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Chair: Mr. René Arseneault



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• (0900)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.)): I'll now call the meeting to order.

We are starting the meeting a little late owing to some technical difficulties.

Welcome to the 49th meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Monday, May 30, 2022, the committee resumed consideration of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

Pursuant to our routine motion, I am informing the committee that all members have carried out the connection tests required prior to the meeting.

We are today resuming our clause-by-clause study of Bill C-13.

I would once again like to thank the officials who have come to support the committee by answering technical questions. Their presence is extremely helpful to us. I therefore welcome Ms. Julie Boyer, Mr. Marcel Fallu and Ms. Chantal Terrien, from the Department of Canadian Heritage, as well as Mr. Carsten Quell, from the Treasury Board Secretariat, and Mr. Warren Newman, from the Department of Justice.

We will therefore resume the clause-by-clause study of the bill.

(Clause 11)

The Chair: We had got to consideration of clause 11. I believe that at the end of our last meeting, we adopted amendment LIB-11, which was about clause 11 of the bill and had completed our study of this clause.

I'm now going to call for a vote on clause 11 as amended.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): I request a recorded division, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Fine.

Before voting, I'd like to point out that we are talking about clause 11 in its entirety. All amendments concerning this clause have been presented, debated and voted upon. We are now voting on clause 11 of Bill C-13 as amended.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Chair, we normally don't hold a recorded division on an entire clause. We simply proceed by unanimous consent.

The Chair: Yes, but there is no unanimous consent in this instance. That's what Mr. Beaulieu was insinuating.

We are experiencing some technical difficulties here in the room, which is preventing us from voting. I must therefore suspend the meeting.

• (0900)

(Pause)

• (0915)

The Chair: I am now calling the meeting back to order.

I apologize for the interruption. There were technical difficulties in the room.

We were about to vote on clause 11 as amended.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Chair, it's important to remember that the party in power limited our debate to eight meetings. Will the time lost this morning and in previous meetings be taken into consideration at some point so that we can have at least the equivalent of eight full meetings to complete our work.

• (0920)

The Chair: Without wishing to contradict you, Mr. Vice-Chair, I would like to point out that the number of meetings was unanimously adopted by all members of the committee. It was not limited to eight meetings by the government.

I have also checked with our team, and it would be possible to make up for the time lost. We would have to agree on the amount of time at issue. We could extend today's meeting, even though it would be impossible for me to stay any longer. I have to leave at 10:45 a.m. on the dot because I have another committee meeting. In any event, the answer as to whether we can make up for the lost time is yes. We could discuss it outside of the meetings to avoid causing any delays in our work today, and come to an agreement on how to do so. Do we want to extend a future meeting or add another meeting? We can discuss it later. I think the committee members would really like to make up for the time that was lost.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You are absolutely right about the number of meetings. It hurts us to say so, but yes, it was indeed a unanimous decision.

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh!

The Chair: As the chair, I'm unable to determine how people feel, but I was well aware of the fact that all of the political parties had agreed to these eight meetings.

Let's start over with the vote on clause 11 as amended.

(Clause 11 as amended carried: yeas 6; nays 5)

(Clause 12)

The Chair: That brings us to clause 12.

We have got to amendment BQ-8, which is on page 34 of the amendments package.

Mr. Beaulieu, before giving you the floor, I'd like to point out to the committee members that the differences in the wording of the French and English versions of amendment BQ-8, are consistent with the rules of legislative writing. The legislative clerk has already checked with the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, which drafted the amendment, that the French and English versions are correct and equivalent. If the amendment is adopted, the final outcome will be the same in both languages. In other words, if there was any confusion or doubt about this, I can assure you that it has already been checked by our legislative clerk and everything is okay.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Basically, the amendment proposes that clause 12 of Bill C-13 be amended to include the following:

(2) A decision, order or judgment issued by a federal court, including any reasons given for it, shall be issued first in one of the official languages and then, at the earliest possible time, in the other official language, with each version to be effective from the time the first version is effective, if...the court is of the opinion that the obligation under subsection (1) would occasion a delay prejudicial to the public interest or resulting in injustice or hardship to any party to the proceedings leading to its issuance.

The proposed amendment also includes adding the following to the bill:

(2.1) No costs related to the obligation set out in subsection (1) are to be charged to any party to the proceedings

The purpose is to ensure that francophones subject to trial have access to all jurisprudence, and not only jurisprudence available in French, as is currently the case.

The Chair: Are there any questions about amendment BQ-8? I don't see anyone.

We will therefore vote on the amendment.

(The amendment is defeated: nays 6; yeas 5) [*See minutes*]

● (0925)

The Chair: I would just like to make a comment about something I intended to mention at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Beaulieu, thank you for having read your previous amendment to the committee. We are not required to read the amendments as such, because we have the documents in front of us, but some people listening to us asked whether it might be possible to do so. I just wanted to mention that to you in passing.

Let's return to clause 12.

Is there unanimous consent to adopt it as is?

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Could you repeat your question, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Amendment BQ-8, which proposed an amendment to clause 12 of Bill C-13, has been defeated, and there are no further amendments to clause 12.

Mr. Joël Godin: Am I correct in saying that the new clause 12.1 that we want to propose is not part of clause 12.

The Chair: We had a similar situation at the last meeting, with respect to the new clause 10.1 being proposed.

Mr. Joël Godin: We would therefore like to have a vote.

The Chair: M. Beaulieu says that he is in agreement to adopt clause 12, but we are going to have a recorded division for greater clarity.

(Clause 12 is carried: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: We will now proceed to the study of amendment CPC-11, which proposes the addition of clause 12.1 to Bill C-13.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have heard the witnesses and would like to properly represent those organizations that informed us of their concerns. I would like to mention that amendment CPC-11 was suggested by the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada.

The amendment proposes that Bill C-13 be amended by adding after line 12 on page 8 the following new clause:

12.1 Subsection 23(1) of the Act is replaced by the following:

23 (1) For greater certainty, in addition to the duty set out in section 22, every federal institution that provides services or makes them available to the travelling public has the duty to ensure that any member of the travelling public can communicate with and obtain those services in either official language from any office or facility of the institution in Canada or elsewhere where there is significant demand for those services in that language.

I don't believe that there is a need to present any arguments for this amendment. It's only logical, insofar as we wish to be consistent and make sure that our citizens can be served in both official languages

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Serré.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe that amendment CPC-11 is well-intentioned, but find that there is some confusion with respect to the two duties mentioned. I think it's important to add some details for consistency with the other legislative provisions. I will therefore propose a sub-amendment.

The clerk has already distributed the subamendment. We also have printed copies.

Essentially, I'm proposing a small change at the beginning of proposed subsection 23(1). After "For greater certainty", " in addition to the duty set out in section 22" would be replaced by "under section 22". The purpose of this is simply to prevent any confusion about section 22 and add a degree of consistency.

● (0930)

The Chair: Are there any questions about the subamendment?

Over to you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I'm against it, because there's a difference between having a duty and not having a duty.

Like the previous proposal, this one aims at boosting services in French to francophones outside Quebec as well. It's too bad that my colleagues should be proposing a subamendment like that while voting against proposals to support francophones outside Quebec.

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

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank my colleague for his intervention and his proposed subamendment.

You're already familiar with my expression, "it's impossible to overdo it". If the aim is to give this bill more teeth, my amendment is a good example of the kinds of provisions that should be adopted.

I'm uncomfortable with my colleague's wording because it makes it less forceful. I'd prefer to leave the word "duty" in my amendment. I can therefore unfortunately not support my colleague Mr. Serré's subamendment.

The Chair: Are there other interventions concerning the subamendment proposed by Mr. Serré?

(The subamendment is defeated: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: We are now back to the vote on amendment CPC-11.

(The amended is carried: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: We now come to amendment BQ-9, on page 36 of your amendments package.

Go ahead, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: This amendment serves the same purpose as the one we just adopted, by adding, after line 12 on page 8, a new wording for section 24(1) of the Official Languages Act:

24 (1) Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that any member of the public can communicate in either official language with, and obtain available services in either official language from, any of its offices or facilities in Canada or elsewhere.

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that it's possible to communicate in French without making it conditional upon things like health issues or the size of the francophone population. It's a response to the notorious rule according to which services are provided where numbers justify it, something that Mr. Charles Castonguay calls the Durham clause, and which means that a large proportion of francophones outside Quebec do not have access to services in French. As the proportion of francophones outside Quebec decreases, the fewer services there will be in French.

It must be possible to communicate in French unconditionally.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Serré, you have the floor.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to ask Ms. Boyer or other members of the team a question.

I'm wondering about the 200 or so offices from one end of the country to the other, Indigenous people, northern Quebec, and unilingual anglophones. What impact would this amendment to the bill have on them? If the amendment were adopted, would it mean that all unilingual people in the country, including Quebec, would now have to be bilingual?

● (0935)

Ms. Julie Boyer (Assistant Deputy Minister, Official Languages, Heritage and Regions, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Serré.

What this amendment is proposing is making all federal offices bilingual. So all of the federal offices in Quebec that are currently unilingual francophone would indeed have to provide services in both official languages.

What is being removed from the Charter is the concept that services should be offered only where there is significant demand. According to this amendment, bilingual services would have to be provided everywhere, for example in Alberta, whether or not there is any significant demand.

My colleague from the Treasury Board Secretariat will no doubt be able to explain the impact of this amendment to you in greater detail.

Mr. Carsten Quell (Executive Director, Official Languages Centre of Excellence, People and Culture, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat): As Ms. Boyer just said, the Charter already sets out the conditions under which central administration, headquarters and offices would have to provide services in both official languages. For example, services provided to people who call toll-free numbers are all bilingual.

There is another condition: there has to be significant demand for the services to be provided in both official languages. People often talk about the notorious 5%, which is the required percentage of the population in a specific location where a minority language is spoken for services to be provided in both official languages by a given office.

The Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations, which were amended in 2019, provide additional changes. The number of people likely to request services in the minority language was increased. That means more people are included in the calculation. Minority language schools were also added. That means that when a federal office is located near minority language schools, bilingual services have to be provided.

This amendment would make all offices bilingual, for example all the post offices. What does that mean, concretely? In Quebec, there are 700 bilingual offices and 1,300 unilingual offices. All of the unilingual offices would become bilingual. That would have two consequences. The first is that a service would be provided where there is virtually no demand. So the service would be offered, knowing full well that very few people would avail themselves of it. The second consequence is that unilingual people would have fewer opportunities for employment. For example, only bilingual people would be able to work at all the post offices.

Generally speaking, the Canadian language system is based on the principle that service has to be provided where there is demand, insofar as providing service is part of what the various offices and headquarters do. However, the idea is not necessarily to provide services where there is no demand.

The Chair: You have the floor, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Quell, what you're saying is interesting, but I'd like to ask you a practical question.

Let's suppose I'm a Canadian citizen living in an area where the offices are unilingual anglophone. What happens when I show up at that office to ask a question or obtain services in French?

Mr. Carsten Quell: You'd be directed to the nearest office that provides bilingual services.

Don't forget that all electronic services, like video-conferencing, are automatically available in both official languages. Anyone who needs a service will be able to get it from us.

Mr. Joël Godin: You said earlier that if this provision were applied, all employees would have to be bilingual.

Is that really what you said?

Mr. Carsten Quell: I need to qualify that.

Offices must be able to provide bilingual service at all times. At offices with very few employees, a high percentage of them would have to be bilingual.

Mr. Joël Godin: Let's take the example of a unilingual anglophone office or facility that receives a request from a francophone citizen. Rather than require all its employees to be bilingual, wouldn't it make more sense to require supervisors to be bilingual? They would be able to speak with the francophone person and it would mean there is a francophone resource at that office.

• (0940)

Mr. Carsten Quell: If the service has to be available in both languages, arrangements would have to be made for the service counter to be able to provide equivalent quality in both languages. It's not enough for only the supervisors to be bilingual.

Mr. Joël Godin: I understand, but you just told me that if I were to go to a unilingual office and there were no francophones there, that you would direct me to another office.

Mr. Carsten Quell: Every big city, for example, always has a post office providing services in both official languages. You could just go to an office offering bilingual services.

Mr. Joël Godin: Doesn't the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms require you to serve citizens in the official language of their choice at all your offices and facilities?

Mr. Carsten Quell: What the Charter in fact establishes is the concept of significant demand. Offices need to measure potential demand in their service areas. They do that on the basis of Statistics Canada data. The absolute number of people in the minority within the service area is established, along with the percentage of the population they represent. On that basis a decision is made as to whether there has to be an office that provides services in both official languages.

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

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I'd like to clarify something.

Not only do all offices in Quebec offer services in both languages, but English predominates. That's what Yvon Barrière, the regional executive vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada for the Quebec region told us. A survey showed that 68.7% of positions in the federal public service in Quebec required bilingualism, whereas outside Quebec, it was only 13%.

It would therefore be very difficult to find a location in Quebec where there was not at least one person who could provide services in English. Outside of Quebec, on the other hand, the situation is problematic because there are lots of places where no services in French are available. All of our witnesses agreed on that in the course of our study.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Over to you, Mr. Généreux.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): The population of the village I live in is 1,000. My riding consists of 58 municipalities, three-quarters of which have fewer than about 500 people. Staff members at the post offices in these villages are not bilingual. You might well say that I live in the most francophone riding in Canada and that it's only to be expected that employees in this area don't necessarily have to be bilingual.

And yet, if we were to adopt amendment BQ-9, there would have to be bilingual staff at every post office in Canada, even if demand did not justify it. Is that what you're telling me, Mr. Quell?

Mr. Carsten Quell: That's right.

The Chair: Thank you for that clarification.

Mr. Serré, would you like to add something?

Mr. Marc Serré: I would just like to add something to Mr. Généreux's comments.

If this amendment were adopted, would unilingual francophones working in any of these offices in Quebec lose their jobs? My understanding is that they would now have to be bilingual to keep their jobs.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Serré.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: My colleagues' arguments are convincing. I'd like to withdraw my amendment.

The Chair: To withdraw an amendment, unanimous consent from the members of the committee is required.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: It looks like there might be some who disagree.

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh!

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Only fools never change their mind.

The Chair: That's true, Mr. Beaulieu.

Is there unanimous consent to withdraw amendment BQ 9?

I see no objections.

(The amendment is withdrawn.)

The Chair: That brings us to amendment CPC-12, which is on page 37 of our package of amendments.

Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Some time ago, the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique experienced a rather unusual situation.

Mr. Chair, in response to your earlier request, I will begin by reading my amendment. That will enable people who are listening to have a better understanding of the arguments I will be presenting afterwards.

Amendment CPC-12 proposes that Bill C-13 be amended by adding after line 12 on page 8 the following new clause:

12.1 Section 25 of the Act is renumbered as subsection 25(1) and is amended by adding the following:

(2) For the purpose of subsection (1), the other person or organization is deemed to provide or make available services on behalf of the federal institution if:

(a) the federal institution exercises control over the other person or organization; or

(b) the other person or organization implements a policy, program or legislative regime for which the federal institution is responsible.

(3) A province or territory that is acting under an agreement with the Government of Canada that provides for the payment of an amount to the province or territory is deemed to provide or make available services on behalf of a federal institution.

The purpose of the amendment is simply to ensure that services are provided in both official languages.

As I said earlier, we in the Conservative Party listen closely to organizations. We heard from various organizations, including the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, which was representing one of its members, the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique.

I believe that it's important to adopt this amendment.

● (0945)

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Go ahead, Mr. Serré.

Mr. Marc Serré: Mr. Chair, I'd like to hear from Ms. Boyer, or Mr. Newman, from the Department of Justice, with respect to proposed subsection 25(3).

My understanding of what is being proposed here is that the federal government is encroaching on provincial areas of jurisdiction.

I'd just like some clarification on that, and even to ask whether the proposed subsection is admissible.

That's my first question.

Mr. Warren Newman (Senior General Counsel, Constitutional, Administrative and International Law Section, Public Law and Legislative Services Sector, Department of Justice): I'm not going to comment on the admissibility of this proposal, but I can certainly make some observations about its impact.

Under this section, the provinces bound to the federal government under an agreement that provides for funding would be considered agents of the federal government, in a sense. Normally, by which I mean without this amendment, that is not the case in law. For a province to be considered an agent of the federal government, something more than the provision of funding is required.

If, for example, there were an agreement or an accord between the federal government and a province or territory, it might well be that this province or territory would continue to exercise powers within its areas of jurisdiction, such as health. Simply providing funding and making the provinces indirectly responsible for applying the Official Languages Act may not be an infringement of the sharing of jurisdictions, but it does raise some questions because it's certainly a stretch. It goes beyond the jurisprudence. The Federal Court has ruled on this matter, in *Lavigne v. Canada* for example, and the Federal Court of Appeal also handed down a decision in 2022. It would therefore be beyond what is normally admitted as the role of an agent. It requires more than a mere funding agreement between the federal government and a provincial government.

It would therefore have several impacts on how things have to be done, and on the provinces' exercise of their own powers and responsibilities under the Constitution.

The Chair: Ms. Ashton, you have the floor.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Chair, in light of a few of the factors that have just been raised, I'd like to present a subamendment. We've just sent it to the clerk for distribution to the committee members.

First of all, I'd like to acknowledge the work done by the francophone community in British Columbia. This marginalized community has fought all the way up to the Supreme Court to protect its rights. We believe that it's essential to support them. And of course we acknowledge that any situations that would create barriers elsewhere, in all of the country's communities, ought to be avoided.

That said, we are proposing a subamendment to alter some of the wording in proposed paragraph 25(2)(a), to eliminate the word "policy", in proposed paragraph 25(2)(b), and to replace proposed subsection 25(3) with a new subsection 25(3) that would add a number of details to address the concerns we heard.

● (0950)

The Chair: Ms. Ashton, I think that the document has just been received. We will wait until it has been distributed to give everyone time to read it.

Over to you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, while we are waiting to receive Ms. Ashton's subamendment, I would simply like to say that I'm on the same page as she is. You saw that when I presented my amendment.

I have a question for Mr. Newman.

The British Columbia case has been alluded to frequently. I'm not a forensic expert. Could you suggest a section or a method to ensure that anything like what happened in British Columbia could never occur again? When all is said and done, British Columbia francophones were victims of the battle between the federal and provincial governments.

Mr. Warren Newman: I'm not a forensic expert either; I'm a legal practitioner. However, we do constantly deal with forensic experts. There are always solutions available in terms of the wording of textual material. It is sometimes necessary to repeat something in a way that takes case law into consideration.

Let's begin by waiting to see what Ms. Ashton has come up with.

The Chair: I believe everyone has received, or is about to receive, the subamendment.

I'm going to suspend the meeting to give everyone time to carefully read the sub amendment.

• (0950) _____ (Pause) _____

• (0955)

The Chair: I'm calling the meeting back to order.

Are there any questions about Ms. Ashton's subamendment?

Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I'm having some trouble understanding this.

Replacing proposed subsection 25(3) with wording that says the federal government would make a contribution is not enough for the application of proposed subsection 25(1). I find that the proposal weakens the wording.

The federal government is always required to communicate in both official languages. If there is a grant from, or participation by, the federal government, then I can only hope the press release would be bilingual.

I'm not at ease with this proposal. I I get the idea. Nor would I want everyday activities to be limited or restricted. On the other hand, I have trouble accepting that we have to spell out the fact that we are not speaking about simply a financial contribution. It's not simple at all for me; everything is important, particularly for organizations in minority communities.

I'm not comfortable with this.

The Chair: I don't want to explain from the chair, but allow me to tell you what I understood about what Mr. Newman said. He can correct me as required.

Let's take the example of transfer payments that would be made under the health agreement that the federal government has just signed with the provinces and territories. If we were to leave sub-

section 25(3) as proposed in your amendment, Mr. Godin, the federal transfer payments to the provinces, based on the country's obligations...

Mr. Joël Godin: I understand you. That's why I'm trying to come up with a solution. I have no wording to suggest this morning. My proposal may be too demanding, but Ms. Ashton's is not strong enough.

The Chair: Okay.

Are there any other interventions?

If not, then we will decide by voting on the subamendment.

(The subamendment is carried: yeas 11; nays 0) [*See Minutes*]

The Chair: That brings us to amendment CPC-12 as amended.

Please go ahead, Mr. Serré.

Mr. Marc Serré: I'd like to ask for clarification from Ms. Boyer or from the Treasury Board Secretariat representative, to allay Mr. Godin's concerns.

Now that the subamendment has been adopted, how will it affect the amendment?

Ms. Julie Boyer: I'll let Mr. Newman explain the impact of the subamendment that was just adopted.

Mr. Warren Newman: The subamendment establishes the guidelines required for the implementation of the duty in question. The federal government does indeed have a duty to ensure that the services actually provided by third parties on behalf of the federal government are offered in both official languages. The wording establishes these guidelines while underscoring the fact that it is understood that a mayor financial contribution from the federal government to a third party is not enough to call for the application of proposed subsection 25(1). We believe that the modified amendment meets the criteria set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in CALDECH, the landmark case for relations between principals and agents.

• (1000)

The Chair: As there are no other comments, we will vote on amendment CPC-12 as amended.

(The amendment as amended is carried: yeas 11; nays 0). *See Minutes*

The Chair: That brings us to amendment CPC-13, which is on page 38 of our package of amendments.

Go ahead, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Amendment CPC-13 proposes that Bill C-13 be amended by adding after line 12 on page 8 the following new clause:

12.1 The Act is amended by adding the following after section 31:

31.1 The provisions of this Part shall be implemented while taking into account the commitment to protect and promote the French language.

In other words, we want to specify that Part IV of the Official Languages Act must comply with Part VII.

That then is amendment CPC-13.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Serré, you have the floor.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Parts VII and IV are obviously important. They address both of official language minority communities in the country.

However, I have a concern about the impact of repeating general provisions that are already in the interpretative provisions. The protection and promotion of French is mentioned in the act for certain locations, but not for others.

I'm not a legal expert or a lawyer, but I'm wondering whether that might lead to interpretation problems in court. Could one of the government officials perhaps answer this question?

Ms. Julie Boyer: I will be happy to answer, Mr. Serré.

As you said, we are reiterating here what was already said in the proposed preamble, in the proposed sections to clarify the purpose of the Act, and in the interpretation provisions proposed in Bill C-13. These are all provisions that have been adopted and already specify that the particular situation of Quebec or of French will be taken into account. Amendment CPC-13 states that "the commitment to protect and promote the French language" must be taken into account.

As to whether that amendment could interfere with the application of the act, that is a question that arises often. My colleague at the Department of Justice could give you more detail.

Mr. Warren Newman: I would just add that we must always keep in mind that the purpose of the provisions of Part IV of the Official Languages Act, like the provisions of Parts III and V, is to apply section 20 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which provides that the public are entitled to use the official language of their choice to communicate with and receive services from the federal government.

We already have these principles of interpretation, and you have added another point, in the amendment proposed by Mr. Beaulieu the other day. So we have a set of interpretation principles that govern the overall interpretation of the Act.

Part IV of the Official Languages Act already deals with the application of the act. We are no longer talking about principles; this is about how to give tangible effect to the public's right to be served by and communicate with federal institutions in the official language of their choice. So we don't see the point of adding interpretative provisions in this part of the act. Those provisions already exist in the proposed preamble, in the proposed sections to clarify the purpose of the Act, and in the interpretation provisions proposed in the bill.

• (1005)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Newman.

Is there any further debate?

Mr. Godin, the floor is yours.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Godin, I will repeat the saying: "You can't have too much of a good thing." However, I do understand what the officials are saying.

I propose that we proceed with the vote.

The Chair: I didn't know that "you can't have too much of a good thing" was a recognized saying in French literature, but I like the image.

I call the question on amendment CPC-13.

(Amendment negatived: nays 6; yeas 5.)

The Chair: We will now move on to amendment BQ-10, which is found at page 39 of the bundle of amendments.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Amendment BQ-10 proposes to amend the bill by adding a new clause after line 12 on page 8.

The act says that the Governor in Council may make regulations for the purpose of section 22 prescribing the circumstances in which there is significant demand.

In fact, this would remove paragraph 32(1)(d), which says that the Governor in Council may prescribe circumstances, in relation to the public or the travelling public, for the purpose of section 24.

The purpose of amendment BQ-10 is to guarantee the availability of services in French in Canadian federal institutions that operate outside Canada. This is necessary to ensure better representation of the French fact outside Canada and to avoid francophones on missions outside the country who want to interact with Canadian federal institutions being discouraged from doing so because of a language barrier.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Is there any further debate?

I call the question on amendment BQ-10.

(Amendment negatived: nays 10; yeas 1. [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: This brings us to amendment BA-11, which is found at page 40 of our documents.

Mr. Beaulieu, the floor is yours.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: The objective of amendment BQ-11, again, is to guarantee the availability of services in French in federal institutions operating outside Canada.

The Chair: Is there any debate?

I call the question on amendment BQ-11.

(Amendment negatived: nays 10; yeas 1. [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We will now move on to amendment CPC-14, which is found at page 41 of the bundle of amendments.

I would point out that if amendment CPC-14 is adopted, amendment BA-12 cannot be moved, since they are identical.

Mr. Godin, the floor is yours.

• (1010)

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Things are moving quickly and I am trying to follow the thread. Forgive me if it takes me a bit of time, but I want to do my job properly.

Amendment CPC-14 proposes that Bill C-13 be amended by adding, after line 12 on page 8, the following new clause:

Paragraph 32(2)(c) of the Act is replaced by the following:

(c) any other factors that the Governor in Council considers appropriate, including the minority situation of the French language in Canada due to the predominant use of English and the linguistic specificity of Quebec.

In fact, I am moving this amendment in order to have reminders of the linguistic specificity of Quebec all through the act, in a situation where English is predominant in North America and Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Are there any questions?

Mr. Serré, you have the floor.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to ask the experts here for a clarification.

If I understand correctly, what is being proposed here applies only in Quebec. There is nothing about outside Quebec.

What does an amendment like this involve?

Ms. Julie Boyer: Thank you, Mr. Serré.

This amendment relates to a part of the act where the factors for the Governor in Council to consider in making regulations are defined. The purpose of the amendment is to give the Governor in Council the flexibility needed for adding a factor that might be important, including as regards the minority situation of the French language in Canada, due to the predominant use of English, and the linguistic specificity of Quebec. So it gives the Governor in Council permission to add specific factors that would advance that objective.

Mr. Newman will undoubtedly be able to add some clarifications on this point.

Mr. Warren Newman: Again, I think the provisions proposed in the preamble to the Official Languages Act, the proposed provisions to clarify the purpose of the act, and the proposed interpretation provisions take that adequately into account.

Here, this is an enabling provision, and we also do not want to move away from the objective of the substantive equality of French and English.

As I was just saying, the purpose of Part IV is to implement the act in relatively concrete ways, including by the use of regulations. This part indicates, in concrete terms, how the services will be offered in French and English. So using interpretation factors like this is not the way to give more clarification about this implementation.

The Governor in Council may already take into account the specificity of minority communities. That is already included in the factors.

It is hard to see how such provisions could help the Governor in Council provide for the implementation of communications and services in both official languages equally.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Newman.

Mr. Beaulieu, the floor is yours.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: I think it is important to specify this, because it mostly happens in English. In Quebec, it is essential.

This is a proposal from the Government of Quebec, like the one that was presented before and was not accepted. The objective is to strengthen French, which is in decline and is in the minority in Canada and in North America as a whole.

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

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I would like Mr. Newman to explain the negative effects that the wording of this amendment might have.

Mr. Warren Newman: Here, it is proposed to add language concerning the situation of the French language and the specificity of Quebec, while Part IV of the Official Languages Act is about implementing the constitutional obligation described in section 20 of the Charter. First, that section provides that the public has the right to communicate with, and to receive services from, any head or central office of federal institutions in English or French. The same right applies to the offices of federal institutions if the criteria set out in section 20 are met: there must be significant demand or the nature of the office must require it.

There already are interpretation principles. As well, this is not about formal equality, it is about substantive equality. Given that, we do not see how referring to only one language and only one province, that being Quebec, as we are well aware, could make implementing Part IV of the act and the constitutional obligation already set out in section 20 of the Charter more effective.

• (1015)

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

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: When you talk about substantive equality, are you talking about equal access to services or also to substantive equality of status for French and English.

Mr. Warren Newman: Ms. Boyer can surely assist you on that, but the term "*égalité réelle*" is translated in English as "substantive equality". First, it concerns access to services. Part IV concerns access to services in practice or in practical terms, as I said. Substantive equality also includes equality of status, and sometimes equality of status also calls for formal equality, for example by enacting laws. Sometimes, too, there must be a degree of formality.

So formal equality does not necessarily rule out substantive equality right away when it comes to the status of the language.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: In your view, when someone says they want to maintain the demographic weight of francophones in Quebec, does that advance the objective of substantive equality?

Mr. Warren Newman: I would say that substantive equality can take into account the objective of maintaining the demographic weight of francophones in Quebec. However, as I said, Part IV is about services to the public, and nothing more.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: But it still has an impact.

The Chair: Mr. Quell, do you want to add something?

Mr. Carsten Quell: Yes, I would like to give an example.

We talk about the principle that minority official language communities be guaranteed comparable treatment from one region to another. I spoke to you earlier about changes made to our regulations. They now provide that federal offices located near a minority language school must offer services in both official languages. The proposed wording might lead us to wonder whether members of the anglophone minority would have access to fewer federal services near their schools, as compared to members of the francophone minority. That is the type of question we would have to ask if we adopt this provision.

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

Mr. Joël Godin: Excellent, Mr. Chair.

I want to comment on your answer, Mr. Quell, and then I will come back to Mr. Newman.

Forgive me, I have lost my train of thought. I think that happens to everyone.

Mr. Newman, in fact, I asked you earlier what negative impact this amendment would have...

Put that question on hold; my comment has just come back to me.

Mr. Quell, we have to understand that this is another factor, it is one factor among many others. We simply want people to keep this situation, this reality, in mind. When we talk about substantive equality, we have to refresh people's memories and repeat the message. That is why we want this to be in the act. It is also why I do not really agree with your comment.

Mr. Newman, I am going to ask you the question again: would adding paragraph 32(2)(c) have a negative impact?

• (1020)

Mr. Warren Newman: I don't think it's my place to answer that question, apart from the legal aspect.

As I have already pointed out, section 20 of the Charter provides for services to be offered and communications to be available, that is, the opportunity to communicate in French and English, based on the criteria established by the constitution. Part IV of the act as a whole is about implementing this, for both anglophones and francophones, for both majority communities and minority communities.

The question is maybe not whether it is harmful, but whether it is relevant in the context of Part IV.

The Chair: I do not see anyone else wishing to speak.

I call the question on amendment CPC-14.

(Amendment negated: nays 6; yeas 5.)

The Chair: Because amendment CPC-14 has been rejected, amendment BQ-12 may not be presented, as I said earlier.

(Clause 13)

The Chair: So this brings us to clause 13.

The first amendment concerning clause 13 is amendment BQ-13.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: We are withdrawing our amendment.

The Chair: You are not presenting it?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: No, we are withdrawing it from presentation.

The Chair: I would like to offer a clarification. If an amendment that is in the bundle of amendments is not presented, it does not need to be withdrawn. However, if it is presented, then it needs the unanimous consent of the committee to withdraw it, as was the case earlier.

So amendment BA-13 is not being presented.

That brings us to amendment CPC-15, which is found at page 44 of our bundle of amendments. If amendment CPC-15 is adopted, amendment BQ-14 may not be moved, because its content is similar.

Mr. Godin, the floor is yours concerning amendment CPC-15.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You are going to see that we are sometimes consistent in the Conservative Party of Canada.

Amendment CPC-15 proposes that clause 13 of Bill C-13 be amended by adding after line 26, page 8 the following:

(2) Section 33 of the Act is renumbered as subsection 33(1) and is amended by adding the following:

(2) In exercising its powers and performing its duties and functions, the Governor in Council shall take into account the minority situation of French in Canada due to the predominant use of English and the linguistic specificity of Quebec.

That's it, Mr. Chair. I think it would be redundant to offer the same arguments.

The Chair: Are there any questions?

Mr. Serré, the floor is yours.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know whether this was a request from the province of Quebec. I have a question to ask the people around the table.

With respect to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution of Canada, is there a problem with presenting this issue this way? Is it contrary to the Charter and the Constitution?

Ms. Julie Boyer: Thank you for the question.

As we discussed earlier, the subject here is the Governor in Council making regulations. The effect of the amendment would be to require that the Governor in Council take into account the minority situation of French in Canada. As my colleague Mr. Quelle said, we therefore have to ask ourselves whether the consequence of this would be that fewer services were offered to anglophones in minority communities, since the unique situation of French in North America is taken into account.

For example, under the current regulations, if there is a minority language school near federal offices that offer services, the services must be offered in both official languages. The wording proposed here says that the minority situation of French would have to be taken into account. So would bilingual services have to be offered automatically near anglophone minority schools? That could lead to a differentiated approach.

As we have said, what the provisions of Part IV of the Official Languages Act and the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms say is that services must be offered in both official languages to members of minority language communities.

• (1025)

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

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: That is what we want. This amendment was requested by the Government of Quebec.

I can give the example of a case that would take into account the minority situation of French: signage. Instead of signage being strictly bilingual, French might predominate. The measures would always have to take into account, in the services, of the importance of the minority situation of French. Bilingualism applied uniformly from one end of the country to another results in the decline of minority languages like French.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. G n reux, the floor is yours.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: I'm trying to understand your reasoning when it comes to adding these sections to the Official Languages Act. You seem to be assuming that its effect might be that fewer services would be offered to anglophones in Quebec, for example.

Earlier, reference was made to post offices. Obviously, it isn't necessary to have bilingual employees in every post office in the country. It is not necessary to have them where there is no demand.

Are you making the same comparison here?

If so, why?

Mr. Carsten Quell: We have to imagine, in the concrete cases where a service is offered, how the government would take these new provisions into account. We are being asked to take the minority situation of French and the predominant use of English into account.

What would the consequences be? The purpose of the act already provides that we are sensitive to the situation in Quebec. Signage might be a concrete example. There is a rule that in federal offices in Quebec, French takes precedence over English, but the size of the letters, for example, is the same in English and French.

Would these new provisions mean that we would reduce the size of the letters in French?

These may be simplistic examples, but, as Ms. Boyer said about services offered in minority language schools, the services offered to the anglophone minority population in minority language communities have to be treated differently. We don't have the choice of taking this into account in the regulations.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: My question is for Mr. Quell or Mr. Newman.

Are the existing laws—both in Quebec, like Bill 101, Bill 96, and in Canada, including the bill we are now debating—not already specific enough?

I agree with Mr. Beaulieu, and we have talked about this on several occasions during the analysis and the design of this bill: the decline of French is a reality that no longer needs to be proved. We have to do everything in our power to halt that decline and improve the presence of French in North America, particularly in Quebec, but also everywhere in Canada where French is in the minority.

You talked about signage laws in Quebec. To my knowledge, they are quite clear, and even if we add this section, its objective is to halt the decline of French and take into account certain factors specific to Quebec.

I would refer to what we experienced last week. I don't want to start the debate over again, but Mr. Housefather and Mr. Garneau raised points that I considered to be legitimate and very interesting. Essentially, however, if we all say that French is in danger, we have to adopt provisions like that in the Official Languages Act to make sure that the decline of French is taken into account and the deterioration if French is stopped.

• (1030)

Mr. Carsten Quell: The government has committed to promoting and protecting French. There is a consensus in Bill C-13 on this point. We are talking about federal services here. We are not talking about provincial services. As I said, this is about post offices and Service Canada centres, for example.

In those cases, in Quebec, all federal services are already offered in French. All federal offices in Quebec offer service in French automatically. Here, the issue is how to guarantee comparable treatment for the anglophone minority in Quebec. There are certain rules associated with that.

In the current act, the two communities are treated the same way. When a federal office is located near a minority language school, it has to offer service in that language. Whether in Quebec or outside Quebec, the service is offered in both languages when there is a minority community.

That is the basis of the treatment. That being said, we have to remember that the federal government offers all its services in French within Quebec at all times. Offering services in English as well is an another plus.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Quell.

Mr. Housefather, the floor is yours.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I had just a couple of questions for the officials, if it's okay.

My understanding is, again, that this is an asymmetrical treatment that is not the original purpose of Bill C-13, but I wanted to understand the effects.

Can you confirm that this change will not add any new French services in Quebec but could indeed cause English services in Quebec to be reduced, and that nobody would know what the court's interpretation of this clause would actually mean?

Ms. Julie Boyer: To the first part of your question, yes, you are correct.

On the second part, I'm not sure how the courts would interpret it.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Okay. Thank you.

Basically, this serves only to reduce, potentially, English services in Quebec. That's all I wanted to clarify.

Thank you so much.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Ashton, the floor is yours.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I would like to ask the experts a question.

I would like to ask the officials whether the Governor in Council is not already required to take into account the minority situation of French and whether it is already taken into account.

Mr. Warren Newman: I am going to try to answer the question.

First, as you well know, we have interpretation provisions set out at the beginning of the act. By the amendment that was adopted the other day, we have added that the provisions of the act are to be interpreted by taking into account that French is in a minority situation in Canada and North America due to the predominant use of English. They must also be interpreted in such a way as to take into account the different needs of the English linguistic minority community in Quebec and the French linguistic minority communities in the other provinces and territories.

In terms of implementing the regulations made under Part IV, which deal with services in English and French, the specificity of the communities may be taken into account. That has been in the act since 1988. The regulations also take that specificity into account.

It does not seem to us to be necessary to go beyond that, when the purpose of Part IV of the Official Languages Act is to implement a constitutional guarantee set out in black and white in section 20 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

• (1035)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Beaulieu, the floor is yours.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Essentially, that represents the difference between the two systems.

In the rest of Canada, all services are virtually exclusively in English, and they are supposed to be offered in French only where numbers justify or there is significant demand. Often, when there is significant demand, there are insufficient services in French. New-

comers therefore have no choice: they join the English side. In fact, 99 per cent of language transfers are to English.

Quebec is the only francophone state in North America, the only place where newcomers can really be integrated in French, and that is what we see.

Now let's look at the interpretation of certain provisions when it comes to institutional bilingualism or the equality of the two languages, for a newcomer arriving in Quebec. If there is active offer in bilingual signage, they are given the message that they can choose English and that French is not necessarily the common language. Newcomers are not being sufficiently francized.

That is why it is important to include this factor and for it to be possible for federal services to be adapted in order to demonstrate that, ideally, French is the common language in Quebec and maybe, even, that it is predominant. Perfect symmetry does not allow for francizing newcomers and securing the future of French in Quebec.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Godin, we're listening.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just heard, in reply to a question asked by my colleague Mr. Housefather, that anglophones in Quebec would be hurt as a result of this amendment. That is what I understood.

I am finding it hard to understand how they could be hurt.

I will reread amendment CPC-15, which would add this to section 33 of the act:

(2) In exercising its powers and performing its duties and functions, the Governor in Council shall take into account the minority situation of French in Canada due to the predominant use of English and the linguistic specificity of Quebec.

That is a real thing. That is an observation.

In this amendment, we are asking that the Governor in Council take into account the minority situation of French; it is not an obligation. We are not trying to use this amendment to disadvantage anglophones in Quebec. The purpose of this amendment is to protect French in Quebec and elsewhere. However, we understand that the content proposed in this amendment is more specific to Quebec.

Could you explain what you said earlier about the repercussions of this amendment for anglophones and anglophone minorities in Quebec? I don't understand your remarks.

Ms. Julie Boyer: Thank you for giving me an opportunity to clarify my remarks.

Mr. Housefather's question asked whether this amendment didn't create a new offer of services in French that could have the effect of reducing the offer of services in English. I answered that he was correct.

Now, I will explain why.

The French version of the proposed amendment says "*le gouverneur en conseil tient compte*". In the English version of that, it says "the Governor in Council shall". In English, "shall" contains the idea of an obligation. If there is an obligation to take into account the minority situation of French, then how it was taken into account must be proven. To have an effect, the offer of services in French must be made predominant, and this would reduce the offer of services in English.

That is the potential effect that this amendment will have, because it has to be proved that the Governor in Council took into account the minority situation of French and the linguistic specificity of Quebec.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Boyer. That is interesting.

Mr. Godin, the floor is yours.

Mr. Joël Godin: In fact, you said that increasing services in French would disadvantage anglophones in Quebec.

Ms. Julie Boyer: No, it would not have the effect of increasing the offer of services in French. As my colleague explained, there is an automatic offer of services in French in Quebec. However, it has to be proved that this situation was taken into account. Consequently, it has to be proved that the minority situation of French in North America was given precedence, as compared to the minority situation of English in Quebec.

• (1040)

Mr. Joël Godin: That's possible, but it is not an effect that is automatically linked.

Ms. Julie Boyer: There are going to be effects.

Mr. Joël Godin: There might be repercussions for the anglophone minorities in Quebec, but, on the other hand, there might be repercussions for the francophone minorities outside Quebec.

Ms. Julie Boyer: No, because it talks about linguistic specificity in Quebec.

Mr. Joël Godin: I'm extrapolating.

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

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Housefather often says there will be fewer rights for anglophones in Quebec. In fact, it is as if he wanted people in Quebec to be able to function entirely in English, but never have to speak French, like Michael Rousseau.

The Chair: Mr. Beaulieu, I'm going to stop you. We are now talking about the amendment, and not about what you assume a colleague meant to say when he didn't say it.

So we are on amendment CPC-15.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Right. The purpose of this amendment is to make sure that French is predominant, to reflect the fact that it is the common language in Quebec, and to encourage the inclusion of newcomers as regards the French language.

The Chair: Mr. G n reux, the floor is yours.

Mr. Bernard G n reux: Mr. Chair, there are people on this committee whose positions set them a fair bit apart from the others, so I am going to speak very cautiously.

Mr. Beaulieu, not to name names, really wants to push things to the limit so that French will be predominant, which I understand.

That is entirely to be expected. We are Quebeckers and we want French to continue to expand, not the opposite. Mr. Housefather, for his part, is defending his community.

The objective is not to try to make it so that either of the two languages is predominant, but to be aware of context. Having reiterated that, I will let Mr. Quell have the floor.

You wanted to say something earlier, Mr. Quell, and you didn't have an opportunity.

The objective is to take context into consideration. The words are extremely important here. Proving it is one thing, but that does not necessarily mean that...

Ms. Boyer, you are speaking in the conditional tense. If you tell me it is inevitable and there will be consequences, I will conclude that we have to be careful. However, if the Governor in Council has to make sure to take some particular context into account, as it says here, that is not in any way an obligation. The Governor in Council must ensure that any requests made were studied. I would remind you that it is the Government of Quebec that is asking for this factor to be included in the act. It is not really us who are doing it. We are not lawyers; we are trying to represent the specific requests made by Quebec as objectively as possible.

Now, I would like you to explain, Mr. Quell, and you can also do so, Ms. Boyer, if you feel it is necessary, why this amendment... I have great respect for Mr. Housefather and the work he does for the anglophone community in Quebec. I have no problem with that. My wife is anglophone, by the way. In spite of these considerations, our objective is not to diminish the importance of one group for the benefit of another. We need to see whether this would genuinely be the case. What you said to me earlier leads me to believe that this is your interpretation, since you are speaking in the conditional. If this were a certainty, I would agree with you, but until proven otherwise, I am going to take the position that you have not proved it.

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

Mr. Carsten Quell: Thank you for the question. I may ask Mr. Newman to add to my answer.

Because I am not a lawyer, I can't say what "shall" and "take into account" mean, but, in my humble opinion, it imposes an obligation on us, if we consider the regulations made under Part IV of the act, that might mean different treatment with respect to the offer of services for minority francophone communities and minority anglophone communities.

I referred to minority language schools located near a federal office. Is the radius smaller? I also referred to signage. Is there less signage to attract attention to a federal office? Are there hours when the service is offered in both languages, or maybe in only one language? At present, service is offered in both languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Equal quality of services is our principle, both for situations in Quebec and for situations outside Quebec. A bilingual federal office is bilingual at all times.

Under this provision, the question will have to be asked. We will have an obligation to distinguish between treatment designed to help anglophone communities in Quebec and treatment intended to support francophone communities outside Quebec.

• (1045)

The Chair: I'm sorry, but because of some of our obligations on the Hill, we have to end today's meeting.

At the next meeting, we will resume our work exactly where we had got to. The next speakers will be Mr. Drouin and Mr. Beaulieu, in that order.

I would like to speak to the two vice-chairs and Ms. Ashton to see how we could make up the time we lost because of the technical difficulties in the last eight meetings.

The meeting is adjourned.

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