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**Chair**

**Mr. Steven Blaney**

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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Thursday, April 30, 2009

• (0900)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)):** Good morning, and welcome to the 17th meeting of our Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today we continue our study on postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada pursuant to the federal government's support regulations and Standing Order 108.

We are pleased to have representatives from universities across the country that provide training in one or both official languages. Your work is central to our study, and we thank you for accepting our invitation.

So we'll begin with the place where all the spotlights will be focused next year as part of the Olympic Games. From Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, we are pleased to welcome Ms. Claire Trépanier, Acting Director of the Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, accompanied by Danielle Arcand, Associate Director of that same office.

And before handing over to them, I'm going to introduce our other guests to you.

From Acadia University, Ms. Janice Best, Director, Department of Languages and Literatures. Welcome. She is accompanied by Robert Perrins, Dean of that institution's Faculty of Arts. Welcome to you as well.

We also have Mr. Donald Ipperciel, Assistant Dean, Research at the Saint-Jean Campus. Welcome to the committee, Mr. Ipperciel. And, lastly, we have Mr. Dan Maher, from the University of Calgary.

[English]

He's the acting dean of the faculty of humanities. And we also have Mr. Ozouf Amedegnato, who is assistant professor, Department of French, Italian and Spanish.

[Translation]

Thank you for appearing before the committee this morning.

Without further ado, we'll start with our representatives from Simon Fraser University.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier (Acting Director, Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, Simon Fraser University):** Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen members, thank you for inviting Simon Fraser University and its Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs to speak before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

My name is Claire Trépanier, and I am Acting Director of the Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, which we also call OFFA. I am here with my colleague Danielle Arcand, Associate Director of OFFA, and we will be sharing the presentation today. I apologize for my hasty departure; I'll have to leave at 10 o'clock. Thank you for your understanding.

The study on the federal government's support for postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada is of considerable interest to Simon Fraser University. There is a genuine attraction to the French language in British Columbia: the use of French is on the rise not only among young people, but also in the general population.

Simon Fraser University is concerned about Canada's linguistic duality and is proud to make a contribution to bilingualism and to the development of the francophone minority community. I'll now hand over to my colleague Danielle Arcand.

[English]

**Ms. Danielle Arcand (Associate Director, Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, Simon Fraser University):** Merci, Claire.

Today we would like to answer the questions put to us by this committee concerning, first, specific programs at SFU in support of official languages; second, about possible initiatives post-secondary institutions could take; and third, the role of the federal government in support of post-secondary institutions.

First, let me inform you that Simon Fraser University has received funding under the Canada-B.C. auxiliary agreement for the development of post-secondary education in French at SFU, an initial five-year funding from 2003 to 2008, followed by a one-year extension for 2008-09.

The initial funding allowed the establishment of the Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, otherwise known as OFFA. OFFA's mandate is to develop and coordinate programs and courses taught in French at SFU, as well as to promote the programs in B.C., in Canada, and internationally. OFFA has an original administrative structure rarely seen in a university setting. OFFA works with two faculties, the faculty of education and the faculty of arts and social sciences, and answers directly to the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic. OFFA's mission also includes reinforcing the ties to B.C.'s francophone and francophile communities.

OFFA came into being thanks to the mobilization and cooperation of a number of community, university, and government stakeholders interested in achieving the common goal of fostering access to post-secondary education in French in B.C.

Two B.C. community groups are worth mentioning for their relentless work and contribution: the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie Britannique and the B.C. and Yukon branch of the Association of Canadian Parents for French.

Across Canada, as we know, there is a shortage of teachers of French. B.C. is particularly in need because of the increasing demand from parents who wish to put their kids in French immersion programs. More than 42,000 students are in French immersion across the province. There are 1,472 new students this year, representing a growth for the eleventh straight year in B.C. As you may have heard in the media, some parents camp overnight, or are being asked to use a lottery system, to register their child in French immersion in B.C.

There is also an increasing number of francophone children in the province, more than 4,200, attending the 40 francophone schools of the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique. Enrolment projections confirm that Conseil scolaire francophone experiences the fastest growth in all of B.C. school boards.

Since 2003, with the help of the funding received from the federal government, the faculty of education at SFU has expanded its programs and developed new programs to provide initial and continuous training to teachers of French. For example, in initial teacher education the number of places has doubled. In addition to the masters of education offered in French at SFU already, a new masters of education program is now accessible online for teachers throughout the province and beyond.

SFU is a member of the MedOwest Consortium, Le Consortium des établissements universitaires de l'Ouest canadien, which includes l'Institut français de l'Université de Regina, le Collège universitaire de St-Boniface, et le Campus St-Jean de l'Université de l'Alberta. As a member, SFU shares online M.Ed. courses with these institutions.

In 2007 another initiative was put in place by the faculty of education. A doctoral program in educational leadership was developed and is taught entirely in French. School administrators, teachers, community leaders, and civil servants are currently registered in this doctoral program.

Let me end by saying that students graduating from the various programs in education have great employment opportunities because of the demand in French immersion and core French programs, as well as in the francophone program.

The faculty of education at SFU is committed to continue its support to the development of official-language minority communities, as well as the learning of French as a second language.

I will now turn it over to my colleague.

Thank you.

● (0905)

[Translation]

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** Thank you, Danielle.

Ladies and gentlemen, in its study, your committee is focusing in particular on the manner in which the universities can train bilingual graduates so that the federal public service can respond to citizens in their mother tongue.

I am pleased to inform you that, thanks to the financial support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, which is responsible for official languages, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is offering a program that specifically addresses the federal government's expectations. It concerns not only a succession for the public service, but, even better, a succession that possesses a very good mastery of Canada's two official languages.

Since 2004, Simon Fraser University has offered a program in public administration and community services, which we also call the French Cohort Program. This is a multi-disciplinary program, unique to Canada, mainly offered in French to young graduates of the French immersion and core French programs and of the francophone program of British Columbia.

The French Cohort Program has a curriculum that includes courses in political science, public administration, history, economics and international studies, to name only a few. It is thus preparing these young citizens who master both official languages to join the public service.

The initiatives that we have put forward to encourage our students to achieve excellent proficiency in French and to understand the communities in which French is used are numerous and original.

Allow me to cite two examples. In the French Cohort Program, after two years of postsecondary studies in British Columbia—

● (0910)

**The Chair:** Ms. Trépanier, you have two minutes left.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** —students take part in an exchange program. Simon Fraser University has established partnerships with francophone institutions in Quebec, France and Belgium. Based on the model of the European student mobility program Erasmus, third-year students have the opportunity to study in various cities. On those exchanges, Simon Fraser University affords young Canadians and French-speaking Europeans the opportunity to develop their English-language proficiency and to discover western Canada.

In those courses, we establish ties with the communities. The students, in cooperation with the various organizations and associations, develop research and analysis programs. These projects enable them not only to gain a greater understanding of the minority francophone community, but also to contribute to that community through recommendations that they make in their various study reports.

How much do I have left?

**An hon. member:** A page.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** A page? Oh no!

**The Chair:** That's fine. You can continue.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** We were told we had a maximum of eight to 10 minutes.

In 2008, Simon Fraser University produced its first bilingual graduates. Prospects for those young people are enormous. Some have opted for French-language teaching positions, others have been recruited by the federal public service in bilingual positions. Still others have already chosen to pursue postsecondary studies in bilingual masters programs.

The federal government was right, in 2003, to invest in French second language and French minority language programs in British Columbia and must continue its investment because demand is growing. When we enter the province's schools, we ask students why they enrolled in an immersion program. The answer we most often get is, "because Canada is bilingual."

Simon Fraser University wants to expand its supply of programs for the youth of British Columbia who have invested all those years in learning French. It proposes to establish another original program entitled French as a C.O.O.L. Option, C.O.O.L. meaning Curriculum in the Other Official Language. This initiative would target students enrolling in a variety of academic programs and wishing to continue improving their French-language proficiency.

We have outlined a few initiatives that have been put in place in a short period of time and which are now real successes in British Columbia. It goes without saying that ongoing and increased financial support from the federal government would make it possible not only to maintain, but also to enrich postsecondary programs in British Columbia. We also propose that financial support paid to Canadian students wishing to continue studying in bilingual programs be expanded. Simon Fraser University would be pleased to welcome students taking part in a bilingual pan-Canadian mobility program. Imagine students from the Maritimes, from the east and the rest of Canada coming to study in British Columbia in both official languages.

In conclusion, Simon Fraser University is proud to have developed the first French-language postsecondary education programs in British Columbia. It is thus becoming the most western university in Canada, in the network of university institutions, to contribute to the expansion of Canada's linguistic duality.

We thank you for your attention and we'll be pleased to answer your questions.

**The Chair:** Ms. Arcand and Ms. Trépanier, thank you for that very cool presentation.

We'll now continue with our representatives from Acadia University.

• (0915)

**Ms. Janice Best (Director, Department of Languages and Literatures, Acadia University):** I'll start by thanking you for inviting us and affording us the opportunity to present our programs. I'll begin because I'm afraid my text is a little too long.

Acadia University's Department of Languages and Literatures offers programs in French as a second language and courses specifically intended to develop the Acadian community, which is a minority community in Nova Scotia. Most of our students are anglophones who come from immersion programs, early or late, or who come from core French programs. We also take in students

whose first language is French, Acadians in particular, who also take courses in French at a higher level.

We offer grammar courses at all levels, elementary, intermediate and advanced. We also offer courses in literature, culture, translation, French second language methodology and socio-linguistics courses. As regards courses that could contribute to the development of the minority communities, I would like to mention in particular our courses on Acadian literature and culture, which are intended for Acadian students and anyone else. These are courses that have attracted a lot of interest.

A second language isn't just learned in the classroom; you have to live in the language you want to learn. We try to organize as many cultural activities as possible, which are open to all members of the community. Whether they be anglophone, francophone or Acadian, anyone can come and take part in our cultural activities.

The two biggest challenges facing the postsecondary institutions are the lack of qualified teaching staff in the primary and secondary schools, and the lack of rigour in the way that grammar, spelling and syntax are taught in both the immersion programs and in the French-language schools. The French taught is too often an approximate French, patterned on English, whether it be in the anglophone schools that have immersion programs or in the francophone schools of our region.

This situation is a particular concern for the Acadian population living in Nova Scotia as a minority in an anglophone majority province. Paradoxically, many anglophone students who come from immersion programs face the same challenges. When these students arrive at the university, their language errors are set and difficult and, in some cases, indeed even impossible to correct.

Like many universities, we have recently introduced new courses specifically designed for these students, who generally speak with ease, but often make a lot of mistakes by patterning their speech on English or using anglicisms. The purpose of these new courses is to target these kinds of mistakes in order to correct them before it is too late.

Another initiative recently put in place by our university is designed to improve the quality of French taught in the schools. This is the creation of a French proficiency certificate for students who already have a teacher's licence, but who are trying to develop their knowledge of French. This certificate has been approved by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission and is recognized by the Nova Scotia Ministry of Education.

Teachers who register for this certificate take a series of 10 courses in French for 30 hours of credits, and they participate in what we call summer institutes, which last two to three weeks. We have observed that the benefits of our certificate go far beyond any improvement in the quality of French. Most teachers work in isolation in our province. In our schools, there is sometimes only one French teacher per school. Consequently, they have no one to speak French to.

● (0920)

Consequently, we have observed that bringing in the teachers to take French courses during the summer enables them to speak with each other in French, to discuss methodology and to establish networks of contacts they can use afterwards once they return to their schools.

Another initiative I would like to point out is the fact that our university recently became an approved centre for administering the TCF, the Test de connaissance du français. This test, which was developed by France's national ministry of education, is administered by the Centre international d'études pédagogiques, the CIEP. It is a standardized and calibrated French-language test that ranks candidates at one of the six levels of the scale established by the European Council under the European common framework of reference for languages. This test gives our students, and any member of the public who would like to know their level of French, the opportunity to gain international recognition for their accomplishments in French as a second language. We organized our very first TCF session on April 4, and we are very satisfied with the conduct of the test and the results obtained.

To the question as to what the federal government can do to help the postsecondary institutions support and improve second-language learning, I will answer that it would be a good idea to adopt and recognize the scale established by the European Council, once again under the European common framework of reference for languages, which establishes six levels of proficiency ranging from A1, the basic level, to C2, the advanced superior level.

This international recognition, I hope, will encourage our students to continue their education in French and to meet the challenge of aiming for perfection in spelling, grammar and syntax.

The federal government could also assist the postsecondary institutions in supporting second-language learning by putting in place as many measures as possible to promote the mobility of teachers and students. And here we come back to exactly the same idea, the idea of youth mobility across Canada and even internationally.

In that context, our university has established four exchanges with universities in France, with Nancy, Poitiers, Rouen and Tours. Through these exchanges, our students have the opportunity to study and work in France, and French students have the opportunity to come and study and work in Canada. Taking part in an exchange program is definitely the best way to acquire sound mastery of the French language and culture, and this is, in many cases, a decisive experience for our students. It can really determine where they want to go in life.

Currently, however, transferring credits between provinces and between countries is difficult, and we have few resources to encourage our students to take part in exchanges. Too often these are students who come from well-to-do families who have the resources to take part in exchanges.

In Europe, the Erasmus program, established by the European Commission some 20 years ago, does much to facilitate the transfer of credits and youth mobility. Young people have the opportunity to study at another institution without having to pay additional costs,

and credits are identified and readily transferable. Financial assistance is provided under the Erasmus program: the Erasmus community scholarship and the mobility scholarship, which are incentives for students to take part in these exchanges.

There is no such thing in Canada, as far as I know, for students who would like to study in another country. The Explore program, which offers five-week immersion courses in spring and summer, is an excellent initiative. Many of our students take these programs, but a five-week stay is not really enough. If you want to learn a language and master it, you have to spend more time.

● (0925)

If the Canadian government could introduce a system of scholarships to assist our students in going on long-term exchanges, either here or abroad, that would really help young Canadians in a significant way, and would assist and promote international relations in general.

Thank you. I'll be ready to answer your questions later.

**The Chair:** Ms. Best, thank you for your presentation and for bringing the Test de connaissance du français to the committee's attention.

We'll now continue with Mr. Ipperciel.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel (Assistant Dean to Research, Saint-Jean Campus, University of Alberta):** Mr. Chairman and members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. First I would like to thank you for the invitation to attend this meeting. The dean of the Saint-Jean Campus, Professor Marc Arnal, regrets that he could not be here. Today he has to meet with representatives of the Province of Alberta to negotiate funding for the campus.

Without further ado, I would like to get to the heart of the matter by answering your questions.

Does our institution receive funding from the federal government? The answer is yes. Out of a budget of \$9.25 million, \$2.7 million, or 29%, comes from Canadian Heritage. Another portion of federal funding comes from the Consortium national de formation en santé, nearly \$700,000, slightly more than 7%. This portion funds our health sciences program.

At our institution, are there any specific programs supporting the development of the official language communities? In fact, the development of the francophone minority communities is the purpose of the Saint-Jean Campus. Historically, the Collège Saint-Jean was founded by Franco-Albertans in 1908 and served that minority population exclusively. In 1977, the college became a part of the University of Alberta and became the Faculté Saint-Jean. Since 2005, the faculty has taken on the name "Campus Saint-Jean", thus cementing its special status as a francophone institution within the university.

The campus offers French-language programs in education, French, Canadian studies, political science, sociology, economics, administration, biology, mathematics and others. The Saint-Jean Campus is a leader in Alberta's francophone community, alongside the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and Radio-Canada (Alberta).

Are there any specific programs supporting the learning of French or English as a second language? The work of the Saint-Jean Campus on second language learning deserves special attention since the mission that the Campus has established is to teach French and English as second languages.

You should know that 67% of the 670 students on campus today are anglophones from French immersion programs, and 5% come from outside Canada. The percentage of francophone students is declining and now stands at 27%, while the percentage of immersion and international students is rising.

In view of these circumstances, you will understand why the efforts of the Saint-Jean Campus have gradually shifted toward the training of non-francophone students, whom we call francophile students. The French program, which is tailor-made for that population, is one of the biggest programs on the campus, after the education program. However, core French training is mandatory for all campus programs.

In addition to the formal programs, the Saint-Jean Campus has established a whole series of extra-curricular measures. These include the establishment of a language assistance centre called "La Centrale", which students go to outside class hours to improve their oral and written skills. Saint-Jean Campus also uses its student residents as a tool for learning French, to the extent that its residents must communicate solely in French on site. A recent study has demonstrated the pedagogical effectiveness of this initiative. Saint-Jean Campus has also established a French theatre program and club in which students can develop their language proficiency in a rich cultural context, and so on.

In the past five years, the campus has also established a comprehensive English second-language program enabling unilingual francophone students to acquire a university level in English. The assistance centre, La Centrale, also offers tutoring in English.

What initiatives could the postsecondary institutions introduce to promote the development of the communities? For many years now, Saint-Jean Campus has had numerous ties with the francophone community of Alberta. The purpose of those ties is precisely to promote the development of Alberta's francophone community and second language learning. For example, its sponsorship of the Toastmasters Club enables francophones to develop their speaking skills in French. Another example is its sponsorship of the Saint-Jean choral society, which welcomes all members of the francophone community.

Lastly, I would note its support for the various community groups to which the campus opens its premises at no cost. More than half of the council of the Association Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta are students at the campus, which is also represented on the council of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta. The campus does not operate in isolation, but is very much a part of the francophone community it serves. Its very existence helps to ensure the survival and vitality of the francophone community in Alberta.

• (0930)

A few years ago, the University of Alberta adopted a new position in its language policy. As a result of the presence of Saint-Jean Campus being in its midst, it bills itself as a bilingual institution and

has accordingly adopted a bilingual designation: "University of Alberta" and "Université de l'Alberta", which appears at the entrance to Saint-Jean Campus.

However, the bilingualism of the University of Alberta has not been fully thought out in all respects. In the current context, the language instruction mandate at the University of Alberta falls to four units: the French sector of the Department of Modern Languages, the Faculty of Continuing Education, the Augustana Campus, which is located in the small town of Camrose, approximately 100 km from Edmonton, and the Campus Saint-Jean.

We believe that, to optimize French-language learning in Alberta, the coordination of French programs should be centralized on the Saint-Jean Campus. That, however, is an internal debate that the campus intends to conduct with central university authorities.

As regards the fourth and final question, as to how the federal government could support the efforts made by postsecondary institutions, I would say that the federal government could provide its support on certain issues. I'll mention three.

First, the federal government, in recent years, has begun to encourage the supply of courses in French at anglophone universities. As part of that initiative, which was not prepared through a clear strategic plan, no one considered either the negative impact it would have on francophone institutions operating in minority settings or the perverse effect that diluting the supply of French courses would have on the ultimate objective of achieving optimum development of second-language learning. We believe that a clear distinction must be drawn, for the purpose of distributing federal funding, between institutions whose primary responsibility is French, like Campus Saint-Jean, and institutions that only secondarily offer courses in French.

Second, if the university can contribute to community development and second-language learning, it is not as a community centre or educational institution, but rather as a university. However, what distinguishes a university from other institutions of learning is its research mandate. A university with a weak research component is thus an inferior institution, with all the consequences that can have on its reputation, available funding and services that can be offered. Only an academically strong university can fully carry out its community mission. Only francophone minority universities and campuses face structural barriers in the field of research that undermine their competitiveness and reputations. Consequently, we recommend that the federal government develop a plan to correct this situation.

In more concrete terms, francophone minority universities and campuses manage to secure only a small portion of research funding from federal granting agencies such as the SSHRC and NSERC. There are funds for research on Canadian francophonie, but the idea is not to promote research on the francophone community, but rather by francophone institutions and their researchers in order to permit the development of francophone university institutions that will be leaders in the development of francophone communities outside Quebec. We thus could foresee, perhaps within the existing granting agencies, competitive funds granted solely to francophone minority universities and campuses, with a mandate to reduce, even if only a little, the existing structural inequities.

Third, it would be useful to produce a study on the additional costs resulting from French-language instruction in postsecondary education in order to quantify the concept of “structural barriers” which French-language minority postsecondary institutions face. The federal government's support here is decisive.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ipperciel.

We'll now go to Mr. Maher, from the University of Calgary.

**Mr. Dan Maher (Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Calgary):** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen members of the committee, thank you for inviting us.

First, I would like to talk about the Albertan context and about the context in south Alberta. There is an incredible need for teachers in French immersion and core French programs. The Albertan government had proposed to require that second-language instruction be provided over five years. Unfortunately, it decided to make that a recommendation, not a requirement.

Immersion programs are operating very well, and enrolment is up. We also have a lot of immersion programs in Spanish, German and Chinese, but 75% of second-language students enrol in French immersion. French is taught in the Department of French, Italian and Hispanic Studies. We note that multilingualism is quite widespread because a large number of our students are doing a double major. We are not competing with Spanish or Italian, but we have students who are doing double majors.

Enrolment in French courses is roughly stable, both for registration in the courses as such and in the major fields. We also offer courses under the acronym FLIP, which means French Language Instruction Program. We offer courses in disciplines such as history, sociology, religious studies and others, in French. This enables students from immersion to stay in touch with French, even if they are not specialists in that language.

In addition, the Centre français is working with the department. We do approximately 8,000 or 9,000 individuals visits there a year. The centre also gives not-for-credit courses to more than 500 students a year and organizes immersion weekends and so on.

As regards special initiatives for French, we are aiming in particular to organize short-term language stays to introduce students to French so that they will continue and spend a year or a semester in a francophone environment.

In winter, during reading week, we organize a course in Quebec. A teacher and a graduate student accompany a group of some 20 students. They visit museums and other institutions, with activities before and after their stay in Quebec.

We have had exchange programs with certain groups for some time now, including the Université François-Rabelais in Tours. We send students to Tours for the entire year, but their numbers are quite limited. We will be organizing a one-month course with a group that will be accompanied by a Calgary professor and also courses with professors from Tours.

As regards education programs, the Faculty of Education already has a two-year program which is given entirely in French. We have a

joint five-year French and education program, which is just starting and for which we still have to solve a number of administrative problems. We're working on that.

We would like to increase the number of scholarships awarded to students who go on language stays.

● (0935)

As my colleague just said, the idea is to put the study of French in a university context and to promote participation by post-doctoral research fellows and guest professors. We've done this, but we're trying to do more. For example, next year, we will be welcoming a Senegalese linguist for a semestre, and, over the next semester, a guest professor from Quebec will come and give courses at our university.

The language research centre has teaching technology projects, and we now have a pilot project designed to evaluate our programs by comparing them with the European common framework. In addition, my colleague has worked on a project on francophone immigration.

I believe I would like to stop there for the moment. We are prepared to answer your questions.

Thank you.

● (0940)

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

Now we'll immediately go to questions for our witnesses.

Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for coming from the four corners of this country to appear before us this morning.

I would like to address the issue of the teacher shortage, which you all mentioned. Are we just talking about the primary and secondary levels, or is that at the postsecondary level as well? Some of my colleagues might say that we aren't here to interfere in the affairs of the provinces, but, if the provinces aren't handling their bilingualism affairs and there aren't any teachers who can teach in French at the primary and secondary levels, there is a problem.

Ms. Best, I believe, mentioned that, even though French is taught at the primary and secondary levels, there is often a lack of rigour. So if there is a shortage of teachers and a lack of rigour, how can we expect that, when they leave university, these students will be perfectly bilingual and able to fit into the federal government, among other things? I would like to hear one or two comments on that point. I'll have other questions later on.



**Ms. Janice Best:** I would say that the shortage of qualified teaching staff is a very serious problem. Often in the schools, no teachers have done any studies in French, but the principal, who needs to find someone to give the courses in that subject, looks among his staff for someone who has taken French courses at university. Here we're talking about the person who will be asked to give French courses and who has taken, let's say, a total of four French courses in his or her entire education. That person is not really qualified to teach French, but since there's no one else, that person will be asked to give the French courses.

I believe that this situation is not rare, at least in Nova Scotia. At many schools, teachers do not have the necessary qualifications, whereas there is a lot of pressure from parents who want French courses to be given at school. You see this kind of case in the program we've established for teachers. Many haven't done a specialization in French, but wind up teaching French.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** I heard you were offering courses in science and education in French to correct what is not being done at the basic level. You probably understand the problem and you want to introduce training in French, in education, so that those teachers will go and teach at the primary and secondary levels so as to improve bilingualism skills. Is that correct?

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** Our efforts to provide people with core French training are significant, and that's a large part of what we do in the context of initial training. I don't think the idea is to correct so much as to supplement. Curricula are now very demanding in many fields, at the elementary and secondary levels. We now have to take it upon ourselves to teach social functions that used to be taught by the family. There may ultimately be less time left to teach.

Initial training is very important, and continuing training is as well. What you're doing with the Explore program is tremendous. I think we have to increase the capability to train people once they are already employed and to offer them subjects that interest them. Grammar is important, but, on its own, it's not always the first choice of people who want to continue developing their skills.

• (0945)

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** I agree with you. I'll have a chance to come back to this later, in another round. You say the idea isn't to correct the situation, but, on the other hand, as Ms. Best mentioned, there is a lack of rigour. That means that, at the basic level, someone hasn't done his job. These people are virtually drawing straws to decide who's going to teach French.

The problem isn't just that the school doesn't have enough resources. Someone else has to provide them, and that could be the provincial government.

You know the situation and what has to be done for the future, but there are people, at the basic level, who don't necessarily understand the situation 100 percent. In British Columbia, people want to learn French but aren't able to do so because there aren't any teachers. The federal government increasingly wants employees to be bilingual in order to be sure it can provide the services it has to deliver to the Canadian population in both languages, but it does not necessarily have all the tools it needs.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

Perhaps you would like to comment briefly on that question, Mr. Maher.

**Mr. Dan Maher:** Yes. In the context of French instruction, core French is a poor cousin, but I believe, with regard to rigour, that we're trying to emphasize the language skills of teachers.

For example, we want to put this pilot project on the European common framework into practice. The University of Calgary, with the Alliance française, is also offering the DELF and DALF diplomas. In that way, we want to establish an acceptable basic level for teachers.

**The Chair:** We'll now go to Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, everyone. I'm going to continue somewhat along the same lines as Mr. D'Amours. I'm a teacher. I was trained at the University of Ottawa. I taught in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Ontario. Today, they first train the teachers, and the subject matter comes second. I think that paradigm has to change.

My subjects were French and history, but I had to teach a number of others as well. In that kind of situation, you wind up adjusting because you want the job. School managements carry out orders that come from their school boards. How management is viewed varies from province to province, but every student still represents \$5,400. At least that was the case at the time. So they want to attract students to their own schools and to offer the course. You can't blame a school principal for obeying the rules set for him by the department of education and the school boards. You people are probably in the best position to influence the department of education.

I'd like you to give me your opinion on the following hypothesis that I've come up with. I won't make a theory out of this, even though I'd like to. The best way to train anglophones so that they become bilingual is to enrol them at a university where French is the first language and which is established in a community where French is also the first language.

In that way, wouldn't we resolve, in large part, the debate we're having today? I'm going to put that question to Ms. Best, Mr. Maher and other colleagues.

**Ms. Janice Best:** I completely agree: nothing replaces a long-term language stay. You really have to be in a francophone environment where there are no anglophones with whom you're tempted to speak.

When they return, we've noticed that our students who have spent a year in France have really made incredible progress. Comparing them to our students who have not made the effort to go to France, we have seen that their level is completely different. I myself have had that experience: this spring, I spent a week in France with two of my students. It was the first time they had been with people who didn't speak any English at all. They were really surprised that they could not make themselves understood by using expressions that worked in their classroom and which are often patterned on English.

I think that finding yourself opposite someone who doesn't understand and being forced to find the right word in French is the method that works.

• (0950)

**Mr. Dan Maher:** I completely agree with my colleague: these long-term language stays have incredible value. I did my studies, a long time ago, at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. It required a language stay of at least one semester and preferably one year. So the students' level of French was very good. Applying that requirement at our universities and finding a way to fund these stays so that they aren't just accessible to students who are well to do would be a considerable asset.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Mr. Ipperciel?

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** I entirely agree. I would add perhaps that this often comes as a cold shower, but that's not necessary. Proceeding gradually is a good idea. At the campus, a lot of francophone students from Quebec eventually want to study in English at the University of Alberta. So they proceed gradually by taking a few courses in French with us, and courses in English.

Conversely, our anglophone students learn French there. They also proceed gradually. They have access to the residence, where they only speak French. Whatever the case may be, this will never replace a trip or complete immersion in a francophone environment.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** The ideal, Mr. Nadeau, would be for all students to find themselves in francophone environments for more than one year. Based on the model we've selected, students spend two years with us—and we of course offer them language training during that period—and subsequently one year abroad. That year is mandatory as part of the BA program. We've chosen to send them abroad in the third year for all kinds of reasons. When they arrive at university, after grade 12, they are 17 years old and lack maturity. They also need intellectual maturity to take advantage of the experience outside their environment. They come back enriched academically. My colleagues mentioned this phenomenon earlier. The students choose courses that are not offered at home, at their home institution. They take advantage of socio-linguistic enrichment. Language learning is done in an environment. There is cultural enrichment—that goes without saying—and personal enrichment as well. This personal growth occurs only starting at a certain age.

These are the reasons why we have selected this model. We prepare the students very well for what awaits them, that is to say that third year abroad. When they come back, they can use the entire experience they've had in third year in their francophone or francophile community. We see that, to date, our students go back to those francophone environments because the experience has really enriched them. These students have a window on the world. It may be a Canadian francophone environment or, as is the case with us, a European environment.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Nadeau.

Ms. Trépanier, this makes us want to go. I think that, if I was younger, I would go study in Vancouver.

Now I'm going to hand over to our parliamentary secretary for Official Languages, Ms. Glover.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Thank you very much. I'd like to welcome the witnesses as well.

I've noticed in a number of speeches made by our witnesses—and here I'm not just talking about the witnesses here today—that five themes have constantly been coming up.

First, they note deficiencies in basic training. Second, there is a shortage of skilled teachers, as Mr. D'Amours said. Third, they note that student enrolment in second-language courses—and that's generally French—is increasing, but declining on the francophone side. Fourth, most witnesses here today, as well as others, suggest that mobility programs should be implemented. Fifth, there's been much discussion of assessments of French levels.

I would simply like to point out to you that this isn't the first time we've heard this. Other witnesses are making the same suggestions. I'm very interested in the fact that these ideas are coming up again.

I'd like to go back to the question that Mr. Nadeau asked and to ask you whether, in your opinion, anglophones in a minority setting would also do well to study in Quebec. Conversely, would Quebec francophones do well to study in completely anglophone environments? Everyone agrees? That's perfect.

• (0955)

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** That's what we're proposing: we dream of a situation in which young anglophones would come and study French in Vancouver and vice versa. We're talking about mobility. We currently have conventions, agreements, with various European and Quebec universities, but why not imagine pan-Canadian mobility where young people would not only hear the other's language, but would know the other's culture and what Canada as a whole is.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** As an immersion student, I took advantage of the fact that I had francophone friends and that I was in a situation where I could speak French. So I completely agree, but we have a problem. There are consequences for those families that can't send their...

Do you acknowledge that that would be ideal, but that it's not really a reality for everyone here, in Canada? Do we all agree on that point? My parents were quite poor, and I wouldn't have had the opportunity to travel far away, but, on the other hand, I took part in exchanges in Quebec.

Ms. Best, you said this is really important, but you also suggested international exchanges. Our universities and our children are increasingly going to China, Japan, and so on, but, if we really want to retain our francophonie, I would like us to choose Quebec first because participants will find advantages there. I agree with you that it's important.

I simply wanted to know whether the other universities have tests like those you set at your institution, Ms. Best. That's really extraordinary. Do the other universities have tests to determine knowledge levels?

You're telling me that's the case at Simon Fraser University. And in Alberta?

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** In Alberta, we had an in-house test for a number of years. Now we're starting to go to international standards, to international-style tests.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Perfect.

And at the University of Calgary?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** We're headed towards that; it's starting to develop. In the past, we only had our in-house standards, as you say.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** You said that these are tests that are used for teachers only. Do you use tests for students?

**Ms. Janice Best:** Yes, anyone who wants to take him the TCF, the Test de connaissance du français. It makes it possible to rank a person from level A1, the basic level, to C2, the advanced superior level.

In addition, the Nova Scotia Ministry of Education has a pilot project right now to enable secondary students to obtain the DELF, the Diplôme d'études en langue française, which is based on the same levels.

Like the other universities, we previously had an in-house test that we had developed ourselves, but what drew us to this test is, first, that it is recognized across Europe and, second, that it is corrected in an entirely objective manner. The tests are sent to France and corrected there. So we don't have to worry about any subjectivity with regard to our students.

Our students are really very, very proud to achieve, for example, level B1 on the test, and that that is recognized by the government.

• (1000)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** I want to take the test too! I can't wait to see it.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** For your information, there is a draft Canadian version of the European common framework. Some Canadian universities and school boards are testing it. So there's a Canadian version of this common frame of reference. That is to say that, from province to province, we'll know what is meant by an A, a B, a C...

**Ms. Shelly Glover:** Fantastic!

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** ...somewhat like for a public service test.

**The Chair:** Is the Public Service Commission of Canada taking part in the process?

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** I don't think so, but the people managing this project are from the University of Ottawa...

**The Chair:** I see.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** ...and it's just next door, so there's no doubt some consultation.

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

I have a question on the same subject. How long does the test take?

**Ms. Janice Best:** The TCF? There are two parts. One is mandatory and concerns oral comprehension, mastery of language structure and written comprehension. That takes an hour and a half.

Then there are two optional parts concerning oral and written expression. That lasts another two hours, I believe.

It's quite long, but the test is really rigorous. It's kept secret; we can't see it before we get it. We open the envelope and we discover it.

We've been very satisfied because we think the questions are quite consistent with the grammar we teach, but we've also been very impressed by the rigour of the test. It's not easy. The last questions are really complicated.

**The Chair:** Committee members have asked a lot of questions about bilingualism and the level of second-language proficiency.

Mr. D'Amours, VANOC said it had received 14,000 applications from people who said they were bilingual. But what does it mean to be bilingual?

Mr. D'Amours.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Given the time it takes, perhaps we could take the test ourselves. That's about the amount of time the committee has.

• (1005)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** There should be an English test, a bilingual test.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** There is a desire at Simon Fraser University to get involved in cooperation and courses. There seems to be an incredible desire to offer training in French. I'm not saying that's not the case of the other universities represented here.

As regards cooperation, it was said that student stays in francophone environments should be funded in part by the federal government, regardless of the parents' financial means. That's an interesting suggestion.

Even if the political parties don't have the same vision of early childhood development—I don't want to have a debate on that this morning—the fact remains that the government can promote the development of children from zero to five years and invest in the future.

Providing financial assistance to students who want to stay in other francophone regions represents an investment in the future. I'm not talking about stays in other countries because, as you'll understand, I'm limiting myself to Canada. If a student wanted to go and stay in Edmundston, in my region, where the campus of the Université de Moncton is located, could he receive financial assistance?

Simon Fraser University has entered into agreements with other Quebec universities, but I haven't yet heard the same thing of the Université de Moncton, in New Brunswick. I hope that could be done at some point.

Would it be a major option for the federal government to provide financial assistance to students wishing to go and study elsewhere for a semester or a full year, regardless of their parents' financial means? Ultimately, as someone said, we might have a chance to keep them here when they come back.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** Think of the parents who've invested a lot of energy in choosing to put their children in a French immersion program.

At Simon Fraser University, the parents' mother tongue is not English. There we talk about multilingualism with two official languages. Think of those parents who don't speak a lot of English, who don't speak French at all, who speak an Asian language and so on. That's the case of the parents of students at our university. It requires a lot of energy on the part of the parents and children, who do their homework alone in the evenings. All those people are already spending a lot of energy.

You talk about investing, regardless of socio-economic levels. I think that's important to the extent that these people have already invested a great deal. Once they get to university, they've already shown that they want to pursue their studies. For example, students have to leave in third year—that's required of them. That demands extraordinary investment and commitment.

Regardless of socio-economic levels, we should invest. I agree with you: that money comes from the federal government. You want that money to stay in Canada. However, once they return to Canada, students who go and experience life in a francophone environment in another country will enrich Canada and the Canadian francophone community. I understand your hesitation, but I would like to encourage you to have that openness on the world, which would give us a return on our investment.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** I understand your point of view, but you also have to consider the principle of the matter.

Mr. Maher?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** I haven't checked recently, but when I took the program at Trois-Rivières in 1977, the scholarship was \$2,000. When I checked two years ago, it was still \$2,000.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** That's the amount provided by the federal government?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** That's it, yes.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** That means things have really changed.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Dan Maher:** I think it's normal for the federal government to invest in Canada.

I understand my colleague's point of view, but we're trying to promote the French fact in Canada. As a result, let them go to France if they can afford to do it, or, why not, to Africa or Belgium, and let's propose language stays in Canada first; I think that's perfectly valid.

**The Chair:** Ms. Arcand?

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** I simply want to repeat the argument Mr. Ipperciel advanced earlier. One of our primary concerns, when we send our students to another institution, is to know whether

they'll be welcomed in an appropriate, rich environment that will enable them to develop the skills we want them to acquire.

Support for research is very important to form centres of excellence in Canada. If we can do something great in political science, but there's a science program in French in Edmonton that's worth its weight in gold, and other centres of excellence are formed elsewhere, I think that's also what we have to aim for.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** I have a brief question. I'd like to go back to the obligation issue. In Vancouver, this is mandatory for students.

Do you think it should be an obligation across Canada, that, at some point during their studies, it should be mandatory for them to go and study in the other official language? In your universities—

• (1010)

**Mr. Dan Maher:** That would be on the condition we got the funding.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** With the funding, that would be fine. Perfect. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

We'll continue with Ms. Guay.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here today.

Personally, I did the opposite when I was studying. I went to English immersion. I'm going to tell you a little story. I studied administration at McGill University. My professor was Vietnamese. I understood absolutely nothing in the first course. I wondered if it was my fault, if my English was that bad. I didn't understand any more in the second course. I spoke to an anglophone who was in my class. She told me the same thing, that she understood absolutely nothing. We asked to change professors because he wasn't proficient enough in the language to teach us.

I'd like to talk about the Explore program. We've talked a lot about it. I would like to have some more details on how it works in your universities. We've been told that it's a good five-week program. However, a lot of people don't take it because they have to work during the summer, or because they can't afford to do it. What could be done to improve the program? Shouldn't there be a scholarship for students to encourage them to use those five weeks to see whether they like being in immersion to learn a second language?

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** There's already the Accent program at the federal level. It's a student monitoring program. The students we sent on mobility in third year to Laval University, for example, also benefited from the Accent program.

We could imagine a combination of those two programs in which the student, through the Explore program, studies his second language, but can also work in his mother tongue, perhaps on a part-time basis.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** There have been government cuts to the programs you refer to. You know that. From what my colleague was saying, it's affecting part-time students.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** I'm citing that as an example—

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Cuts have been made to that program. They've taken an axe to it—

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** So a program should be reintroduced—

**Ms. Monique Guay:** It should be reintroduced.

**Ms. Claire Trépanier:** There's also a benefit in working in your mother tongue. For example, we've had students who've worked in a summer camp in their second language in Quebec. You have to have imagination and try to offer those students different options.

It's true that our students need to work. We know that. Combining the two would be a possibility, an option.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Ms. Best.

**Ms. Janice Best:** I completely agree. In fact, I think there are programs enabling students in the Explore program to stay at the same place and to work there. One of our students did that last summer. She found a job and worked in French.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** That also depends on qualifications.

**Ms. Janice Best:** Yes, exactly.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** They nevertheless have to have a fairly advanced level in order to be able to work.

**Ms. Janice Best:** It depends. It's not guaranteed. We've also seen that our students who took the Explore program were the ones who wanted to do another language stay. A lot of students take part in a first and a second Explore program. Then, in third year, they go on exchange programs. I think that's an excellent program, except that —

**Ms. Monique Guay:** It enables them to determine whether they really want to learn the second language and whether they're comfortable with that.

**Ms. Janice Best:** The scholarship helps enormously.

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** At the Faculty of Education, the Explore program is linked up with the initial training program. The generalists in the anglophone class are first given an introductory course to the teaching of French as a second language.

In fact, we teach them French by showing them how to teach it. Then we send them for further training and immersion in the culture as part of the Explore program. I think the cultural side of that course has extraordinary value.

It enables them to understand the purpose of teaching our language and to discover ways of continuing to develop that.

• (1015)

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Yes?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** I think you have to look at the Explore program not as if it were intended solely for French specialists, teachers for example, but also for others who won't necessarily teach French or do a specialization.

My son studied in the Explore program at Chicoutimi and he did a major in political science. He went into late immersion, but he's able to read documents and work in French in his field.

So you have to consider the non-specialists and continue to increase the linguistic levels of all our students. The Explore

program is an excellent way to promote this linguistic ability as well as the cultural aspect.

I'm thinking here in Quebec. If you study political science in Calgary... Well, I'm going to refrain from making political comments.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Studying in Quebec is obviously not the same thing as studying elsewhere.

Mr. Ipperciel?

**The Chair:** All right, go ahead.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** I haven't talked a lot.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** You also have to understand that the experience of students today differs to a great extent from what we experienced when we were students. The image of the hard-up student doesn't at all correspond to what they know, at least in Alberta. They go around in cars, go to restaurants.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Perhaps in Alberta, yes.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** They've got money. A consumer mentality prevails, so that they want to work and make money in the summer. They're very independent. Paid programs work well with them. Back home, employment as an English-language monitor in France, for example, is popular. This kind of work is popular, provided it's paid.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** With the oil, things work in Alberta.

**The Chair:** You see there's also a cultural component to a language. We can come back to that.

[English]

We now turn to Madam Tilly O'Neill-Gordon.

Tilly.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** First of all, I want to welcome the witnesses for being with us today. I am from New Brunswick, Canada's only bilingual province.

In my last few years of teaching I was in an immersion school, so I saw first-hand how the students, just like a sponge, can absorb all this. I wasn't teaching French, as you can figure out.

I agree with Janice Best when she says that quite often principals have to grab the first person they can get. In our school we were very fortunate in having a young man who throughout his years of university travelled through different provinces in Canada and studied French. He also then travelled to Europe for maybe even several summers after he became a teacher. There is a great benefit, and you see that with the students. Not only does he bring all kinds of ideas, but he also opens the idea of travel to children and shows that there's more to life than just the Miramichi, even though we like to think that's not true.

Are there not more initiatives that we could have to offer advantages not just to university students, but to these young teachers who are going into the classrooms? I know I have a godchild up there who is just starting her first couple of years of teaching. She is teaching French immersion. I was just thinking not only she, herself, but other teachers in our province could benefit from programs that would help teachers to see different involvement and so on.

I am wondering if the universities have anything for teachers. That question is open to anybody, it doesn't matter who.

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** I think that teacher experience outside the country is very important. One thing we have done at the faculty of education is organize a short four-week practicum in a country. We've been to Cuba. We've developed relationships with teachers and universities there who train their teachers to teach French and English, and our students spend some time with them, preparing lessons, teaching in the schools. We are interested in developing this sort of short-term practicum in other regions as well. This is something that is certainly important in our eyes.

We've also developed a dual certification program by which we send our students to Université François-Rabelais. They're very big on the international exchange. They do spend three months in a master's of French as a second-language program there. When they come back, they integrate our teacher training program, which is a one-year program, at the end of which they are trained to teach in our province and they can also qualify for a diploma in France.

Vice versa, we integrate people from France into our program that way. The enrichment goes both ways. Some of the students who come from France are indeed interested in teaching in the province as well.

• (1020)

**Ms. Janice Best:** I think it would be a great idea to put in place a system of exchanges for teachers. I know at the university level we do have that possibility, if you can find someone who switches from their university to ours and then you can basically change houses and change jobs. It's quite easy to do.

Something like that, if it could be organized for teachers, would be tremendously beneficial, because a teacher would have the opportunity to go and live in another province or another country and just find out all these things that are going on in other places and come back with so much more material to bring to the classroom. I think that would be an excellent initiative.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Teachers can never have too much material to bring back with them.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** An openness to the world is important. It's important for the anglophones in Canada; it shouldn't be less important for francophones in Canada.

More and more now, independently of the question of French and English, we're trying to include ideas of globalization. We try not to just focus on specific courses but to have the idea of interculturalism present in all of our courses. This openness to the world is just as important to francophones.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** When you see the only teacher in the school who has had that opportunity, you really come to compare the rest of us. The kids just loved him; he was the only teacher who mattered.

If there were only more opportunities out there.... It's a shame that it's just open to people who can afford it. His family could afford to send him back in those years and he had the opportunity to go.

If we only had more incentive and initiatives for kids from just a normal family, not just for someone who has the money to do it, it would be great for all of us.

**Mr. Dan Maher:** I think we do have—not so much organized through the university, but through Alberta Education—a number of bursaries for teachers to do summer programs, particularly in Quebec. I think these types of programs are really quite valuable. I'm originally from Newfoundland, and we had in residence the French part of Explore. It was a conscious decision to put them in residence and to give every Québécois a Newfoundlander roommate. For interprovincial understanding it was great. It did send people back to Quebec sometimes with interesting accents.

Particularly in these types of programs, I think that sending kids either to home-stay situations or something where that contact is required is really a big deal for a number of reasons. When my son was in Chicoutimi, he shared an apartment with other anglophones. Now, he tried very hard, but you get less cultural and linguistic value being among the same people. Even if you are speaking French all the time, it's semi-immersion French at the lower end of the scale.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Thank you.

• (1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Gravelle, you've come at the right time. You can take over.

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

Unfortunately, I missed a large part of the presentation, but since I have questions to ask, I'm going to ask them now, before I leave.

Ms. Arcand, in your presentation, you talked about the B.C. and Yukon branch. Could you explain to me what that is?

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** It's a chapter of the organization Canadian Parents for French, that you no doubt know. I believe that representatives of that organization have come to testify before this committee. These are local associations of parents whose children are in immersion. They support the efforts of the schools that enrich the cultural program. The British Columbia chapter has associated with the Yukon. The number of people being what it is in the Yukon, these people have grouped together to combine their strength.

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

Ms. Trépanier has left, unfortunately, but she talked about a scholarship system. Is there a system that you would like to see the government apply?

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** In fact, we've developed that theme a little. I think all my colleagues from the other universities have emphasized the importance of having mobility scholarships, whether it be pan-Canadian or reciprocal, to permit exchanges between anglophones and francophones from regions of Canada, but also exchanges within the francophone world, to reinforce second-language learning ability. For us, this is about French. We already have some scholarships.

What we're saying here, collectively, is that we encourage government authorities to continue supporting these programs because they are of capital importance.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** My next question is for everyone.

We've often heard it said that there is a shortage of qualified teachers. I'd like to know whether you recruit qualified people from other provinces or countries.

**Mr. Dan Maher:** In the case of immersion teachers, we recruit extensively in Quebec, but I think it's very important that students have francophone and anglophone teachers for models. If they only have Quebec teachers, we send them the message that they'll never achieve that level. However, if the students also have qualified and trained anglophone teachers, and thus if they can see both sides of the story, I think that encourages them.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** That answer surprises me a little. Wouldn't it be better to have qualified francophone teachers rather than unqualified anglophones?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** We should have qualified anglophones.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** Are there any? It doesn't seem that there are a lot.

**Mr. Dan Maher:** There are enough.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** So wouldn't it be better to recruit qualified francophones to teach in immersion rather than to have no one?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** I'm very pleased to have francophones who teach, but, at the same time, it seems essential to me that there be anglophones or people with another mother tongue to teach French.

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** I may have another answer, Mr. Gravelle.

Francophones are actively recruited in all immersion programs in Canada. What happens is that they are very attached to Quebec, to Quebec culture and to their families. They don't necessarily stay very long.

Consequently, there's a problem retaining these teachers. I think it's important that there be qualified people, from the local area, and that we give them the resources to qualify.

I listen to Mr. Maher and I see that he's very qualified in French. You've acquired an excellent level of French, and the same is true of Ms. Best.

So it's possible. We simply have to continue supporting the programs that enable people to achieve those levels.

• (1030)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Gravelle.

Ms. Best would like to add something.

**Ms. Janice Best:** I would like to support this idea that it is important, of course, to have francophones who teach, but also qualified anglophones because they serve as models for our students.

An anglophone student wants to know whether it's possible to achieve a certain level of proficiency and, if he has a model before him, someone like me, for example, that will encourage him. I learned French as a second language starting in grade 7. I can tell my students that it's possible, that, if they work, they can do it. Having a few teachers of anglophone origin also gives our students a lot.

**The Chair:** In my opinion, instead of committee members taking the TCF, it should be Ms. Best and Mr. Maher. I think they would do well.

[English]

We'll now move to the third round.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj, welcome to the committee. We'll open the round with you.

[Translation]

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Is there a Quebec dictionary of Quebec French words and expressions? It's often easier for students of French to understand francophones from other countries, from France, for example, than Quebecers.

The worst are the television programs that students of French find too hard to understand. I'll ask a second question later. Is there a dictionary or a book containing all those expressions?

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** There are a number. There's the Bélisle, the Robert québécois and a lot of glossaries.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Most teachers from other provinces are anglophones who have studied French. If students have trouble understanding Quebec French, perhaps we need institutes for teachers in Quebec.

Perhaps we can rethink our method. What's the priority for official languages? Is the priority to use French for international business or to be a bilingual country? Also do we need to invest in order to have teachers who really use Quebec French, with all its expressions, and who have a typically Canadian, Quebec accent?

**Ms. Janice Best:** I can talk about my department. We have all kinds of teachers who come from everywhere. We have two colleagues from Quebec, one from Belgium, one from Switzerland, one from Haiti and myself. I don't think my department is unique. You find that mix in most French departments across Canada. You hear all kinds of accents.

We have a socio-linguistics course where we study all the various kinds of spoken French. I think we're very sensitive to the importance of making our students understand that there are all kinds of French in the world and that they have to be able to understand all accents, all expressions. We really like studying the various expressions that come from various countries. I don't know whether that answers your question.

• (1035)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** However, you mentioned that some secondary students used English expressions in French. In fact, the world is now a global village and our priority is to have a bilingual Canada, but we're talking about English-Quebec bilingualism. There are differences.

On the other hand, when I was in high school, all the books and courses were in French from France. Perhaps we should set a priority so that our students can travel to Quebec and speak French with Quebecers. Perhaps we should make a greater effort to get Quebec teachers in our schools from other provinces

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj. The five minutes are up.

Are there any comments?

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** A distinction should be drawn between formal French and social French. From the standpoint of formal French, there's no difference; it's an international French that is used in Quebec, in France and elsewhere. However, social French differs from region to region. The strategy that the Saint-Jean Campus has adopted, for example, is to have students learn social French not in courses, because they learn formal French there, but in various places and programs outside the courses, where they can learn social French.

This is often an emotional French. So it involves small emotional words that you'll often hear among anglophone students when they speak French. They say cool man—in English—because it's an emotional French. I think it's important—you're right—that we “teach” that emotional French, not necessarily as part of the formal courses, but, for example, in the residences, the corridors, at informal meetings, tutorials between anglophones and francophones and so on. So French isn't learned just in the classroom, but also in informal venues.

**The Chair:** Mr. Nadeau.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to answer Borys on the subject of what's called the vernacular, a question of great interest to me. English is spoken in Utah, New England, Scotland and various regions of the world. All those people speak a vernacular language, that is to say they have their own expressions, but there is only one English grammar.

It's the same thing in French. There is only one French grammar, but there are a number of ways of speaking the language. The people of Lac-Saint-Jean, Montreal, the Outaouais, Haiti, Belgium and certain regions of France have their vernacular language. It's an asset.

What is important is to learn the grammar well. When you know your grammar, you can adapt to the work place and to the people you're speaking with. That's what Antonine Maillet is demonstrating when she denies that she has an Acadian accent.

For example, in Quebec French and Acadian French, we say “moé” and “toé”, as they said in the 16th and 17th centuries. They talked about the “roué” and not the “roi”. Things evolve with time. These are vernacular expressions, but there's only one grammar. You can offend people if you tell them that their French or English is not as good as that of others. You have to keep that in mind when you teach French.

Mr. Gravelle talked about teaching and what we call the intermediate learning system. A person who has gone through all the stages of learning another language is in a better position to teach it than another person who already masters the language and who has not gone through all those stages. An anglophone student who has managed to learn French in an immersion program and who subsequently wants to teach it will be more understanding of his students. That concerns language learning.

Mr. Ipperciel cited a figure earlier. I'm torn by it and it's one of the reasons why I'm in politics. It was the number of FL1s, which means French as a first language, in Canada. I don't really like the expression, but it's a reality. People born in a French-language family and culture are being assimilated so that they no longer speak French at all at 17, 22 or 40 years of age, regardless of age.

We've established institutions. I'm thinking of the Faculté Saint-Jean, the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface and the Collège universitaire de Hearst. There comes a time when those institutions can no longer serve their own community, the one for which they were created. Some 27% of the student body at the Faculté Saint-Jean are Franco-Albertans, or FL1s, whether they be Franco-Manitobans, Quebecers or other francophones.

I think assimilation is a major problem and a cancer as regards non-respect of the French fact across Canada. There are even regions in Quebec where French is losing ground. Come and take a tour of Pontiac. I'm a Nadeau and my mother is a Lalonde, but since people only speak English in my region, our names are pronounced with an English accent. Assimilation is progressing.

You talked about socio-linguistics earlier. When you teach political science and history, do you make your students aware of the fact that it is crucially important to ensure that those who speak French very young not become a pale reflection of those who have assimilated them later on? Is that done?

I don't think the university programs of English Canadians who don't understand Quebec take that fact into account. Moreover, they don't understand the French-language minorities because they don't even know the word “assimilation”.

• (1040)

**Ms. Danielle Arcand:** You have to view that from a historical perspective of the development of francophone communities across the country.

I'm going to cite the example of British Columbia. We've only had a francophone school board in the province for the past 12 years. Now that we have well-established francophone schools and we have the resources to correct... We may have classes with smaller groups, but we can nevertheless justify establishing a school, a class. We're also working systematically on anything relating to identity building.

We're talking about assimilation. In education, assimilation, mobility and the transformation of linguistic environments are problems that are raised very systematically. The socio-linguistic issue is very prominent in education in minority environments. That's what we focus our efforts on.

For example, the ACELF represents teachers of French as a first language regularly and supports them to the extent of its resources. A great deal of effort is being made in that direction.

**Ms. Janice Best:** I would say the same thing. In Nova Scotia, too, a lot of Acadian families are losing their French. In my classes, I regularly see students whose names seem Acadian to me, d'Entremont or Leblanc, for example. I realize they don't speak French. I find that unfortunate and they do as well.



We have an Acadian school board of francophone schools. So we're trying to make those students proud of their heritage, to teach Acadian history in the schools and to produce French texts that tell that history. There's a lot of interest in the history of the Acadians, their culture, and so on. Through the Acadian school boards, we're trying to reverse the trend toward assimilation, which is really sad.

• (1045)

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** You're entirely right. The assimilation rate in Alberta is 75%. That means that, if I'm francophone and I have four children, only one of them will remain francophone. Exogamy is probably one of the major reasons for this situation.

However, from a relative standpoint, the figures are declining. Mr. Castonguay, a researcher from Quebec, often emphasizes relative rates. However, you also have to understand that, in absolute figures, the number of francophones has increased in Alberta.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** That's because of immigration.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** It isn't a significant increase. Fortunately, immigration helps not only maintain, but also increase the number of francophones in absolute terms, although, relatively speaking, the number is declining. The assimilation problem is not something that Franco-Albertans have to be aware of; they experience the reality every day. Their brothers and sisters will become anglophones.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** I'm talking about the anglophones who constitute 67% of your clientele. Are they aware that a cataclysm is happening, what I would call an ethnocide, to the extent that people are losing their culture?

**The Chair:** It's time that you're killing.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** I'll give you an example among many others, the example of the textbooks used in our history courses at Saint-Jean Campus. The Canadian history textbook is based on the perspective of the west and the western francophone community. It's not a textbook written in Quebec, from the Quebec perspective. In that sense, it's entirely suited to this population.

**The Chair:** Mr. Amedegnato, go ahead please.

**Mr. Ozouf Amedegnato (Assistant Professor, Department of French, Italian and Spanish, University of Calgary):** I hope I can reassure you, but I don't think you necessarily have to panic if you don't find that awareness formally, in instructions, textbooks or texts. It exists in the courses. Regardless of the titles of the courses offered to students, what is done and said in the courses is not necessarily visible. I believe that a lot of my colleagues are aware of the situation and make their students aware of it as well.

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

We're going to conclude the third round with Mr. Jacques Gourde.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to be with you this morning. I don't often have the opportunity to sit on the committee. I'm discovering that certain universities in the anglophone provinces are very competent. I didn't know that there could be such effective programs.

What motivates students to enrol in your universities? They no doubt have a French base since they can't go to you as completely unilingual anglophones. They've no doubt previously had immersion

courses or studied in francophone programs at the primary, secondary or pre-university level.

When they arrive at university, what attracts them? Do they come for their professional careers, for the culture or is it a mix of the two? Is it to make a career in the public service or internationally? Do those students speak two, three or four languages?

**Ms. Janice Best:** We take in two types of students. First we take in those who have studied French in high school and who would like to continue studying it. They have a number of careers in mind, including teaching or a career in politics, tourism or international relations.

We also have beginners, generally international students who have never studied French and who would like to study it because it's one of Canada's official languages. That interests them a great deal. So we have those two types of students who are very pleased to learn French.

I don't know whether I've really answered your question.

[English]

**Mr. Robert Perrins (Dean, Faculty of Arts, Acadia University):** Another reason they take French is that students are required to take at least one year of a second language to get a bachelor of arts degree at our university. French is overwhelmingly the choice, because they at least have some experience with it in high school; or, as Janice said, there is a recognition that French, as one of our two official languages, is the natural path to take, I think, for most of them.

• (1050)

**The Chair:** Okay.

So it's an obligation at Acadia University to do that?

**Mr. Robert Perrins:** They have to take at least one full year of a second language.

**The Chair:** Does that mean one course, or how many?

**Mr. Robert Perrins:** Two courses, or one course each term.

**The Chair:** Would that be six credits?

**Mr. Robert Perrins:** Six credit hours are required.

**The Chair:** Oh, good. Very good. We should make it a recommendation of the committee.

**Mr. Robert Perrins:** We had quite a discussion on that about ten years ago. There was a motion in the faculty of arts to get rid of that requirement. It was quite a rigorous debate, and the motion lost overwhelmingly. It wasn't the language department that ended up supporting it, but in fact the other departments.

But as you can see, I've been wearing my earpiece most of today. I'm probably the least able to communicate in French, but that's because I studied Chinese and Japanese when I was at university. I did Asian history. So I think I have a small excuse for being a little deficient in my French abilities.

It was in fact people like me, people in political science, and people in other disciplines, who argued for this, and the classicists all joined in, because the reality is that it's not just a question of the ability in the language you can get from the one year or training, but how it trains your mind. It really focuses you and makes you learn in a different way. I think that the most rigorous course you can take in university is probably learning a second language. The other thing is that it opens you up to a different culture and a different way of thinking. And several of us have mentioned the internationalization from this, or just learning about other people. I think that's one of the other great benefits from language acquisition.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Gourde, for letting me share the time with you.

[Translation]

Go on. There's one minute left.

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** To answer your question, there are various groups. There's one group that comes from immersion. Within that group, there are two ways of thinking.

There are some for whom it's simply a question of values or ideology. The group Canadian Parents for French sometimes adopts a solidly "Trudeauist" ideology. These parents want a bilingual Canada and want their children to be bilingual. Those children, having grown up in that environment, subsequently wind up at our university.

There are also some for whom it is a question of career choice. You have to understand that 100 percent of our students find jobs after graduating. The education students who speak French are snatched up. Their jobs are guaranteed.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** As you said, we are now on perhaps the second generation or the start of the third generation in the promotion of bilingualism in Canada. With respect to the third generation of those who promote it, is the language better, in families, in English and in French, relative to the language of the first or second generations?

**Mr. Donald Ipperciel:** There's a particular phenomenon in immersion. These people often speak what we call "Immersionese", a distinct French that they understand amongst themselves. When they arrive at the Saint-Jean Campus, it's a shock. They have to relearn the language. Is it better? For the reasons mentioned earlier, probably not. At the university, we're trying to correct that.

You asked the question whether students speak other languages. Increasingly, yes. Currently, we at Saint-Jean Campus offer Spanish courses which are very popular. The hardest language to learn is the second language. Subsequently learning a third language is easy. Students are ready to do it. They are open to the world and want to do it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Maher?

**Mr. Dan Maher:** We have a lot of students who choose a double major. There is a second language requirement at the Faculté des sciences humaines. Students in international relations, international trade, have to study a second language for at least two years. We have a lot of students who figure that, since they're in Canada, they should learn French. They've chosen a career in which French is a major asset for them.

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

With that testimony, we conclude this morning's business. We've had some cool presentations from British Columbia and some "tripping" ones from Calgary.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Your work is important. In fact, you are the leading edge of linguistic duality.

And thanks as well to the members for their cooperation. We'll see each other next week. Have a good trip!

Thank you.

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