employees in my office can continue to work productively in a safe and healthy environment. During the last year of my second mandate, my office will start preparing for a positive transition to my successor in 2016.

Our operations are divided into three program activities: protection of Canadians' language rights, promotion of linguistic duality, and internal services.

[Translation]

To protect the language rights of Canadians, my office investigates and resolves complaints, conducts audits, evaluates the performance of federal institutions and intervenes before the courts when appropriate. The expenditures planned for this activity in 2015-16 are \$6.9 million.

We will focus on the following initiatives in response to our organizational priorities: continue to investigate all admissible complaints in the most efficient way possible with the resources that are available and reduce the number of complaints in our inventory. Internal restructuring will result in more efficient workload management and better follow-up of recommendations issued during investigations.

• (1645)

[English]

We will examine the provision of active offer and the delivery of services of equal quality to the public in English and French, and develop a strategy to address these issues in the long term.

I will report on my accomplishments as Commissioner of Official Languages and on the challenges and opportunities for the future. The report will include an assessment of 33 federal institutions that have received report cards over the past 10 years. The institutions' most recent report cards will be published in May 2016.

I will also appear before the Federal Court of Appeal in Canada (Commissioner of Official Languages) v. CBC/Radio-Canada to defend my concurrent jurisdiction in terms of applying part VII of the act to CBC/Radio-Canada's programming activities.

[Translation]

To promote Canadian linguistic duality, my office communicates regularly with parliamentarians, official language minority communities, federal institutions and the Canadian public. Expenditures linked to the promotion of linguistic duality account for \$6.9 million.

My office will continue to focus on the following initiatives in response to our organizational priorities, while delivering on our expected results. We will work with key partners and decision makers to ensure that celebrations linked to the 150th anniversary of Confederation and the major sporting events that take place on our soil reflect Canada's linguistic duality.

Partners include Canadian Heritage, Sport Canada, the Toronto 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games Organizing Committee and the National Organizing Committee for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

[English]

We will continue to work with other language ombudsmen in Canada and host the second conference of the International Association of Language Commissioners in Ottawa.

We will also identify official languages issues related to early childhood development and intervene with federal departments and other partners to follow up on the recommendations in our report on francophone immigration, our 2014-15 annual report, our study on the bilingual capacity of the superior court judiciary, and our study on English-speaking seniors in Quebec.

[Translation]

We will deliver presentations at schools across the country to continue promoting linguistic duality as a Canadian value. We will also launch my office's new YouTube channel to raise awareness of Canadians' bilingualism and of their use of our two official languages.

Our third program activity allows my office to assemble resources that support the organization as a whole. Internal services include asset management, finance and human resources management. Essential to any organization, these services ensure that taxpayers' dollars are used efficiently and transparently. This activity has been allocated a budget of \$6.9 million.

[English]

Internal services will focus on the following initiatives in 2015-16: explore opportunities to further streamline business processes, with possible areas of process review including staff arrival and departure, budget management, information management, and management and oversight; continue the transition from the Human Resource Information System to PeopleSoft; integrate government-approved case management software into our enterprise information management platform and introduce technology tools to help employees work more effectively as our needs evolve; and begin preparing briefing materials to support the transition to a new commissioner in 2016 and plan for the internal communications effort to inform staff of the upcoming change of leadership.

[Translation]

Like other federal organizations, we have been asked to streamline our operations while absorbing increasing costs. As our budget gets tighter and as our staff gets smaller through attrition, it will become even harder to continue meeting our performance standards and maintaining the public's confidence in our ability to fulfill our mandate.

Thank you for your attention. I would now like to take the remaining time to answer any questions you may have.

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

We will have 30 minutes for questions and comments.

[English]

We will begin with Mr. Nicholls, then go to Mr. Gourde, and finish with Madame St-Denis.

Mr. Nicholls, go ahead.

• (1650)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Commissioner.

Under subsection 78(3) of the Official Languages Act, you, the commissioner, have the authority to ask the court for "leave to intervene in any adjudicative proceedings relating to the status or use of English or French." I would like to ask you a question specifically on the CBC/Radio-Canada Windsor case. How does your office fund its intervention in this case, and how does the CBC/Radio-Canada fund its appeal? Could you clarify this for the committee?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** It's funded internally with our existing resources. We have a staff of lawyers who are excellent, who have developed a high degree of expertise in language law and a certain amount of hard-won experience intervening before the courts.

It is an honour and a pleasure to work with staff of such high quality and enormous commitment. It becomes simply a matter of how we manage the priorities within the legal affairs branch.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Could you clarify how the office is funding that legal affairs branch? Is the legal branch a paid branch of Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Yes. If you look at it within the categories that I described, that funding fits into the protection basket, if you like, rather than the promotion basket. It is part of the share of the funding that is dedicated to protection.

One of the elements I would underline is that because we quite often intervene in cases where the Government of Canada has intervened on the other side, our lawyers are not justice department lawyers. They are paid according to the scale established for lawyers inside the public service and are evaluated on the same basis and have the same rating, but they are not justice department lawyers.

We have seven lawyers, and the budget they have is a million dollars a year.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** So if I'm clear, Department of Justice lawyers, Government of Canada lawyers, are working on the other side, the appeal side?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** No. In this case it is CBC and they have, at the Federal Court level, hired external counsel to represent them. Borden Ladner Gervais was the firm they hired to represent them.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** In view of the complaints that have come before your office, in your 2015-16 report on plans and priorities you set four priorities, one of which is to identify solutions to recurring compliance issues. Earlier in this meeting and in the previous meeting, we talked about Air Canada and the difficulty in getting certain organizations to comply with the Official Languages Act. How do you intend to tackle these compliance issues?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** With respect to Air Canada, I had a meeting with president Rovinescu, the CEO of Air Canada. It was a constructive meeting. I was worried that a negative relationship between our two organizations had developed, and I wanted to clear the air. I found it a very cordial and useful meeting.

I'm also going to be appearing before the Emerson task force, which is doing a review of the Transportation Act.

In terms of other recurring issues, we are doing a study on active offer. One of the things we have noticed year after year is that federal institutions, quite clearly, have not integrated active offer into their culture of service. We want to find out why. We want to look at the best practices that exist in those areas of federal institutions where they have done so, those that have been successful, and look at how that situation can be improved.

You know, the traditional definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. We've recognized that there is a recurrent problem and we're going to try to see how we can do something differently to get some different results.

• (1655)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** In light of that quote, do you think that maybe something different to do should be your being offered more powers to enforce compliance?

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

Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** That's for parliamentarians to decide. It would involve a restructuring of the organization. It would mean having tribunal-like authorities. My own sense is that I am not the person to preside over a quasi-judicial tribunal. I have never asked for that power, and I'm trying to use all the powers that are now available to me under the act. If Parliament were to decide that the Commissioner of Official Languages should become the chair of a quasi-judicial tribunal, they would obviously need someone who had the professional training to play that role.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Gourde.

[*Translation*]

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

Thanks again, Mr. Fraser.

At the beginning of your presentation, you said that you would focus on Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations in 2017. A few weeks ago, Canadian Heritage unveiled plans for the 150th anniversary celebrations, plans that include a bilingual component.

What do you think the plans should include in terms of how Canadians can honour the reality of Canada's two official languages? In my region, there is an organization that wants to commemorate the arrival of the Irish in our region and their influence over the past 150 years. There are other francophone communities in western Canada that could do the same thing. There are now many non-francophones in communities of francophone immigrants that settled in the west. Many francophones have lost their ability to speak French, but their names remain. We know that many of the francophones who settled in western Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s came from Quebec.

What would the office of the commissioner like to see in those plans?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I'm glad to hear that you will be commemorating the arrival of the Irish in your region. That's exactly the kind of thing we want to see.

There are two elements to consider here. The first is what I would call content. You mentioned important elements, such as the arrival of the Irish, the colonization of western Canada by francophones, the role that francophones and anglophones have played together and the history of linguistic accommodation in Canada. People tend to see the negative aspects of that history, but there are positive aspects too. Both aspects should be addressed in terms of the content.

There is also the element of presentation. We have already developed a manual for organizers of major sporting events. It explains how to organize an event keeping in mind respect for both official languages. We need to plan and collaborate with communities and in many cases with schools. We adapted the manual for organizers of community celebrations that will take place in 2017.

By planning and investing time and effort, it is possible to ensure that francophones and anglophones travelling across the country will be able to fully participate in these celebrations that give both official languages their rightful place.

For example, I would like to talk about what was done in Prince George for the Canada Games. A fairly remote community in the middle of British Columbia made a major effort to ensure that the games provided a welcoming atmosphere for francophone and anglophone athletes and their families. There were signs, manuals, announcements and documentation in both official languages. It was a huge success. Their best practices can be used by other communities planning celebrations for 2017.

• (1700)

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Do you believe that the celebrations will provide an opportunity for people to feel proud of bilingualism? It looks like you have an answer ready.

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Absolutely.

I strongly believe that Expo '67 in Montreal was one of the factors that contributed to the adoption of the Official Languages Act in 1969. That was exactly the same feeling of pride. That event gave us an opportunity to recognize that it was possible to hold an amazing event not just for Montreal or Canada, but for the whole world, while fully respecting both official languages. All Canadians were proud of that event, and it really opened people's eyes.

I truly believe that that pride helped Canadians realize—not necessarily consciously, but unconsciously—that it is possible to have a system that fully respects both official languages. I have high hopes that that pride can be rekindled even though the 2017 celebrations will be handled completely differently.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** With passage of time between Expo67 and the 2017 celebrations, the situation has definitely evolved, but what can we look forward to and hope for in 2067?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I must admit, I often find it hard to predict what will happen up until 2017.

In any case, this has to do with certain points in the annual report. Living in a minority situation is always challenging, and respect for both official languages in a context where two mainly unilingual societies exist side by side requires ongoing efforts. It isn't like paving a road or building a piece of infrastructure that we no longer need to think about once the work is complete. I am talking about the ongoing efforts that are needed to enhance the minority situation and support the vitality of both official languages in Canada.

I hope the issue of identity will be strong enough to ensure that the importance of both official languages is not called into question regarding Canada's future.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We now go to Ms. St-Denis.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Mr. Fraser, it is philosophically stimulating to listen to you. Everyone agrees with you; however, let's come back to the budget.

There is a big event to prepare for, and yet your budget has been reduced from \$24 million to just a little over \$20 million in the past two years. Overall, this amounts to less than \$1 per Canadian. In other words, every Canadian pays less than \$1 to promote linguistic duality. That is why I find the situation a little disheartening, but that is the reality and what is being asked of you.

I have two questions. They both have to do with the budget, and not on my comments.

Does your budget allow you to reach all stakeholders in all regions that have minority-language communities? If not, are you able to do so only in large urban centres and in larger municipalities?

In addition, you said that about 15% of your budget is spent on legal proceedings. You talked about \$1 million and \$6.9 million for staff.

Do you think that is sufficient?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** There is quite a bit of pressure in terms of the budget, which I will explain briefly.

You mentioned \$24 million. Some of those additional funds were used to pay for the move to our new location at 30 Victoria Street in Gatineau. The Treasury Board gave us that money. It is an accounting exercise. In fact, we are using less space, but we are receiving the same amount of money, so we can pay some of that back, and it won't have an impact on our budget. On paper, yes, there is that \$24 million, but it comes in the context of a long-term repayment program, since we are paying less for our rent. Given that it isn't money that we actually receive for our operations, it is an accounting matter.

Did I explain the situation clearly?

**Ms. Colette Lagacé (Director, Finance and Procurement, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages):** Yes, the exercise that paid for the move from 344 Slater to the new location at 30 Victoria Street can be considered an advance on parliamentary appropriations. We were given an advance on funding. Considering the space we have been able to save, it was negotiated with Public Works and Government Services Canada. Every time we negotiate office space, Public Works and Government Services Canada is the central agency that provides us with our office space and it receives the funds. When the commissioner asks for additional funds for office space for staff, 13% of every application for funding goes to Public Works and Government Services Canada to provide us with the space we need to carry out our mandate.

Since we have reduced our office space considerably, Public Works and Government Services Canada has returned \$325,000 to us each year for the envelope for office space, and that money is being used to refinance our loan. It is not really a loan, but rather an advance on funding.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** What is the situation in the regions?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** We have a network of regional offices. We have an office in Moncton, for the Maritimes, an office in Toronto, an office in Sudbury, an office in Winnipeg, an office in Regina, an office in Edmonton and an office in Vancouver.

• (1710)

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Is there one in Montreal?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** I'm sorry, yes, we also have an office in Montreal.

In Moncton and Montreal, all staff are located in those offices. In western Canada, there is the Winnipeg office, but we also have a satellite office in Regina. There is the Toronto office and a satellite office in Sudbury. Similarly, there is an office in Edmonton and a satellite office in Vancouver.

We have changed the purpose of those regional offices somewhat, in part because my predecessor realized that, since the people who work in the regions also live in those communities, if they have to investigate complaints filed in the region, they ran the risk of an appearance of conflict of interest.

We restructured and decided that all investigators would be based here, in the national capital region, and that the people in the regions would be mandated to do promotion.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Do you think the 15% for lawyers and legal proceedings is sufficient?

**Mr. Graham Fraser:** Is it sufficient? We make decisions regarding legal action on a case-by-case basis. It has never occurred that we weren't able to pursue legal action because we didn't have enough resources.

There are other elements and other aspects about which we need to make difficult decisions, but so far, these are also strategic decisions, because we don't necessarily get involved at every stage.

As for CBC/Radio-Canada, we were managing the files in that regard. However, when a case has to go through all the stages before getting to the Supreme Court, we often get involved at the Supreme Court level, as was the case with the Rose-des-vents elementary school and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. There was also a case in Northwest Territories. We went there to take part in the proceedings, but that was several years ago.

We are able to make strategic decisions to determine where, when and at what level we need to get involved, and to see how we can use our resources as efficiently as possible.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. St-Denis and Mr. Fraser.

[English]

We'll end our questioning of the Commissioner of Official Languages on the estimates.

We have a vote on the estimates, and the committee can either adopt, reject, or reduce the estimates. I'll call the question.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$18,556,100

(Vote 1 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the chair report the estimates and the vote back to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Thank you to the Commissioner and the public servants who appeared with him for their support.

We'll suspend for five minutes.

•(1710) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1715)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** We are now resuming the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We are on item 3 on our

agenda, committee business. We will discuss the motion brought forward by Mr. Nicholls, who gave a notice of motion on April 28.

Before I turn it over to Mr. Nicholls, I would like to go to Mr. Gourde.

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

I would ask that we go in camera, please.

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay.

All those in favour of going in camera?

•(1720)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Can we have a recorded vote?

**The Chair:** Mr. Nicholls has requested a recorded vote.

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 3)

**The Chair:** The motion is defeated. We remain in public.

Mr. Daniel, you have a point of order.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** I wasn't sure what was being voted on.

**The Chair:** I appreciate that there was confusion, but the clerk took the vote and the decision is final.

The rules of procedure are as follows: once a vote is in process there can be no interruptions or points of order.

The clerk had the floor and conducted the vote. I'm sorry if people were confused about the vote that was in front of us, but those are the rules.

Mr. Daniel, go ahead.

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** I move a motion to adjourn.

**The Chair:** We have a motion to adjourn. It being a dilatory motion, it shall be put immediately.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair:** There's been a request for a recorded vote, and we will have that.

Before I give the clerk the floor, to be clear, the question being put is that this meeting do now adjourn.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4 )

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

This meeting is adjourned.





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