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—
Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

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•(0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 25th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Thursday, May 15, 2014. Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are here to carry out a study on the economic situation of Canada's minority linguistic communities.

Today we will hear from Serge Kaptegain of the Canadian Centre for Refugee Employment.

[English]

Also, we have Mr. MacGibbon and Mr. Rodgers from the English Language Arts Network Quebec.

We have Madam Hunting and Mr. Cutting from the Townshippers' Association.

We'll begin with an opening statement from Monsieur Kaptegain.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Kaptegain (Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Refugee Employment): Mr. Chair, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before the committee. I am from Winnipeg and I represent the Canadian Centre for Refugee Employment.

Our work with refugees involves promoting their expertise and helping them find work based on their talents. Our organization was founded four years ago, and things are going very well.

Last year, the centre helped 240 people, all of them refugees. We believe that our system works, and we hope that other provinces will get on board with the idea of giving newcomers opportunities to work.

We realized that, in some cases, refugees could not find work because people did not have enough information about them. In other cases, refugees did not know where to begin to find work and the services they were looking for here.

That, in a nutshell, is what I wanted to say.

If committee members have questions, I can give them more details about the situation.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Now we'll have an opening statement from the English Language Arts Network Quebec.

Mr. Guy Rodgers (Executive Director, English Language Arts Network Quebec): Mr. Chair, I was concerned we might run slightly over seven minutes, so we might have a bit of extra time.

Good morning. I'm Guy Rodgers, and I'm the executive director of ELAN. Peter MacGibbon is the president. We want to thank the committee for inviting us here today to provide some information for this very important study.

The economic aspect of arts and culture is a relatively modern phenomenon. Prior to the 1960s, there were few professional artists in Canada. During the 1940s and 1950s, anglo Quebec gave birth to a large number of artists who would go on to international careers. It was not economically viable for many of them to remain in Quebec. Actors like William Shatner and Christopher Plummer went to the U. S. via CBC Toronto and the Stratford Festival. A number of writers went overseas: Mordecai Richler to London; Leonard Cohen to California; and Mavis Gallant to Paris.

The economic exodus was followed by years of political instability during the 1970s and 1980s. During the most militant years of Quebec nationalism, it was difficult for anglo artists to be recognized as full and equal members of Quebec society.

The English-speaking community was preoccupied by education, health, and rapidly declining vitality, and therefore arts were not a priority. Apart from a few stalwarts such as the McGarrigle sisters, many of the English-speaking artists of Quebec left or drifted into virtual invisibility.

•(0850)

Mr. Peter MacGibbon (President, English Language Arts Network Quebec): In 2011, Guernica Editions published a series of essays entitled *Minority Report: An Alternative History of English-Language Arts in Quebec*. This landmark review noted that English-language writers in the 1970s were squeezed between two nationalisms: the growing separatist movement in Quebec and burgeoning literary nationalism in Toronto. In 1985, *La Presse* announced that English theatre was practically dead. Also, in 2011, the research team of Canadian Heritage's official language support programs branch produced a statistical profile of artists in the OLMCs. The average percentage of artists in Canada's workforce is 0.65%. The majority French-speaking population is slightly lower than average at 0.56%, and the majority English-speaking population is slightly higher than average, at 0.68%. The highest concentration of artists in Canada is found among English-speaking artists in Quebec, at 0.99%, roughly 50% higher than the national average. This statistic reflects a remarkable transformation from a community of artists that was invisible and almost dead 30 years ago.

Allow us to give you a brief overview of some of the social and economic forces responsible for this transformation.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Shortly after the 1995 referendum on Quebec independence, the tide began to turn. Almost imperceptibly at first, artists began to return to Quebec or to migrate to Montreal, and young people were more inclined to remain in their home province than to leave. This was partly for cultural reasons. The strong francophone arts sector was an attraction. The rich linguistic complexity of Quebec was an attraction, and part of the change was economic. There were low rents and an affordable cost of living, and proximity to Europe and the U.S.A. In some cases, people turned to arts and culture due to an absence of opportunities in more traditional sectors.

By 2005, *Spin* magazine and *The New York Times* had discovered Arcade Fire and were looking at Montreal as the most interesting indie music scene in North America. English-language writers began to win national and international prizes. Visual artists, dancers and filmmakers also began to attract national and international attention.

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: Statistics Canada reported in 2005 that the arts in Canada employed twice as many people as forestry or banking. Most of these people work for very small not-for-profit organizations or are self-employed. They are a highly diverse group, whose language skills and economic profiles vary greatly.

The large number of artists creates new problems and challenges around finding performance spaces, obtaining media coverage, and building audiences. The primary focus of ELAN's work has been collective projects involving visibility for artists and access to audiences. All of these projects are designed to improve the economic conditions of artists.

ELAN's first visibility project was called RAEV, Recognizing Artists: Enfin Visibles! which created 150 profiles of artists, 25 videos about the costs and benefits of being an English-language artist in Quebec, and short histories of the development of each artistic discipline. The RAEV project has been helpful in strengthening the idea of an English-speaking brand within Quebec because we're forgotten by the rest of English-speaking Canada and ignored by French-speaking Quebec.

The ACCORD project was developed to assist regional communities all around Quebec to produce special arts events. The project was designed to develop skills in small communities so that they would be encouraged to produce more events in the future. The project's website was designed to allow communities to identify artists who would work for a modest fee in small communities.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Made au Québec is ELAN's most recent and most successful visibility project. It aggregates coverage about anglo artists from media all around the world and provides a summary of that information in French.

I used to do interviews with the francophone media. I'd be describing artists that were quite famous to us, and they'd say, "Pff, never heard of them." Now we can point to Made au Québec and suggest that maybe they have heard of *The New York Times* and the Grammy Awards, so maybe they should take a look at this artist, because they think they're important.

ELAN has also devoted a great deal of time and energy to building links between artists and educators and increasing the number of English-speaking artists in Quebec's culture in the schools program. ELAN's most recent project built on this foundation and added a new foundation. The project is called YEAH!—youth, education, arts, and health. YEAH! was a very ambitious project designed to increase connections between artists and the important sectors of education and health.

There are many benefits that flow from using the arts in a therapeutic way to stimulate learning and to address youth problems, such as bullying, depression, and at-risk behaviour. There are also many artists who have developed skills in this field. Creating additional revenue sources would help them stay in Quebec, and ELAN has been actively involved in making interventions to the CRTC concerning broadcast policy and licence renewals.

Film and television production can employ many artists ranging from actors, writers, and directors to designers and technicians. Last year ELAN persuaded Vidéotron to apply for a licence for an English-language community TV channel. This would stimulate productions, create many full-time jobs, and produce content that reflects the history and the reality of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

• (0855)

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: Tourism is another sector in which arts and culture can create jobs and have a beneficial impact on local communities, particularly in regions outside Montreal. CEDEC recently sponsored a study on economic benefits of tourism. We look forward to seeing the results.

The arts are also an important factor in regional vitality. This is particularly true in regions such as the Outaouais and the Eastern Townships, where strong local cultures of volunteerism contribute to a quality of life that encourages youth retention and seniors involvement.

Volunteers drive arts festivals and venue management, generating and sustaining the activities that make their communities attractive places to visit and spend money in.

Working through province-wide networks such as ELAN, the Quebec Writers' Federation, and the Quebec Drama Federation increases the connections between regional arts organizations and creates opportunities for artists touring, for access to expertise and resources, and for sharing best practices.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: To conclude, artists constitute one of the largest segments of the workforce. The Canadian arts and culture sector generates \$85 billion per year in revenues. In 2008 the Conference Board of Canada calculated this at 7% of Canada's GDP.

Statistics Canada reported in 2005—we don't have the updated statistics—that Canadians spend twice as much on live performing arts, \$1.4 billion, as they do on sports.

Over the past two years the Quebec Community Groups Network has identified arts and culture as an important factor in community development.

The Department of Canadian Heritage's recent review of support for OLMCs decided that the program would prioritize sustained actions in three key areas for community vitality: actions aimed at youth, arts, culture and heritage, and media and communications.

Artists make an important contribution to identity and vitality for the English-speaking community, and they make an important contribution to dialogue with the linguistic majority. Arts and culture can also be an important factor in our communities' economic development.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll have an opening statement from the Townshippers' Association.

Mr. Gerald Cutting (President, Townshippers' Association): Thank you very much and good morning, Mr. Chong.

Vice-Chairs Monsieur Godin and Madame St-Denis, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for granting Townshippers' Association the opportunity to testify before this committee on the subject of economic development in Canada's official language minority communities.

For 35 years now, Townshippers' Association has been at the forefront of community engagement pursuing its mission to promote the interests of the English-speaking community in Quebec's historic Eastern Townships, strengthening its cultural identity, and encouraging the full participation of the English-language population in the community at large.

We work on behalf of over 46,000 English speakers who are spread across a region that is larger than Belgium in its geography, stretching from Philipsburg in the west to Mégantic in the east and from Inverness in the north to the U.S. border in the south.

The English-speaking community of the historic Eastern Townships is not a recent immigrant group. Our roots go back to the late 1700s. Indeed, our ancestors were the first settlers of European heritage to enter this region. Consider for a moment that in 1861 a full 58% of the population was English speaking. Currently that percentage has dropped to a mere 6%.

This morning we will outline for you the situation of English speakers in our region, what actions Townshippers' Association has taken to address the issue of economic development in the community it serves, and conclude with recommendations for the future.

• (0900)

Ms. Rachel Hunting (Executive Director, Townshippers' Association): I'll begin by discussing the socio-economic status of English speakers in the historical Eastern Townships.

A marked trend in the Eastern Townships' English-speaking community is the absence of middle-generation individuals, age 35 to 54, who, by virtue of their profession, education and income, would typically constitute the middle class. We have a missing

middle, if you will. Those who remain show signs of growing socio-economic vulnerabilities, including high unemployment, low income and low education levels.

Unemployment is a major issue for English speakers living in the Eastern Townships. When considering the rate of unemployment across the generations, evidence shows that disparities between the minority and majority populations are most pronounced among those age 15 to 24. The rate of unemployment among English-speaking youth is considerably higher than the rate for youth whose first official language is French. Low levels of education, income, and employment among English-speaking youth demonstrate a clear socio-economic disadvantage for this age group and the communities in which they reside. If ever there was a pressing need to call for affirmative action to deal with a struggling minority group, it is now.

Some actions that Townshippers' have taken to approach the subject of economic development and employability in our region include fostering community development and the growth of initiatives that support the pursuit of economic, entrepreneurial and educational opportunities for English speakers who call the Eastern Townships home. It's one of our primary objectives included in the association's strategic plan. Our history of working in collaboration with community stakeholders to ensure that existing and future resources within the English-speaking community are maximized demonstrates our recognition that successful and sustainable economic development requires a holistic approach that draws from the expertise of all the actors in the milieu.

The Townshippers' Association, through our make way for youth program, has been working with partners in the field of economic development, such as SADC, and employers from across the Eastern Townships to develop networking opportunities and activities that bring together human resources and recruiting personnel from the private sector with English-speaking job seekers. Collaborative efforts of this kind allow us to support English-speaking job seekers on a regular basis, as well as annually at large community events, such as Townshippers' Day, where our townshippers-at-work section and employers panel activity give local and regional employers a chance to interact directly with English-speaking job seekers as well as the general public.

In order to combat the mass exodus of young English speakers which is common to our region as it is in other rural areas of the province, the association has sought funding to support a project developed in collaboration with the Eastern Townships School Board and employers from around the region that would seek to highlight opportunities for English-speaking graduates in the Eastern Townships, introduce them to the local employment market, and encourage graduates to remain in the community. Initiatives such as these are fundamental to demonstrating to English-speaking high school and CÉGEP graduates that diverse employment opportunities are available in the Eastern Townships, and that remaining in the region can lead to success.

Additionally, in the past year we have teamed up with Youth Employment Services Montreal, which provides entrepreneurs of all ages with the information and guidance necessary to build a solid foundation for their business, to offer one-on-one coaching sessions to English-speaking entrepreneurs at our head office in Lennoxville.

Federally funded programs, such as the McGill training and retention of health professionals project and its bursary program, not only support the training of desperately needed health care professionals, but they also provide incentive for these young professionals to settle in the regions once their education is complete. The recruitment and retention of young professionals from any sector to live and work in regions such as the Eastern Townships will most certainly contribute to the economic growth and overall vitality of our linguistic minority community.

Mr. Gerald Cutting: That's part of the problem, but what can we do when it comes to recommendations?

In order to continue to meet the economic development and employment needs of the English-speaking members of our community, associations and organizations such as ourselves must work in tandem with and support other associations, institutions, and organizations working to address the issues present in this sector whether they be defined locally, regionally, or provincially. We also need sustained financial support for core operations in order to develop and implement the projects and new initiatives that short-term funding envelopes are eager to support.

The community sector cannot maintain its momentum when the cost of operations increases every year with the market, but recurrent funding envelopes do not. For a results-based approach there must be a firm resolve on the part of government at both the federal and provincial levels to recognize that without a concerted effort to reinforce and adequately fund community organizations such as the Townshippers', the plight of the rural English-speakers will only worsen.

Finally, as one of the founding peoples of Quebec, we feel it is imperative that the linguistic minority in Quebec be recognized as such with proportionate funding as compared with our francophone counterparts across the country.

Furthermore, it is vital that any programs developed to bolster economic development in the linguistic minority communities take into account the fundamental differences between urban and rural realities lived by English speakers across the province. This is not to create a division between the linguistic minority communities in these areas, but in recognition that they have different needs and thus require a tailored approach for their support.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I guess now we are at your mercy.

● (0905)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Cutting.

We'll now have an hour of questions and comments from members, beginning with Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for coming today to testify.

Mr. Cutting provided me a good segue into my questions because, Mr. Rodgers, stable funding is an issue and we've heard that from multiple organizations that have come to this committee. I want to cut right to the chase and see if you would also recommend a more stable model of funding, perhaps on a three-year model rather than

year to year with funding being indexed for those three years. Would that not be a recommendation you would make?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Yes. Our experience in the community and many studies demonstrate that when you have core organizations like the Townshippers' or ELAN that are stable, the benefits for everybody, the individuals, are enormous.

So yes, indeed; three-year funding that is stable and indexed would provide an extreme margin of security for us.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: That's great.

Also, given that you mentioned that arts and culture constitute nearly 8% of real GDP and also that it contributes to innovation in the economy, which is right now a weakness in our economy and needs help, would you not also recommend increased funding for arts organizations and organizations that support the arts?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: I think that it needs to be targeted. I think there are parts of the arts that are very important for community vitality. There is already quite significant funding for art for arts sake through the Canada Council, through the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. ELAN is developing connections with education, with health, with community vitality. I think in those areas, specifically targeted funding is of extreme importance for the minority language communities and their vitality.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Yes. I know that young artists in my own riding do have issues, difficulties and challenges that organizations such as yours assist them with. As you know, the creative economy requires an infrastructure. It doesn't just build itself. Given the recent and rapid growth of Quebec's English-speaking arts community, is there a problem right now finding performance and presentation venues for artists?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Back in the eighties and nineties, there was a lot of money invested in infrastructure both from the federal government and from the provincial government. At that time the English language arts community was pretty embryonic. It wasn't present. There were organizations like Centaur Theatre and what was then the Saidye Bronfman Centre, which is now the Segal Centre, that had the capacity to upgrade their infrastructure.

For most artists, it's a struggle finding spaces. They share spaces. They work in unlicensed lofts and get kicked out. So yes, developing infrastructure where we can actually connect audiences and artists is an urgent priority.

● (0910)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Great.

I'm wondering about outside of, say, Montreal. Are there any special concerns for artists working in areas outside of Montreal?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: The president of ELAN is from the Wakefield-Chelsea area, so I'll let him answer that question. He has a much more personal connection.

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: First of all, I'd like to say regarding community-based arts organizations and artists working in the regions, there is a tremendous culture of volunteerism. Any money, any funding invested in projects by these groups is money well spent, because it's paid back many times over by the efforts of people, including professionals who sometimes work alongside amateur artists to raise the level of quality, and so on.

There are issues around artists organizing themselves and having access to funding, particularly through Canada Council grants. Often it requires quite a bit of organizational infrastructure, administrative infrastructure, to be able to access some of the other Canadian Heritage grants. There's a lot of time and energy put into the admin side. It's not wasted but it is time consuming. Frankly, it's not as much fun as the work of being an artist, so generally it has to be paid work.

Those are the sorts of needs that we're looking at.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Both groups have mentioned partnerships with service organizations. There are issues that come up. How could the federal government assist in helping you build these partnerships?

Mr. Cutting or Ms. Hunting.

Ms. Rachel Hunting: I think one of the most important things that needs to be ironed out in the community sector is how funding envelopes and programs can support organizations without creating competition between organizations, and competition between provincial organizations, regional groups, and local groups. There needs to be a greater understanding of how these organizations work together and how funding envelopes at each level can contribute to the overall economic vitality of the linguistic minority community and not in a divisive sense.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Wouldn't a three-year funding envelope be more stable as a model instead of having this year-to-year competition for funding?

Ms. Rachel Hunting: A three-year funding program would absolutely provide stability for organizations, not only in an operational sense, but also in an action sense. When you have a one-year funding envelope, often you will get to the point in your project where you're really ready to roll, and the funding stops, or it's not renewed, or it cannot be renewed for a variety of reasons. You're always wary of creating an expectation in the community, or of responding to a need for a certain amount of time, and then no longer being able to provide that support to the members of your community. It is problematic because you don't want to be creating needs; you want to be responding to them.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: I'd like to respond to that.

That is a very serious problem. We understand that we don't want to turn project funding into program funding, but there must be some way of evaluating projects that have greater community value, through letters of support from the community. Sometimes we create a project that just hits the mark. It provides support. It provides a benefit, and then the project's over. We have to drop the project or find alternate funding. Some projects are projects. They have a life of one or two years, and then they're gone and we move on to the next one. When a project really has ongoing value, there should be some way of demonstrating that through letters of community support and having an envelope to perpetuate those particular projects. That would be enormously helpful.

The Chair: Mr. Cutting.

Mr. Gerald Cutting: I'd like to reinforce a couple of points.

Stability will create vitality, because stability creates presence. In looking at what might be described as a wise investment, to take a

business model, I think both provincial and federal governments need to invest so there will be ongoing sustainable vitality, and what we'll see is the communities themselves will begin to take on more and more of that responsibility. Right now what we're faced with is an enormous amount of the time of our administrators is taken up with the yearly fight to continue.

• (0915)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Cutting and Mr. Nicholls.

Madame Bateman.

[*Translation*]

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

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses. Their testimony is very important today.

I'd like to begin with a few questions for Mr. Kaptegain because he is a member of my community.

Your work makes an important contribution to the refugee community.

As you know, our asylum system is one of the most generous in the world. Canada takes in one of every 10 UN convention refugees. Canada is also on track to increase the number of convention refugees it takes in by 20%. We have increased funding for refugee assistance programs by 20%.

Our study today is about the economic contribution in both official languages, about bilingualism. I think that our investments are significant, as is our generosity around the world. However, the work begins with people like you, Mr. Kaptegain.

Can you please give us more details about your work with refugee communities, specifically in terms of their ability to work? As you know, our government is very interested in job creation.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: As I said to the Chair earlier, last year alone, we helped 280 people. That's very important because, when you talk about that many people, it's not just the individuals. It's a whole family, maybe with two or three kids. If you do the math, that shows a really significant impact.

Imagine if those people ended up on the streets. They would depend on social assistance. Who would lose? Not just the government, but also those families. So we realized that, in the past, if people were reluctant to hire refugees, it was because they didn't have enough information.

I have a simple example. When organizations take in these refugees, there is a lot of confusion about the difference between a refugee and an immigrant, and between an international student and a refugee. So these organizations see a newcomer, and that group includes both immigrants and refugees. If you put all of those people in the same group, how do you explain why a refugee doesn't have university documents, for example? People might think the refugee is lying because Robert over here has all of his documents. But that's because Robert is an immigrant.

That can change. That's why I talk about education. We have to educate these organizations about the groups of individuals who come here. Not only do we have to educate organizations, but we also have to educate refugees about the services that are available to them and help them understand the work culture in Canada. That's easy. You might get hired today, but in two or three months, you might lose your job. I realized that, in many cases, that's because of a lack of information. These refugees can't understand the differences between the work culture in Canada and the work culture where they came from. That knowledge is really important and can help a person get hired and keep his or her job.

That's what I wanted to add.

• (0920)

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you.

Can you give us an example of a person who has had a hard time but who wants to succeed?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Of course.

One of the 280 people we helped last year was a musician. That's what he did before coming here. We started working with him this year. He just released an album in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He also opened a music school. He finds other children of refugees and teaches them how to make music so they don't end up in the streets.

There are a lot of examples like that. There is also a man who was a tailor before coming here. I should mention that he came here with five children. He had a transportation debt he needed to pay back to the government. After a year, he wasn't working and he had nothing. I am sorry to say that his oldest son ended up joining a gang and is lost. He started selling drugs here and there to make money.

That man is having a hard time. He found work as a security guard. I respect what people want to do, but that isn't what he wanted to do. He just wanted to be a tailor. From the beginning, people told him that was not possible and that he would have to go back to school and things like that. He said that he didn't have enough time and that he just wanted to open a tailoring shop.

When he came to see us, we put him in touch with a Canadian tailor who became his mentor so he could see what it was like working here in Canada. After three months, he realized that he needed to learn a few things, but that he also had skills that were useful here. We helped him register his business, and now he is working.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kaptegain.

Ms. St-Denis, over to you.

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): My question is for Mr. Kaptegain too.

Your organization is Franco-Manitoban. According to our information, in 2013, 1,484 refugees landed in Manitoba. You have helped 280 of them, if I understand correctly.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: We have helped more than that.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: I mean francophone refugees.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: We have helped refugees who are not francophone too.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: How many of those refugees end up becoming part of the francophone community?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Last year, it was at least 90%. The others were anglophone.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: So that's 82% of 1,484.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Ninety percent.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Ninety percent of those 1,484 refugees were francophone.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: No.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Ninety percent of the 280.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Yes, that's the number for our organization.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Do those refugees want to become part of the francophone community, or do they resist the idea?

• (0925)

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: That depends. They need to get services in order to integrate, but are those services available?

In Winnipeg, anyone who comes as a refugee has to go through the ENTRY Program. It's mandatory. The program is delivered in English. The system kind of encourages people to learn English so they can find work. That can be hard for some francophones who speak only French. They are told to learn English. Some people who speak French and come from Congo or Burundi, which are francophone countries, refuse to do it because they want to maintain their heritage and they want their kids to go to francophone schools and maintain it.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: That's the case for what percentage of your refugees?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: I would say about 30%.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Can the Franco-Manitoban school system integrate those kids?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Yes.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Do they have to attend orientation classes? I would assume not, since they're francophone.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: I think the Franco-Manitoban system works really well. In fact, just this year, because refugees and other newcomers were asking for education in French, a small school was replaced by a larger one to meet the demand.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Are most of the francophone refugees African?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Right now, yes.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: What economic contribution to refugees make to private Franco-Manitoban businesses?

I am asking because some witnesses have said that refugees are one way to grow the minority francophone community. A lot of people have talked about that.

What, if any, is their economic contribution?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: You asked if most of the refugees were African, and I would like to clarify that. As you know, they are refugees because of war. Whenever you talk about war in Africa, you talk about war in Congo, which, again, is a francophone country, so a lot of Congolese come here.

Take the tailor I talked about earlier. I think that man is contributing to the economy because he will pay taxes. He also plans to hire some people. I also talked about an artist. In my opinion, these men are contributing to the economy in one way or another.

Of course, that doesn't happen overnight. All of these people are starting to come here now. In the past, maybe refugees were mostly from Europe, but now, they are African. If we continue to support them, in 10 years, it will be a completely different story.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Mr. Rodgers, if I understand correctly, the arts and communications situation between francophones and anglophones is not the same in Montreal as it is in the regions. We are not very aware of what goes on in the regions.

Are the two solitudes still a reality in Montreal?

In music, there was Arcade Fire. Personally, I always got to Blue Metropolis, a literary festival where anglophones and francophones coexist in an extraordinary way.

Is there a great divide between the anglophone and francophone arts communities in Montreal?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Less and less. It depends on people's age.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Yes, among young people.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: When the Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival was launched, the UNEQ executive committee was deeply opposed to the idea. It didn't want a bilingual festival in Montreal, a festival founded by anglophones, etc. That opposition lasted for two or three years, but has since been forgotten.

A new magazine in Montreal published an article on the indie music scene in Montreal. It was an overview of the past 20 years. Even those people think that the English scene and the French scene are coming together more and more. In a group with five members, you might have three anglophones and two francophones, especially among young people. I think that a major shift has been happening over the past 30 or 40 years, and I love it.

• (0930)

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Such a major shift that Cohen is now promoting French music.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: He was one of the first to become bilingual, to speak and sing in French.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: But at the start, he was anti-francophone—

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Yes.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: Are anglophone artists in Quebec producing work that is influenced in part by their status as minorities?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Very much so. Through the RAEV project, 25 videos have been created in which the artists discuss why they, as anglophones, are working in a francophone musical context. Often the francophone culture has a direct influence—especially in theatre—but it might be as simple as these people find the environment stimulating. They are influenced both by the artists and the culture.

When I was young, in many Canadian cities, people who were starving artists were encouraged to do something else with their lives. However, in Montreal, Quebec, artists were respected. A person who worked in the arts was respected even if they weren't rich or famous. It was a very supportive environment for artists.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rodgers.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

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

I want to thank the witnesses for being here this morning. It is truly very interesting. My first question is for Mr. Cutting.

The Townshippers' Association works with a number of members.

Mr. Gerald Cutting: I'm having a technical problem.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I'm having a problem with my voice this morning. We had a lovely evening yesterday. I lost my voice.

Mr. Cutting, your association is working on a number of projects. I think that, in the past 20 years or so, 51 projects have provided services. Tell me about the services you provide to your members. Do our programs at Canadian Heritage come mainly from the Development of Official-Language Communities Program? Is this just one tool? Is it the only funding you get? Do you also get money from your members to improve the services you provide to them?

Mr. Gerald Cutting: I am going to ask Ms. Hunting to answer that question because she has the expertise on that.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: No problem.

Mr. Gerald Cutting: She could provide some clarifications that I could not.

[English]

My apologies to you, sir.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Hunting: When it comes to funding for the Townshippers' Association, I can tell you that last year, 76% of our money came from federal subsidies. For the most part, the subsidies came from the Canadian Heritage program. We also have programs that stem from Health Canada in connection with the Community Health and Social Services Network, or CHSSN, to promote health and ensure access to health and social services in English for Quebec's English-speaking communities.

We also receive provincial subsidies, the largest coming from the *Make Way for YOUth* program, which focuses on youth in the region. We have an immigration officer who works on recruiting and retaining young anglophone or English-speaking professionals in the regions. The problem with this subsidy is that our immigration officer works for seven municipalities at the same time. For the francophone community there is one immigration officer per RCM. Our officer has to do seven times the work of her colleagues with the same funding.

The funding we get from memberships represents roughly 1.5% of our overall funding. The membership fees do not really cover the association's operating costs. They more or less cover the cost of printing a quarterly review to provide members with information on the English-speaking community, such as services offered, and activities and initiatives available in the youth, health, and arts and culture sectors. Municipal subsidies are available for shorter-term, targeted projects, but it depends on the subject and the sector.

• (0935)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I know you do not work in the education sector, but sometimes young people in the anglophone communities have to move in order to attend an English-language school. The school boards receive subsidies from the province. In fact, it is federal money that is transferred to the province to help your communities.

Do you have any problems getting the money you need for school transportation?

Ms. Rachel Hunting: I can't speak for the Eastern Townships school board, but I know that transportation is always a challenge in the regions.

In our region, the Eastern Townships, the sparse English-speaking population is scattered over an area the size of Belgium. There are some children and teenagers who have to commute between home and school for an hour and a half or two hours, twice a day every day. They spend three or four hours a day on the bus. I had to do that too when I was growing up. I spent less time on the bus than some of my fellow students, depending on where they were from. It's a lot of time and it's always a question of money.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

My next question is for Mr. Rodgers.

We are all very proud of artists who use their regional accent and present us with something different. I think that Canadians love to hear artists who take the time in their art to promote their part of the country, who they are, and so on. We all benefit from that.

Do the Canadian programs help these artists promote their culture and ours at the same time? These artists enrich Canadian culture. We like hearing different accents, for example, an anglophone singing in French with a regional anglophone accent. It's so interesting.

Do you have any examples of that?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: There really aren't any plans to support that type of initiative. Some artists sing in French to appeal to a francophone audience. I can name two or three anglophones who speak French well and who write songs in French in order to reach a francophone audience. There are others, like Susie Arioli, who you've all probably heard of. She does not sing in French, but at her shows she speaks a sort of "franglais", which is quite interesting.

Personally, I think we should be promoting works that speak to the Anglo-Quebec experience. Over the past 10 years, I have read 100 or so novels. They are often love letters written in Montreal, for example, by anglophones living in certain neighbourhoods who have certain ethnic backgrounds. It would be good if those letters could be read outside Quebec or translated in order to be read in Quebec and generate discussion.

We contacted Vidéotron to create MYtv, to go with MATv, specifically to ensure that there are exchanges between the two communities. There needs to be programs on the artists produced in English and dubbed or subtitled in order to promote dialogue. We said the same thing to CBC/Radio-Canada, which has the role of mediator to play between the two communities. There is a lot to do and not a lot of subsidies for this type of initiative.

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rodgers.

Mr. Chisu, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much to the witnesses for their presentations.

The presentation from ELAN is very optimistic. From the Townshippers' Association, it's quite a pessimistic one. I will start with the most optimistic situation first.

You told us in your presentation that over the past 10 years there has been a surge in arts and culture activities in Quebec's anglophone communities. What factors would you say are behind the flourishing arts and culture scene? Your artists are going, but not necessarily only to the United States, and so on. How are you approaching the new European scene? I think it's a great consumer of arts from Canada, and has been for a long time.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: There are two parts to the question, so let's answer the first part.

Why there are so many artists in Quebec is a bit of a mystery. We're only starting to figure it out. You have to go back to the seventies and the eighties, which we alluded to, when there was a mass exodus of anglos from Quebec, including many artists, for all kinds of reasons. I remember 20 years ago the writers' union in Quebec would not even allow the term "anglo Québécois". If you were anglo, you were not Québécois; you were anglo Canadian. There was a whole discourse about who was Québécois and who wasn't. It was not a welcoming environment for anglos. There are some interesting studies on that.

Francophone culture—and I also alluded to this earlier—is an appreciation of the arts. There was a flourishing of francophone culture in Quebec in certain areas, such as theatre, film, and multimedia. People came to Quebec to see what was going on and liked it. Some people had trips back and forth after Expo 67, but there was a major change in the political and social climate after the 1995 referendum. The feeling was, let's move on to something else. There was an openness. It changed everything. People started coming. There was a snowball effect. People brought their friends. There were all kinds of economic conditions. Quebec had low rents. It was close to the States and close to Europe.

Now there are these people there. They weren't brought there by programs, policies, or an organization. They came there for all kinds of reasons, personal and individual.

Now that we have these artists there, we're trying to structure them, but there are very small organizations. ELAN, for example, has been around for 10 years. We have two employees. We don't have the capacity to be thinking about what our policy is with Europe. What the Townshippers' was referring to.... We have all of these artists. We have this tremendous natural resource. If we invest a little bit more in organizations like ELAN, the Quebec Writers' Federation, and the Quebec Drama Federation, to create policies and programs that will allow people to survive economically and to develop new markets in the States and Europe, the benefits for everyone would be enormous.

I'm optimistic, but it's a fragile optimism. It could all disappear tomorrow.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: How are you measuring success? For example, you are telling me that it was a great development of the arts in anglophone and also francophone.... How are you measuring the success of your organization? These artists who are successful.... Probably there's an economic study. They go back to the community, back to the sector and develop the arts more.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Well, there are two large directions we work in. One is connecting artists to the community, which is where our work with education and health is important. Artists can be extremely beneficial for communities working with youth at risk and for stimulating education. There's a connection there between art and community via youth which is very important.

We also see artists as having a very strong role to play in creating social dialogue in Quebec. Once upon a time, all anglos were millionaires living Westmount. In some people's minds, that is still true. There are probably more people working in the arts than in banking in Quebec, by a margin of 10 to 1.

What we find is that when artists are in leadership roles, there is a much more positive dialogue with the francophone community. A few years ago, the president of QCGN was Linda Leith, who was the founder of Blue Metropolis festival. Because she's an artist, writer, and translator, her relationship to government and to other francophone groups was much more positive than someone who comes from a business background would have. I think artists have this role of developing the community, and also, with this linguistic duality, of developing a social relationship. Where my optimism is most strong is in those two areas.

It's not arts, purely. I mean, people are doing their arts on their own. It's the social connection benefits of the arts that are really positive.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chisu, go ahead, very quickly.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: I have one more very brief question for the Eastern Townships.

What are the main economic activities of the anglophones living in the Eastern Townships? What can be done to turn around, let's say, the downturn, like in the arts? What can be done? What is your opinion on that?

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Cutting.

Mr. Gerald Cutting: What you've identified is precisely one of the issues we've tried to get at.

When we're dealing with a rural community, you could go to places in Quebec

[*Translation*]

—in Gaspésie and the north shore—

[*English*]

and what you'll find is that exactly the same kind of problem exists. What we find is that, as the young people become better educated.... In the case of young anglophones, for the most part, if we're looking at people under the age of 35, they are fluently bilingual. What happens, though, is that because of the lack of opportunity, there is a migration to the larger centres. If we just take the example of the arts in the townships, as soon as someone makes a certain name for themselves or achieves a certain level, they are naturally drawn to a larger community where there is more exposure. What we have to create, and what we tried to get at, is tailor-made solutions whereby, once we see that young English speakers have developed and acquired the necessary skills to be successful in our own community.... The unfortunate thing is there is lack of opportunity. Manufacturing is gone.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Cutting.

We're going to continue with Mr. Benskin. I know he's anxious to ask some questions.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): I have a whole slew of questions. If I had an hour, I wouldn't be able to ask them all.

I'll touch on what was brought up earlier in terms of the burst of anglophone arts in Quebec and how important that is to the economic development of the anglophone community in general and their presence in Quebec. Being one of those people—Montreal was always my home—I made a conscious choice not to leave either Montreal or Canada on a permanent basis in order to be part of keeping that regeneration alive. You were talking about after the 1995 referendum people beginning to come back. I think there was a trickle back before that.

I've always maintained that the anglophone community in Quebec is different. The anglophone community in the Eastern Townships in Quebec and Montreal is different from English Canada. I think it is not any more evident than in the artistic community. Disagree with me if you will, but I think what attracted anglophones to return to Quebec and the anglophones that were in Quebec was a rubbing off, if you will, of the passion and the self-identity that French Québécois had developed since the 1970s with Gilles Vigneault and all that, and I'll just make the link between Vigneault and Cohen.

Cohen was successful because he was different. He had the Gilles Vigneault troubadour aspect that wasn't happening anywhere in the English language at the time, except for maybe Bob Dylan. I think that's what he captured. But there's a vibrancy that the anglophone community borrowed from Quebec in its story-telling and its bravery in trying things that weren't happening in the rest of Canada. That's something that people dedicated themselves to, whether they were getting paid for it or not, to help build that community in Quebec. Would that be something you would agree with?

• (0950)

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Yes, I would certainly agree with that. There was a time when a small number of people, like yourself, sort of hung in there. You know that at the time there were hundreds, maybe...dozens. There just weren't that many professional artists choosing to stay in Quebec. Something happened around 1995. There was a change. Exactly what happened was there were people coming to Quebec for the first time. There were people whose parents left in the 1960s and 1970s who returned. More and more students were staying. The influence of that francophone cultural scene was extraordinary. There was something different about it.

What has shifted in the culture? There was a time when people who were integrated were kind of looked upon as oddities. I remember a few years ago talking at a large presentation of artists and saying that I worked in francophone film production, and at the end of the day, we would sit down and I'd write script in English. The crew was francophone, and we'd sit down and have a beer and they'd start going

[*Translation*]

“damned English, ha, ha!”.

I would say, “I'm English too, am I like that?”

Some hon. members: Ha, ha!

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Then they would say, “But no, you're not a real one”.

[*English*]

There was a time when there was a handful of people who were all kinds of these odd ducks; whereas I think now, it's not just some odd ducks. There's a shift; there's an integration; there's a partnership that I don't think was evident before 1995. There's something there to build on, absolutely.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: In terms of economic development, we were talking about stability for both groups. I look at it as being almost three levels.

Stabilized operational funding keeps the lights on, keeps the telephone going, and so forth. My colleague brought it up, but I would divide the more project-based funding into two levels. One would be long-term project funding; in other words, projects for which you can do a three- to five-year strategic plan and say that a project can be done within a five-year period. The funding is there for that five years so you can save money; you can do your purchasing and your planning based on that. There other would be short-term project funding. This would be for an interesting project; for example, this group is coming in from Europe or wherever and you want to do an exchange and it's going to last a year or two.

Do you feel that would help stimulate activities in both sectors in retention in the English community in the Outaouais, the Pontiac, and the Eastern Townships and in generating artists who stay in Quebec and continue to create in Quebec?

Ms. Rachel Hunting: I think that definitely would contribute to the stability and the vitality of the community, because you wouldn't be trying to stretch your dollar as far as it could go. Gerald alluded earlier that you spend your year gearing up for the next fight for funding. I think that would definitely have a positive impact on how groups like Townshippers' and ELAN look at their long-term planning.

We do strategic planning with our core program funding, so we are able to say where we're going in the next five years and how we're going to get there. If we could do that on a long-term project basis, it would definitely be interesting for us and a positive thing for the community.

I want to add a side note about artists in the regions. It's really important to understand that artists in regions like the Eastern Townships are mostly amateur and emerging artists. They're not Arcade Fire. They don't have that level of success and level of public notoriety and support. The kinds of programs and avenues we need for those emerging artists are quite different from what more well-known and successful artists in the Montreal area are experiencing on a different level.

• (0955)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: I agree with you wholeheartedly.

When I was an emerging artist, one of the great employers at the time was the Piggery Theatre in North Hatley, and the Knowlton Theatre as well. They would develop emerging artists, and provide a community service as well, which would bring in tourist dollars. People would pay money. People would build their vacations around going to Knowlton and North Hatley. There were great restaurants in the area, wonderful scenery, hotels, and so on. So I do understand that.

As far as that aspect is concerned, my colleague across the way asked how you measure success. I know for an artist, being able to do what they do, whether they're being paid or not, is success. Being able to say they're in a play or they shot this indie film is a measure of success for them.

I don't look at things in terms of having emerging artists there, and they're not successful yet, because they haven't made it to Arcade Fire status—

Ms. Rachel Hunting: Exactly.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: —but I guarantee that if you speak to them, for the most part they'll say they got to do something last month—

Ms. Rachel Hunting: Exactly.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: —and for them, that's a measure of success.

That's where you would tie in. If the energy that comes out of organizations like ELAN can reach out to the artistically inclined in the Eastern Townships, in the Gaspésie, and provide the infrastructure for community theatres and other types of presentations, festivals and so forth, they would become a tourist attraction. You have the lobster season in Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Having a nice little concert during lobster season, or whatever the case may be, would be an economic driver for you, I would think.

Ms. Rachel Hunting: Yes.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

I want to follow up a little on understanding how much funding each of your organizations has received year over year. Perhaps you could start, Ms. Hunting.

Ms. Rachel Hunting: Is that total funding, or from each sector?

Mr. Joe Daniel: Yes.

Ms. Rachel Hunting: Off the top of my head—it's audit season—we were up around \$609,000 for the programs we ran last year for Townshippers' Association.

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: We don't receive any money from the government.

Mr. Joe Daniel: That's excellent.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Last year, we received up to \$60,000 from the United Way. Other than that, the other refugees are working now and making contributions to the organization.

[English]

Mr. Joe Daniel: That's outstanding. Okay.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Our operating funds through the Department of Canadian Heritage have been \$95,000 for the last few years.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Is that per year?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: It's per year. We had an increase this year, which was beneficial, but we have been operating on that kind of money supplemented by projects.

We haven't had very good luck with Quebec for reasons that are partly technical and partly sociological.

We're not eligible for any kind of operating funds from the Canada Council because we're multidisciplinary and they have disciplines, and we can have specific projects. ELAN has worked on a fairly small budget for the last 10 years, and they've accomplished quite a lot.

Ms. Rachel Hunting: We receive \$228,000 annually from Heritage Canada; \$609,000 is not Canadian Heritage, so—

Mr. Joe Daniel: —but you have some other organizations—

Ms. Rachel Hunting: It is supplemented through other funding.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Thank you.

I'd like to follow up a little on this dropout rate. It seems unusually high. We've seen similar illiteracy numbers coming out of certain

areas of New Brunswick, and generally that's because there have been jobs they don't need literacy or education for.

Is that the case in the townships in your industry?

• (1000)

Mr. Gerald Cutting: No one answer covers it all. In part, what was alluded to earlier on the question of transport, when a number of young people hit the age of 16, they've had it with being on a bus sometimes three to four hours a day. When they leave home, they're tired; when they get home, they're tired. School means they're in effect excluded from many of the extracurricular activities that build friendships that lead to stability in a community.

Another factor that has had a major impact is that when regional schools were developed, secondary schools were closed in many of the communities, and the students were bused away. It failed in one important aspect, not in terms of its educational goals—there was much more variety—but it meant young people no longer found themselves rooted in a community, in a small town, or on a farm. They saw themselves essentially in transit, and as soon as they reach the age of 16, there is an imagined paradise that exists somewhere out there. It's west and it's bigger and it has so much more to offer.

If we went back 100 years, many jobs were available that didn't require specialized training. That is no longer the case, so dropping out happens.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Would anybody else like to comment?

Mr. MacGibbon.

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: With regard to youth retention in the arts—Guy has alluded to this already—there are a lot of opportunities in arts and culture to encourage youth to be involved in the community.

Our organization, which I represent in Theatre Wakefield, is an umbrella group. We run programs for youth. We do a summer film camp for youth, which fills up every year. The graduates, the alumni of those camps—because they do come back year after year—have gone on to star in main stage productions that we run. They have gone on to apprenticeships in directing, and things like that. Some of them then follow their careers into arts within Quebec.

Mr. Joe Daniel: That certainly seems to be what I would term the traditional arts area. Have the technology changes that we've seen over the last decade impacted the arts community for anglophones as a minority group in Quebec?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: That could take an hour or two to talk about. The digital shift—the transfer of product to the Internet, free content, free music—has had a devastating effect on the revenues of many artists, and it's not specific to anglophone artists.

Young people are used to getting free content or cheap content. We've developed a generation that doesn't really want to pay for arts and culture. They appreciate it; they consume it, but they don't want to pay for it. Any artistic discipline that can be distributed on the Internet—books, records, films—is struggling with this: how to find some way of making it open and free, but at the same time allow the creators to have some sort of fair return on their personal ownership. We don't have an answer.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Having said that, has that created greater artistic opportunities for people to create movies with just a cellphone and things like that? Has it expanded arts and culture?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: The expense of production has plummeted, absolutely. Once upon a time, you would have had to rent a studio this large and pay \$10,000 a day to have a certain quality of music that you can now record in your bathroom with your computer. After having created that music or that film, the distribution and making some money from it is a challenge. Creating quality product inexpensively is certainly within the reach of anybody who is creative.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Along those lines, what is a creative economy? Does a creative economy exist in an anglophone community in Quebec? How does it compare with the francophone version?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: Well, there are two answers. QUESCREEN, the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network, did a study three years ago on the social economy and how it applied to English Quebec, and it ties into things like tourism, to ways of monetizing artistic activities. CEDEC, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation, is in the process of doing a study on tourism and the economic benefits of tourism. We're starting to try to identify the needs.

Essentially, the creative economy as defined over the last 10 years is about bringing together people who create art spontaneously, who create an environment in which people find it interesting to live. A city with a creative class will attract other industries and creative types. Since we live in a post-manufacturing era, when creative jobs are more important, a city that can attract those creative types will stimulate its economy and will create jobs. There's no better place in Canada for that to be happening than Quebec, and because a lot of people in North America still speak English, the fact that they could have English-language arts within Quebec is an important factor.

• (1005)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to go to Monsieur Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Welcome to all of you. It's not the first time we have met each other. It's nice to see you back at this parliamentary committee.

I think in Quebec about 85% of the anglophones speak French. Is it about that percentage?

Mr. Guy Rodgers: The overall is 85%, and once you get into the younger demographics, under 40, it's 90% to 92%.

An interesting factor is that half of the anglos in Quebec are in romantic relationships with francophones. That's a fact. It's an extraordinary fact. It's a strategy of survival, perhaps, but I can't think of any other community in the world in which a minority is that closely related to the majority.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The reason I raise this question is to tell you it's similar for us in New Brunswick. One thing that is positive about being a minority is that you learn the two languages. You have no

choice. You know how we feel, I'm sure, because you feel the same way we feel. You're a minority. You have lots of work to do to try to survive. I share that with you. Coming from the north of New Brunswick, from the Acadian peninsula, we have to work hard.

You could maybe find many judges who are bilingual from our two groups too.

Mr. Guy Rodgers: We should have more exchanges, absolutely.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: As far as refugees are concerned, Ms. St-Denis said the government was going to try to get them set up in the regions. I think she misspoke. I think the government meant immigrants, not refugees. There needs to be programs to provide refugees with work, but I think the target is truly immigrants.

In Moncton, for example, our goal is to welcome francophone immigrants in our region to ensure that the francophone population remains viable. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Serge Kaptegain: Yes, what you say is true, but it should be noted that when Canada accepts someone from abroad, a refugee, that person has immigrant status. It's just his experience as a refugee that's not there, but he is considered an immigrant.

That is what we must focus on so that they're integrated easily. It's been tough for refugees in the past. If we don't consider that reality, and don't educate that person, they'll get lost.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I completely agree with you.

[English]

Mr. MacGibbon.

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The other question is about the cuts to CBC/Radio-Canada. How does that affect the minority of Quebec, for example? You're talking about the arts and culture, and all of that. CBC, for example.... How could you participate in national television if you do it in Montreal. If all the arts and all of that are in Montreal, then how do the people of

[Translation]

Rivière-au-Renard see you?

[English]

How do those cuts affect you? Do they affect the anglophones of Quebec?

• (1010)

Mr. Guy Rodgers: The effects are incalculable. If we look at television, there were recently some conditions of licence imposed upon CBC last year to create more locally with local producers. That is now potentially in jeopardy. There's the question of production, which is important. There's a question of how radio promotes local talent.

There's a major rock station in Montreal called CHOM, which was one of the pioneer radio stations. It plays rock and roll. It plays music from the 1960s and 1970s. Only two years ago did they realize there's music being made in Montreal now.

CBC figured this out decades ago. CBC has been a loyal supporter. They have an entire website devoted to Canadian music. CBC has been the greatest champion of the arts, much more than commercial radio or television. I'll let the 'Townshippers' and Peter talk about the benefit of CBC in the regions. Once you get outside of Montreal, you just don't have that many options. CBC is a lifeline of connecting with the rest of Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: I'll just add to that. The cuts are really going to hurt. They're hurting already. At our last board meeting, which was just this week, our treasurer, who's a professional musician—

The Chair: Sorry, Mr. MacGibbon.

Madam Bateman.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, with some respect to all our witnesses and to our colleagues, the cuts that we're talking about here do not exist. The reality is—

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's not a point of order.

The Chair: Just one moment. Let's let Madam Bateman have the floor.

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

[Translation]

It is very important for us to realize that the market has changed.
[English]

The revenues for advertising have diminished for CBC because they don't have as many viewers. That's the point. There have been no government cuts.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Bateman.

That's not a point of order. It's a point of debate.

Mr. MacGibbon, you have the floor.

Mr. Peter MacGibbon: I was just going to say that it was reported at our board meeting that CBC will be phasing out all the live recordings of music, new live recordings of music across the board by a certain date. I forget what the date is, but it's coming up relatively soon. The CBC live recordings have been a major way of promoting arts and music, especially all across Canada. There's an example where an entire discipline is going to feel the shock of change in the CBC, whether you define it as cuts or other things.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You heard what was said from the government, Madam Bateman. No, the cut by the government last year of \$115 million from CBC/Radio-Canada has been hurting CBC/Radio-Canada. Removing the index that has been going to CBC, which is on the wages and the expenses of CBC, is money. If you don't give it to them, that is cuts. It's very clear. The president of CBC came here and told us at one of our meetings last week that the index was gone. The \$115 million that was cut last year on a three-year basis, they are feeling it now. It's not only the advertising; it's everything that's been going around.

Going back to the region you represent, it's not just around Montreal. Does it go right up to Rivière-au-Renard?

Ms. Rachel Hunting: It goes—

Mr. Yvon Godin: Fox River is what they call it.

Mr. Gerald Cutting: Because the territory is so large, one of our major problems is that we may have a small pocket of anglophones who would like to participate in a certain activity who might find themselves near Philipsburg, which is at one extreme, and then there may be another group. When we talk about how we create avenues of vitality, communication becomes extremely important. If you talk about the importance of radio—

Mr. Yvon Godin: What do you suggest then?

• (1015)

Mr. Gerald Cutting: In terms of making suggestions to deal with that kind of issue, the geography we encounter means we have to move towards the use of technology. We can have a conversation. You can be in a town at one end of the townships and I can be in another, but through video conferencing, through Skype, and through the use of electronic devices, we can create more avenues of communication.

What we're going to have to look at is using what is available and developing structures and programs around that so we can share ideas, share our artistic presentations, and have a dialogue that will bring us closer together in the world of ideas.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Are you suggesting that the government get involved with your organization to create that? You have the idea, but what are you missing to put it together?

Ms. Rachel Hunting: We're missing infrastructure in the regions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Rachel Hunting: There are still pockets of the Eastern Townships where people don't have access to the Internet at home. They need either a satellite 3G kind of system, which is really expensive and not reliable, or they simply don't have access to the Internet and that technology when they're at home. That can also create opportunities for employment for people who are in isolated areas, opportunities for education through distance learning and video conferencing. It's not only in terms of arts and culture that it could have a benefit. Infrastructure is really important.

The Chair: Okay.

Thank you, to all of our witnesses, for your testimony. *Merci.*

We'll suspend for five minutes, so we can go to the second part of our orders of the day.

• _____ (Pause) _____

•
• (1020)

[Translation]

The Chair: We are resuming the meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

The work of the committee is on the agenda for the second part of our meeting. We are considering two motions.

Mr. Godin, you asked for the floor. Would you like to move your first motion?

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

My first motion is as follows:

That the Committee invite the Minister of Heritage before June 12, 2014 to appear in front of committee to explain why there is a delay in the payment of grants allocated to official languages groups by her department.

The reason I am calling on the committee to invite the minister is simple. The last time the minister came, she said that she was quite pleased to come to our committee. She is the minister responsible for official languages. This week, I saw her rise in the House and say that we could invite her to the committees because she enjoyed coming.

I think that the minister must come to our committee because the witnesses we've heard from so far and the people who call our offices are telling us that there is a delay in the payment of grants to the organizations. It is already mid-May.

Mr. Chair, the problem is that the organizations can't go through with their summer activities if the payments are made too late.

Mr. Chair, this is not your first day at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. You probably recall that the organizations said they had to use their credit cards to keep their employees paid or to pay for expenses. We don't want that to happen any more.

I remember when James Moore was the Minister of Heritage and he promised us that this would stop. He said the department would take the previous year's applications and process them in early spring. Once again, we hear that there are delays in the payments. Maybe the government has a good explanation, but we would at least like to hear that. We would like to be able to ask the minister questions to see what's going on and to determine what we could do to help these organizations.

Under the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages, Canadian Heritage has responsibilities to the communities. The Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages is a mechanism the government put in place in order to grant funding. Under Part VII of the Official Languages Act, the government must promote the official languages and official languages minorities in Canada. All these organizations are in place.

I didn't think the payments would be late this year. Maybe the minister will tell us that the payments aren't late. I look forward to hearing what she has to say. According to what we've heard, we would say that Canadian Heritage employees are not communicating with the organizations to let them know where things stand and to reassure them.

Mr. Chair, that is one of the reasons I hope that the government side will vote with us. I don't know whether it'll be in camera or not. One thing's for sure: if we leave here after an in camera session, it won't be because they voted in favour of the motion. That would be too bad, yet again.

I therefore call on the Minister of Canadian Heritage to come here before June 12 to explain what is going on and to take questions. This is about her responsibility and the committee for which she is responsible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Gourde.

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

I think that my colleague's questions are perfectly legitimate. I urge him to go see the minister, who is scheduled to appear before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage at 1 Wellington in 35 minutes.

I believe that you—if you want to go—or your party will be able to ask her all the questions you can think of about everything you want to know. You will not get those answers any faster than in 35 minutes from now.

It goes without saying that we are going to vote against this motion today because the minister is appearing before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. You can ask her all the questions you want. You will not have any problems asking her questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

Ms. St-Denis, you have the floor.

Ms. Lise St-Denis: I do not really understand how you can say that anybody here can go to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage meeting to ask questions.

Here, I am the only one asking questions and over there they take turns asking questions. There are members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. They are not going to give Mr. Godin their turn. I do not think that is a valid reason for refusing Mr. Godin's request that the minister come to meet us here.

• (1025)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nicholls, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Thank you.

I just find the lack of transparency regrettable, Mr. Chair, coming from Monsieur Gourde.

I've been here for three years now. Monsieur Gourde has been here longer than I have, I believe, and he knows the way committee works. He knows that we have speaking rounds. He knows that we have members who are permanent on the committee.

This is a specific issue that we have to get to. He knows the way the committee system works. If you're discussing 10 different issues, you're not going to have in-depth discussions on those 10. You might have in-depth discussions on one or two.

This is a particular issue that we have to address. I see Ms. Bateman smirking and thinking that it's not important, but it's regrettable that we can't bring the minister here to ask her specifically about something that many of the witnesses on this economic study have said is a problem, that they're not getting payment and that the instability of funding is affecting their operations.

I don't think it's realistic of Monsieur Gourde to suggest to run over to 1 Wellington to ask questions at committee. He knows this isn't feasible. He knows this is a fantasy and yet he still persists in pursuing this fantasy.

I just find it regrettable, because we need to get to the bottom of why this is happening. The best way to do that is to tell the minister two weeks ahead of time to please come and tell us why this is happening and how we can solve it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nicholls.

Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I am having a really hard time understanding why Mr. Gourde is telling us these things. He is saying that, if we want to ask the minister questions, we can go to another room where the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage is meeting and that we will have 45 minutes to do so. Hello! The heritage committee is not the official languages committee, even if the minister is responsible for both.

The heritage committee is the one that is examining the 150th anniversary. I could have told Mr. Gourde to go in the other room rather than wearing us with this. Our committee has also examined this issue. Mr. Gourde's argument is that the two committees are different and that our committee is independent. The government has had us examining this issue, which is also being examined by the heritage committee, for months on end. Yet, it is the same government.

I have been an MP since 1997 and I have never seen the like. A minister responsible for official languages has never come to testify before a committee for only one hour instead of two. The government is using its majority to ensure that the minister will appear before our committee for only one hour. We cannot even ask the minister the questions we want to ask her.

Since it seems the minister does not like appearing before the heritage committee, the hour devoted to the heritage committee could be split in two: half an hour for the heritage committee and half an hour for the official languages committee. As long as we are doing that, we may as well just invite the minister for 15 minutes.

She does not like appearing before committee. The Conservative government does not like Parliament. The Conservative government does not like for committees to be transparent. It does not want committee members to ask questions. I think it is shameful that the minister responsible for official languages will not appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages to talk about programs related to official language minority communities.

The heritage committee discusses arts and culture, but our committee talks specifically about our country's minority communities. Organizations that need government programs have told us that there is a delay in the payment of grants. The government is the one that suggested we conduct this study in the first place. Witnesses from across the country have told us that they have not received any money from the government and that there have been delays.

Now, Mr. Gourde is telling us to go to the other side of the House and ask our questions somewhere else. I am wondering what we are even doing here. I know the Conservatives do not want us here, but here we are. As parliamentarians, we are responsible for asking the minister questions and she is responsible for appearing before us. She should be testifying for two hours, not just one. We will ask her

our questions and then it will be done. If she does not do so, perhaps it is because this government has something to hide.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Gourde, the floor is yours.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I would like to respond to Mr. Godin.

In the past, Mr. Godin has participated in other committee meetings to ask questions to other ministers. He is pleased to attend other committee meetings. Committee members of a party make arrangements among themselves. Committee members can allow members of their party who do not sit on the committee to feed them questions or let them take their place. It has always been considered good form to do so. This is a way of doing things that has been around for a long time.

This morning, there is a procedure and House affairs committee meeting that should be very interesting. At that meeting, your leader will explain how he took money from the House of Commons to do partisan work. It is a meeting that Canadians are going to love watching this morning. It will be very interesting to hear him explain how the \$3 million was spent. I might even pop in to hear his explanations.

• (1030)

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

Mr. Yvon Godin: My leader will appear before a committee today to show that the NDP is transparent. The government cannot say that he does not like Parliament and parliamentarians. He is out there working with people and helping MPs with to do their work in Ottawa. Today, I am going to be proud of Thomas Mulcair. He is going to attend the committee he was called to appear before and he is going to testify for two hours. He did not do as you did. He did not refuse to appear. He accepted and he is looking forward to appearing before the committee, before the Liberals and the Conservatives. He did not hide. He said himself that he was going to appear and that he was looking forward to explaining all the work that we have accomplished.

In case Mr. Gourde is not aware of this, Mr. Chair, we are all paid by Parliament. All of our work is done for Parliament, and I am looking forward to our leader's appearance before the committee today. He is not ashamed to appear. He did not refuse and he did not hide, like you are trying to hide your minister.

I am very proud of my leader.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Is there further debate on the motion in front of us?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: May we have a recorded vote?

The Chair: A request has been made for a recorded vote.

(Motion negated: nays 5; yeas 4)

Monsieur Gourde.

[*Translation*]

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Can we proceed in camera?

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, I will pass the floor, once again, to the clerk for a recorded vote on the motion in front of the committee.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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