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—
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The Honourable Michael Chong

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•(1100)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Tuesday, October 30, 2012. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), today we are studying the issue of linguistic duality during the 150th anniversary celebrations of Canadian Confederation in 2017.

Our witnesses today are Ms. Bourget, who is the assistant deputy minister, and Mr. Racine, who is the executive director, and they are both from Canadian Heritage.

We will start with Ms. Bourget.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget (Assistant Deputy Minister, Sport, Major Events and Regions, Department of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Chair, committee members, first please allow me to thank you for the invitation to discuss the important focus that will be placed on linguistic duality during the planning for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017. As a Franco-Ontarian, who was born and raised in Sudbury, Ontario, this topic is very important to me personally.

As you know, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage recently addressed the issue of Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017. Minister Moore had the opportunity to discuss this topic with them. Although we are in the preliminary stages of planning for the activities and initiatives to mark Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, we know that many Canadians across the country have already begun planning initiatives in their own communities.

[English]

Many Canadians have fond memories of Canada's centennial in 1967. They were fortunate to have experienced this landmark year in Canada's history. Those centennial celebrations that ignited the imaginations of so many Canadians were held on the eve of significant changes that led to the vibrant Canada we share today.

[Translation]

Canada's centennial was celebrated two years before the Official Languages Act of 1969, but even then, strides were being made towards linguistic duality, with the appointment of a francophone deputy commissioner for the Centennial Commission, and an official centennial song in both French and English. These measures foreshadowed the significant changes to come.

In fact, Canada has changed considerably since 1967. From the adoption of the first Official Languages Act and its 1988 revision to

the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, linguistic duality is entrenched in modern Canadian society. Today, official language minority communities have a network of schools throughout the country, as well as diverse institutions that support them in their development and growth.

Official language minority communities have had to work hard, and continue to do so, to ensure their place in Canadian society. The Department of Canadian Heritage recognizes and supports this effort when planning major events and commemorations. We have developed and refined several best practices that will be a cornerstone of the plans for the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Canada.

In 2008, the country celebrated the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City. Through these celebrations, Canadians gained a better knowledge of the origins of our country. Canadians from the two linguistic communities throughout the country celebrated the event. For example, nearly halfway across the country in Alberta, the 400th anniversary of Quebec City was a theme during the 2008 Calgary Stampede.

[English]

To ensure a balanced perspective, recognition of the contribution of the anglophone communities in the history of Quebec City was also an integral part of the programming of the 400th anniversary. As such, Quebec's 400th Anniversary Society included a representative from the anglophone community on its board of directors.

[Translation]

The 400th not only celebrated the city of Quebec and its people, but it also became a rallying point for Canadian francophone communities. On August 15, 2008, during the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City celebrations, the "Grand Tintamarre Acadian" took to the streets of Quebec City. Throughout the day, the dynamism and vitality of the Acadian people were celebrated both in Quebec and, of course, throughout l'Acadie. These celebrations also included the Francodôme, which highlighted the creators and artists from francophone and Acadian communities in Quebec and across Canada.

[English]

Another example of the department's commitment to linguistic duality was the Vancouver 2010 games. During the Olympic torch relay, Canadians from across the country showed their pride like never before by participating in festivities surrounding the torch relay in their communities.

[*Translation*]

Francophone and Acadian communities across the country contributed to the planning of the torch relay and had the opportunity to showcase their dynamic culture throughout. These communities had a strong presence over the course of the 45,000 kilometre journey.

[*English*]

When Minister Moore appeared before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage last October, he highlighted the success of la Place de la Francophonie during the Vancouver 2010 games. The Government of Canada provided significant support to showcase the richness and diversity of the French language and francophone culture in Canada to the rest of the world.

Celebrations such as the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, and the Olympic and Paralympic games in Vancouver, contributed to a greater appreciation, both by Canadians and by our international visitors, of our history, our landscape, our culture, our communities, and the richness of our linguistic duality. This was not accomplished by the Government of Canada's grants or contributions alone, but in conjunction with the support and leadership from community organizers who worked closely with official language minority communities.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Canadians' enthusiasm for celebrations and commemorations has not dimmed and will, we hope, gradually increase as we approach 2017.

[*English*]

Between 2012 and 2017, we will mark a number of anniversaries that will help build a sense of pride and belonging for all Canadians. They will highlight our achievements, both nationally and internationally. These milestones commemorate events and people who have contributed significantly to the development of our country and will help unite us in our collective struggle for the advancement of causes at the core of our common values.

[*Translation*]

In planning for the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation and other events on the road to 2017, we will build on past experiences, implementing proven best practices. The road to 2017 also offers a unique opportunity to highlight the significant contributions of francophones towards making Canada the country it has become. Milestone anniversaries marked over the coming five years will be used to build a shared sense of pride among Quebecers and all Canadians.

[*English*]

The contributions of Sir John A. Macdonald, for example, are well known and are commemorated by many organizations across Canada. But we will also have the opportunity to commemorate his Quebec contemporaries, such as Sir George-Étienne Cartier and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine.

In addition, in 2015 Canada will host the Pan American and Parapan American games in Toronto. The federal government is a

leading partner. The organizing committee began several years ago to work with the Franco-Ontarian community, among others, to ensure that the games reflect Canada's linguistic duality.

[*Translation*]

Past events such as the 400th anniversary of Quebec City and the Vancouver 2010 Games have taught us much within the department, but they have also built a strong capacity among the representatives of official language communities. I am confident that we will once again work in partnership to build strategic alliances to implement initiatives that support the recognition and celebration of Canada's linguistic duality.

Mr. Racine and I will gladly answer your questions. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to share my thoughts with you today.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have about two hours for questions and comments.

Mr. Godin, you have the floor.

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

I would like to thank the representatives from Canadian Heritage for being here. We are pleased to welcome you to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I am reminded of all the discussions we had for the 2010 Olympic Games. I remember that we heard from a lot of witnesses about this. We could say that good things were done, but we could also say that, in some cases, we very clearly missed the mark.

We will mainly discuss the two official languages here because this is the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Will our francophones be singing in English or in French? That's what happened during the last Olympic Games. When it came to French, people defended it by saying that a francophone had been asked to sing. But an English song was chosen. However, I didn't see many anglophones choosing to sing songs in French.

What will Canadian Heritage's involvement be with respect to looking at the schedule for such events? There are Métis, first nations and different groups. They shouldn't just be invited for the opening and then forgotten. We're talking about celebrating the 150th anniversary of Confederation. I'm sure Mr. Dion will speak about it. You are talking about Canada's birthday, but I don't think it's Canada's birthday. In our documents, we are really talking about Confederation. There is a difference between the two.

I would like to hear what you have to say about that. Our committee worked very hard at that time. We had even invited the president of the organizing committee for the Vancouver Olympic Games. Despite that, we really missed the boat. When the celebration began, we realized that we had lost.

What are Canadian Heritage's intentions in this matter?

• (1110)

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Thank you very much for your question.

First of all, if we look at the Olympic Games as a whole, even the Grand Témoin who was at the Games and the Commissioner of Official Languages said that these were the most bilingual games that had been held in the history of the Olympic Games. We're talking about the presentation of the games. The same thing is true of the torch relays where francophone groups were involved in the community. Each of the 130 communities visited by the relay had a representative from the official language minority community on the committee. A lot of local talent was on display. Good practices were developed. A great deal of effort was made during the games to ensure that signage, announcements and most of the activities relating to the various events were done perfectly in both official languages.

The opening ceremony was a different matter. There was a contribution agreement with some obligations. The Commissioner of Official Languages reported on it and made recommendations that we have implemented. The minister gave a ruling at the time. Unfortunately, with respect to the Olympic Games, there were last minute changes that were not communicated to the department and that meant that the French components that should have been there were not.

However, we can talk about the 150th anniversary of Confederation and some events that we are organizing across the country on behalf of the government. I will give the example of the war of 1812, which is a commemoration. We can see what was done with respect to the consultations with the official language minority communities. This is the case in Ontario and in Quebec, with the English language community there, including—to also answer your question, Mr. Godin—first nations groups and groups from various communities to ensure they are better integrated. There are lessons that we learned and lessons that we are implementing when we are developing projects, during discussions and during meetings. We made commitments to official language communities to have discussions and to see what we can put into place to ensure that they are reflected in the events.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Are you going to have a board of directors?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: No decision has been made about the structure for organizing the 150th anniversary.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Its structure has not yet been decided. I would suggest, for example, that a member of the FCFA be involved, as well as a member of the QCGN, and perhaps a person representing the Métis. Then, you would have people involved on the ground, rather than people from this site in Ottawa who think they know the entire country or that they speak for the country. You would have people who could come from various places and especially from organizations that experience this every day.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: The standing committee submitted the report on its hearings on the 150th anniversary where there were presentations from various groups. As you know, the government is considering the report, but there is an enormous number of suggestions. If I may, I would like to add something to the topic of the 150th anniversary. Right now, a number of citizens are already involved. The groups already reflect francophones, Acadians, first—

• (1115)

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'll tell you this, Ms. Bourget. I hope the Radio-Canada representatives can hear me because they are going to hear me when they appear before us.

I remember when I was in Prince George when the Olympic flame was going to Nanaimo by boat. The only thing you saw on RDI was the plane with the door closed. When you saw the plane on the tarmac in Vancouver, the boat was going with the flame to Nanaimo and the francophones saw none of that.

Basically, will there also be discussions with the organizations, especially those that represent public television? I know they take care of their own programming but, at the same time, it will be the celebration of Confederation. There will be events, especially events of this nature, and we must ensure that both official languages are represented and that a lot of communities are able to watch it on their public television station, which is paid for by taxpayers.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I think this is a good opportunity. CBC/Radio-Canada intends to hold consultations on the 150th anniversary of Confederation. It intends to start early in the new year. I imagine that the groups and people taking part in those forums will echo your comments.

Certainly, for the organizations we have contribution agreements with, our requirements relating to linguistic duality are clearly stated.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

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

Ms. Bourget, Mr. Racine, thank you for being here and sharing your expertise with us.

The commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation will no doubt be exceptional for people of our generation, perhaps even two or three generations. Taking part in this type of celebration is a special opportunity.

I think it will also be a special opportunity to promote our linguistic duality and enable all our communities to be involved in this celebration. We need our minority communities to show Canada's character and our core identity. You mentioned that they had been invited to propose various projects. Has this process already started, or will it pick up steam in 2013 to allow people to get involved, to have their say and present their initiatives?

No doubt there will be projects in large cities, but the local projects are also important. It is important to remember the small communities that built our country. Think about the rural regions that fed our country in its early years. It's important because we have deep roots there.

In my riding, some areas are 375 or almost 400 years old. These regions also have treasures. How can we integrate all of that into the celebrations?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Thank you.

Fortunately—and it's good to see what is going on—there is already an enormous amount of interest in the 150th anniversary. We are seeing groups form, particularly imagiNation 150, from Calgary. These people have set up a website and a users guide, which is accessible in French and English, to all the small communities across the country. These people explain how to organize a local community and what people are doing.

Radio-Canada will start its consultations. Several other groups, particularly the national capital commissions network, have held consultations in a number of regions in the country. People are forming groups on a daily basis. Some have already sent us project requests. I would say that interest will basically increase.

The minister told the committee that the communities are going to decide what celebrations they want to hold, how they will locally celebrate the historic aspects, the figures, the local heroes, the culture and the linguistic diversity.

We are just starting out, but I am sure that, between now and 2017, Canadians are going to propose a very long list of activities and initiatives. I hope that this will be contagious and that people will want to celebrate this anniversary and get involved.

Denis, do you want to add anything?

• (1120)

Mr. Denis Racine (Executive Director, Major Events and Celebrations, Department of Canadian Heritage): Of course, July 1st will probably be a very important day in 2017. The department already supports Canada Day celebrations across the country. There are more than 1,800 of them across Canada every July 1st, and the vast majority of them take place in small communities. They basically cover the entire country, from north to south and east to west.

It is celebrations like these that allow us to connect with the communities. In the small communities, most of the people take part in organizing these events. For the celebration of these important milestones, there is a real movement of solidarity in the communities. We are expecting this same trend in 2017, and that people will be even more inclined to celebrate Canada and Confederation by highlighting how they experience it in their community.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I can assure you that there will be special events in Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière. We are starting to talk about them already. People are used to taking part in commemorations, be it the 100th, the 125th or the 150th anniversary of small communities.

This will be an opportunity to unite all these small communities and their leaders in order to go beyond the confines of their celebration. It will be really very interesting. I can tell you that there is a lot of history in our corner of the country. There are treasures in places that need only be revealed to the country. I can assure you that this will be special.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

Mr. Dion, you have the floor.

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

Ms. Bourget, Mr. Racine, could you please tell us exactly what your role will be? Are you the pivotal people—after the minister, obviously—involved in organizing these celebrations?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I would like to say yes. I am the assistant deputy minister responsible for Sports Canada, major events, celebrations and regions. I am responsible for supporting the minister and the department, and I support them in developing plans and programming for the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Mr. Racine is the executive director responsible for major events and celebrations, including the 150th anniversary of Confederation and all other major anniversaries. He is also responsible for managing the grants and contributions programs for all other commemorations that we are celebrating in the road to 2017. Denis spoke earlier about Celebrate Canada, which is one of the programs we manage. We also manage the Commemoration Canada component.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Are you the two most pivotal people, after the minister?

Mr. Denis Racine: In my humble opinion, you have before you the two people who are currently working on the file.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Actively.

Mr. Denis Racine: As for the organization—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I repeat the question.

[*English*]

Do we have the two key persons, after the minister, for the organization of these events?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Racine: I can quite simply tell you that we are the two people who are working on the file currently, with our teams of course. The very structure that will be put in place to go ahead with the initiatives has not yet been determined. Until then, we are the people who—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Is it possible that we will have an arms-length organization, like in 1967?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: It's possible that the government will decide to go that route.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: You don't know when that kind of decision will be made?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: No.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: You understand that I prefer to speak to the people who are really doing things. If I go back to your presentation, Ms. Bourget, I am both reassured and concerned. I'm reassured because you told us from the start that this is important to you. You are a Franco-Ontarian. You lived in Sudbury and this is something that you do not want to fail. That is very reassuring.

I am also concerned because I would have liked you to have said from the start that there were failures in the past and that you are going to learn from them. But your presentation doesn't mention that. You said this only when you responded to Mr. Godin. If we look at the failures closely, they really tarnished the good things. That is the problem. In our country, in Canada, symbols are extremely valuable.

The mayor of Quebec, the premier of Quebec and a number of other important people in the Canadian francophone community said that we failed in the opening ceremony. That is what people remember today. As for the good things, we need to remember that a lot of effort was made to have more bilingualism and that almost one volunteer in five could speak French. It is important to remember that, but the opening ceremony made a mess of things. And the reaction of other people also made a mess of things.

When David Atkins, the organizer, said that he was Australian, that he didn't understand what was going on and that we could never satisfy the Quebecers, that just added insult to injury.

I don't know if you read the book by Mr. Furlong, but it is extremely dreadful. He wrote that he did not understand why that guy wasn't happy that his song was used. That guy is Gilles Vigneault. You really have to be ignorant of Canadian political history not to know that Gilles Vigneault doesn't like it when his songs are used to celebrate Canada. It's incredible. He wrote this in his book.

There was a very serious disagreement with Mr. Charest. Mr. Charest made a speech, and Mr. Furlong did not put his headset on to listen to Mr. Charest's speech. Seeing that, the francophone journalists obviously asked Mr. Furlong questions in French. In his book, he said that he was insulted by that. I found it insulting that he didn't listen to my premier if he was unable to understand directly. That is the type of thing that needs to be avoided at all costs. It is very difficult to predict everything that may happen, but I would like to feel that this concerns you and that you are determined to manage the symbols correctly, starting with the name of the event. Calling it the 150th anniversary of Canada is an insult to our history.

When I was young, in 1967, we celebrated Confederation. I was taught that my country had a long history that had led to Confederation. The first prime minister of Canada, you just mentioned him, was Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, in 1848. He risked his life to become prime minister of Canada. He faced the Orangemen who straight out wanted to kill him. This is our history. You can't just set it aside.

During the Olympics, Donald Sutherland—one of our greatest actors—read one of our most famous poems, *Hymne au Nord* by François-Xavier Garneau, but he read it in English. Why do such a thing? The poetry doesn't translate well. Since we're talking about François-Xavier Garneau, if 1867 is the start of our country, how did he write *Histoire du Canada depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours* in 1845?

You see, you have to be careful with the symbols. That was my comment.

• (1125)

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Mr. Dion, I believe that the text indicates that our practices are better and that we have been able to learn from

our mistakes and our successes over the years. We take them very seriously and, yes, we are implementing them. Certainly, we will be extremely vigilant about every activity that will come under our department.

I don't want to spend much time on the opening ceremonies, which were just one component of the Olympic Games. The minister spoke about it, as did the commissioner. People are aware of the mistakes that were made. Lessons were learned. Recommendations were made. They were implemented. As an official, it is my duty to focus on the future, as well.

As for the use of the word "Canada", that was a mistake I made today, on this beautiful Tuesday morning. All the official documents mention the 150th anniversary of Confederation. So that is what it refers to.

The Chair: Thank you. Mr. Dion, you mentioned Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine. There is also Robert Baldwin in the other corner. They are the two great reformers in Canada in the 1840s and 1850s.

[English]

Their statues are together, behind Centre Block. I think it makes the biggest statue on the back of the Hill.

It's a very good story, because one was English-speaking, and one was French-speaking. From my memory, they switched circumscriptions, they switched ridings—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Baldwin was elected in Rimouski.

The Chair: —that's right—and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine ran in Ontario, in order to bridge the divide between—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No: because they had been defeated.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: That was the other reason.

It was a generous way to bridge the divide.

Mr. Yvon Godin: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...in Montreal.

The Chair: That's right.

An hon. member: A unilingual anglophone.

The Chair: Well, Robert Baldwin, I think, was unilingual.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, LaFontaine spoke English. And Baldwin's daughter, who spoke very good French, helped him.

The Chair: It's an interesting story. They fought for and won responsible government. They were Reformers, as was George Brown.

An hon. member: We still have them today.

The Chair: The first Reformers: "moderate" Reformers.

[Translation]

Mr. Trottier, you have the floor.

• (1130)

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

I was born in 1965. I was two years old during the Centennial of Confederation, so I don't remember much. However, I still see things that are left over from those great celebrations. Canada's centennial was celebrated in a very decentralized way. During the centennial, communities across Canada expressed this joy in different ways.

In 2017, is a decentralized approach being planned, or a more centralized one? Are we going to come up with creative ideas and different ways to celebrate the 150th anniversary?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: When the minister appeared, he was clear. He said that he wanted these celebrations to be community-based, that they be from the grassroots. He really wanted people from the four corners of the country to celebrate in their community, that they develop ideas and form committees. I think that, ultimately, we will see a mix of the two. For example, the government departments and agencies have regular programming. Mr. Racine spoke about Canada Day celebrations. In 2017, the theme will obviously be the 150th anniversary. We can draw on a number of programs to support the initiatives of citizens and groups.

I know that I went with my parents to Expo 67 in 1967. I don't remember it, but I know the impact it had on my family and on just about everyone. We still talk about it as a turning point for Canada.

I think that this is a very exciting period since generations that weren't there can look toward the future. We will in fact have a lot of things to celebrate, a lot of points of view to reflect, a lot of stories to tell.

Mr. Racine, do you want to add anything?

Mr. Denis Racine: Let's look at some past experiences. The organization of the Olympic torch relay, for example, was done at two levels. The VANOC organization took care of the relay as such, including all the mechanics of the torch, the torch bearers, and so on. Seeing the torch go by was a very popular and very exciting event.

There were other great moments as well. I'm thinking of the famous community celebrations. The torch stopped twice a day in a community and a celebration took place. These celebrations were organized by the community receiving the torch. It was done at the local level. The community really wanted to celebrate what it was all about. There was a balance between the VANOC leadership and the community movement behind these celebrations. The blend of the two provided good results.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: In this community movement, will there be a certain freedom, for example, if people decide to celebrate in only one language, English or French? Do we need to require all the communities—

Mr. Denis Racine: When we did the Olympic torch relay, there were obligations with VANOC because the government was investing money in this event. Everything had to be in both official languages. We also agreed with VANOC that each organizing committee in the local communities that held a community celebration had to include a representative from the official language minority community when there was a presence in such communities.

And it went well. In fact, the francophones outside Quebec, the Acadians and the anglophones in Quebec were part of the organizing committees. We ensured that communication was done not only in

both languages, but that the content of the celebration also reflected this aspect of linguistic duality in the celebration's host community.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What is the time frame for assessing the ideas that will come out of the communities? Will requests for ideas be made soon? Will it be in 2014?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: For the moment, people are sending us proposals on their own. Groups are asking to meet with us and are submitting proposals and requests to us. We are assessing these requests. As I said, people are undertaking a lot of activities. The government is working on it, and I am sure that the minister will be pleased to reveal the plans once they are done.

For the time being, we are just listening. Several consultations are being held. This is feeding the data, the ideas, the projects, and so on. This is giving us an idea of the size of the event and various possible scenarios.

• (1135)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: There is no specific date?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Not yet.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Proposing the best ideas to undertake projects could create a spirit of competition in the communities. That could help focus the efforts.

Right now, I don't think most Canadians are thinking much about the 150th anniversary. But if you set a date, the communities are going to form teams and create ways of celebrating. There still isn't a specific date, isn't that right?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: So far, there is no specific date.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: That's fine.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lauzon, you have the floor.

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

I would like to welcome our guests.

I would like to understand how things will play out. I represent a riding that is about 25% or 30% francophone, 70% anglophone and that has about a thousand aboriginals.

Do we need to set up an organization or a committee before making a request? How will it work, in a very practical sense?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I will try to be clear.

Groups are organizing themselves. These groups have decided to create their own committee and bring together representatives from official language communities and other community groups. They may be scouts or a variety of groups. At that time, they discuss what they would like to do in their own community. They discuss large-scale projects and possible partnerships.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Yes, but if the group doesn't have any anglophones, francophones or aboriginals, it won't work.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Mr. Racine mentioned the Olympic torch relay. If you know groups in your constituencies who want to do something for the 150th anniversary, it would be helpful to ask them if they have thought of inviting a member of the francophone community, if they have thought of approaching Aboriginal groups in the community or groups of young people or new Canadians, in order to reach the greatest possible number of people.

In terms of our funding, it must be understood that our current programs, or any special programs that may be created by the government, contain official language requirements. These are set out in the contribution agreements. It is made very clear that written and verbal communication must be in both official languages and that public events must be conducted in both official languages.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Is that the case in minority language communities or in all communities?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: It is written into our funding agreements with all groups eligible to receive financing, funds, from our department.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: The department should perhaps suggest that we as parliamentarians might form committees representing the various interests. Otherwise, other groups could perhaps set themselves up and get ahead of us.

Could that possibly come from the department? In my case, for example, if the francophones from the cultural centre decide to do something and another committee from somewhere else does something different, we will end up going in different directions.

Mr. Denis Racine: One does not preclude the other. Sometimes, where there are national celebrations, some francophone communities want to organize their own activities. An Aboriginal community, a First Nation, might perhaps do the same thing. In some cases, everyone gets together around a table and forms one single committee. It depends on the dynamics in the community.

• (1140)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: In my riding, I chair the volunteer committee for the July 1 Canada Day celebrations. It includes all the groups. The program is bilingual; it includes Aboriginal people, and that is how it is. But someone has to take the first step. You need a leader to bring all the various groups together.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: You seem to be demonstrating good leadership in your community by rallying everyone together.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: We have to decide, because time waits for no man. If it makes sense, we should probably start right away.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Thank you for your suggestion. As I said already, we are going to get involved with anyone we have agreements with. It is going to be very clear.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: It is very important in an official language minority situation. I have been involved with my community for 11 years and it took two, three, even four years for the francophones to get on board. Our program is now completely bilingual. But someone has to get the ball rolling. If we got grants from the department, it would help us a lot.

The Chair: Great. Thank you.

Mr. Benskin, you have the floor.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): My thanks to the witnesses for being here.

The Expo 67 experience, one year before I came to Canada, remains a great experience for me. I kept going to *Terre de Hommes*, Man and his World, afterwards.

In much of the testimony we have heard, we have been told time and time again that ideas should come from communities. I think that is really important for the 150th anniversary. But, since 1967, there have been a number of changes in Canada. Some for better, some for worse. The monarchy does not go over very well in Quebec, for example.

[English]

What do you envision doing to create a situation wherein Quebec will want to be part of this, will feel invited into this process and into the celebration? The acknowledgement of our histories and of our working together is something that is very important.

What could be done by the ministry to help promote the celebration in Quebec?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: It was interesting to hear the discussion between Mr. Dion and the chair on Monsieur Borden and then Monsieur LaFontaine and Mr. Brown. I think Quebec and francophones across the country have a very rich history and influence in the building of our nation.

What we've learned through the 400th anniversary or many other anniversaries is not for us.... And when you say "grassroots", you're right. Stories come from people. Events come from people.

If we want them to resonate, the way to do it is to ask people who live in Quebec, for example, who are the heroes? What are the stories that have a lot of meaning and history? We talk about Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, and George-Étienne Cartier; they're important to our history. Then there are the characters, historical figures, on the anglophone side who have as much relevance.

So you want to do programming or events that will resonate and that have meaning for citizens. Often what we find is that when we consult with the community groups and when we involve them at the outset, they help define what it is that should be celebrated. So you can get that engagement from it.

When we did 1812, we did not think there were certain areas in Quebec, *à l'école et ailleurs*, where it had resonance for certain citizens. So we sat down with the anglophone community in Quebec and asked what we could do to make these celebrations relevant to them.

I think with the 150th anniversary, we must have that same attitude. There are hundreds of thousands of stories in this country, and some groups might want to celebrate. One of the committee members was mentioning some artifacts and wonderful findings in their community. I think it's an occasion for citizens to tailor the celebrations to local heroes and broad national ones, but hopefully we'll have a myriad of good stories and history to reflect.

• (1145)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Just to echo what Monsieur Dion said, though, although it needs to be grassroots, I think the packaging, for lack of a better way of putting it, is really important in how people perceive what is being done. If it's perceived as a royal, monarchy, anglo celebration, that's going to deter people from presenting projects that reflect them.

I had the opportunity of spending some time up in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and the family I was staying with told me for the first time about the Acadian revolt, revolution, and this is something that's incredibly interesting and something that the rest of Canada should know.

How are they going to be encouraged to tell that story if it's billed as a flag-waving Canadian anglo type of thing?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I do believe our minister has been clear on the desire for stories and for grassroots involvement.

Will there be broad thematic that will develop? Most likely. The focus should be, and the focus as stated by the minister is, to unite Canadians and to put forward our common values, and that is populated with so many of these stories that you speak about.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Wilks.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Thank you very much for being here today.

I had a couple of questions leading from what Mr. Benskin has just said. Certainly in western Canada there is a lack of understanding of how important the francophones have been in nurturing Canada. I say that sincerely, because we tend to forget that everything moved from east to west. It was the west that slowly came in to Canada.

I give the examples of such places as St. Paul, Alberta, and Maillardville, or now Coquitlam, which hosts 13,000 francophones in its community and has several events every year. It was established back in 1909.

But more so I think of the Saskatchewan farming community, which we tend to forget is highly populated by francophones. If it weren't for them, maybe a lot of the smaller communities in Saskatchewan wouldn't be where they are today. Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, had I believe the first French school district outside of Quebec, which is still established today.

I'm wondering how we are going to go about explaining those stories of the small towns in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia that are going to show the importance of the francophone influence across Canada.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Those are wonderful anecdotes of those communities.

I think there are many ways to highlight those communities and the richness they bring. Fortunately, and that's without government intervention, of course, we will have programming to support local groups as we do through our building communities through arts program and celebrate Canada that, as I've said, will be themed to help support.

We do strategic alliances with historical institutions to help develop pedagogical material for the schools, and we work with the NFB and various institutions that are tremendously talented and great at making this material available. We're fortunate we live in an era of social media where, through Facebook or other mechanisms, or Google, people can exchange stories and information, and build narratives. I think there are tremendous opportunities. Right now if we all let our imaginations go, we could think up so many wonderful things.

We have our official languages program, as I mentioned. We have various other programs in the department. I think as citizens in those communities develop these stories and want to highlight and celebrate them, it will start to form.

• (1150)

Mr. David Wilks: I think one of the frustrations that does come a lot of times, and I speak from a municipal political background, is that we will hear about programs that are instituted by the federal government, but then municipal governments come along and say, well, that's all fine that you have a program, but we need some direction and/or we need some money to be able to pull this off; we want to do it, but there's only one taxpayer, and we're on the bottom of the barrel: so what are you going to do for us?

Is there some plan or initiative that you see coming forward that will assist municipalities financially to pull off some of these events? Otherwise, I believe they will be left in the loop.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: It wouldn't be in my purview to comment. I'm not aware of initiatives to date of that nature. Plans have not been finalized in terms of programming in an area related to the 150th, so I can't comment.

Mr. David Wilks: It may be something that you—

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Is everything under consideration? Are suggestions and ideas such as these important to hear? Absolutely.

I know, for example, that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the FCM, is involved with the CBC and others in terms of consultation.

So I think the level of awareness that people have of wanting to come together and build programming is there. As for the government's plan, we'll leave that to my minister at a later date, when those plans are finalized, to discuss. At this stage, we are really using our existing tool box, we are gathering all the information, and we are still in the early planning stages.

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Chair, if I have time, one important other step that I would strongly suggest is to utilize our national parks. They tell a huge story across Canada from coast to coast to coast in both official languages. If we can focus in on those national parks, it's a great story.

Has that been looked at? Are there any plans for that?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Definitely.

It's one of Monsieur Racine's ongoing partners, so I'll let him speak to that.

Mr. Denis Racine: With the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812, Parks Canada is a key partner and obviously some national historic sites are key places where so many battles took place. When we commemorate major milestones, we try to work with our federal colleagues and federal institutions to reach out to Canadians.

You mentioned the francophones in Saskatchewan. This is the year of the Fransaskois, and Radio-Canada has done a tremendous job in promoting the French community in Saskatchewan from a historical point of view, what it is today, and what it looks forward to.

It's with key partnerships like that with federal institutions that we can go beyond the reach that the department would have with its own programs.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Michaud.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you for your presentation, Ms. Bourget and Mr. Racine. It is interesting to hear about the first steps in the planning of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

I would like to thank my colleague Mr. Benskin for his comments on the broad themes. That was one of my concerns, actually. In your comments, you mentioned Lacolle, which ties in with my concerns a little.

I understand that these celebrations are trying to unite Canadians. But still, some historical events and figures are perhaps a little more controversial, depending on the community where one lives.

Take Louis-Joseph Papineau, for example. He is always mentioned in the same breath as rebellions. Perhaps his name has a more sovereigntist connotation in Quebec. But it is all about the 1837 rebellions that were also happening in Upper Canada at the same time and that constituted the first steps towards responsible government. I am also thinking about Louis Riel, who is a major symbol for the Métis community, but who is possibly perceived differently elsewhere, despite the recent pardon that Canada has granted.

How will those events be incorporated? Will you be able to paint a true picture of our history? Have you given any thought to that? How do you see it fitting into the celebrations?

• (1155)

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: As we mentioned earlier, there are a number of stories that have to do with the country's historical figures. The stories are important. The voices are important and communities are going to showcase them. That is where the ideas come from and people have the right to celebrate them.

We are looking at bringing people together to showcase those things in the period leading up to 2017.

[*English*]

There will always be somebody who's controversial to someone. I think one of our great strengths in Canada is having the ability to listen to all of these stories. I think citizens will make the right choice when it comes to celebrating.

Maybe some people don't like Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, so why we would celebrate? But if it has significance, historical importance, it's all right to recognize....

[*Translation*]

No one will be able to achieve unanimity, especially with history.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: However, if you look at the celebrations of the war of 1812, you can see that there is a very specific historical point of view. In a way, it is being presented as the beginning of the unification of Canada as a nation, whereas I was talking about the 1837 rebellions. There was also the Act of Union in 1840. It is all part of a process. There is a slightly more militaristic slant. I do not want to read too much into the intentions behind it. But even so, there is a specific vision.

If broad themes are developed for the 150th anniversary, my impression is that we are running the same risk, and that communities will not necessarily be able to state their own needs and to really show their own history and say which figures are important to them.

Could you comment on that possibility?

Mr. Denis Racine: Let me make a quick comment, taking the 1812 bicentennial as an example.

When we started planning for that event, we consulted francophone and First Nations communities. If you look at the activities that have gone on up to now and that will go on in the coming months or next year, you can see the recognition of First Nations communities.

The major battles that have been commemorated up to now took place in the Niagara Peninsula or at Fort Detroit. Commemorations of the war will quietly follow their historical course. Next year there will be events in southern Quebec where a group of francophone municipalities have prepared activities to commemorate how French-Canadian militias beat back the American invasion up Lake Champlain. The people in the area want to commemorate that historical event.

When we plan, we try to get as much balance as we can.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: I have been watching the government's little propaganda videos—sorry, information videos—on TV. I am not sure that I see a specific francophone presence, or the involvement of particular communities. The events are depicted with the statement that the nation of Canada defended our country. I am afraid that that is the kind of obscurantism that we will see in the celebrations of Confederation.

I think we have to be careful. I hope that Canadian Heritage will provide good guidelines that will allow communities to be able to express what they want. I hope that the approach will not be top down, but bottom up. That is very important for celebrations of this kind.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would just like to say that the meaning of the word “Canadien” has changed a lot in the last 50 years. Prior to the 1950s, I think, it referred to French-speaking Canadians. The word “Québécois” referred to people living in Quebec City.

• (1200)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: That was true even through the 1960s.

[*English*]

The Chair: Exactly. It's very interesting how nomenclature has changed over the years.

I'll leave that to others to navigate through.

We will take a brief pause for five minutes.

• (1200)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We now continue the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Ms. Bateman, you have the floor.

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

My thanks to our witnesses. I have really enjoyed your comments and those of all my colleagues.

I have two main questions for you. If I have time, I will ask one more.

Have you a plan for sharing grants or contributions between large and small organizations in all our communities across Canada?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: As I mentioned, we are still in the preliminary planning stages. The department itself already has a selection of programs, some of which target national organizations. Others target the provincial level more and still others target the community level.

If the decision is made to establish any kind of funding, of course we will make sure that people have access to it according to their projects. But, certainly, our goal of trying to establish a link with people and to assure ourselves that they are able to establish it counts for a lot with us.

But, at this stage, it is too early to discuss the plan.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Yes, I understand. It is complicated and it is difficult. But if a group of students in an immersion program in Iqaluit wants to celebrate Canada, it is a good idea, in my opinion.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: That is a theme that has come out of the 150th anniversary committee consultations. The study deals with exchanges, among other things. Our department has a youth exchange program to bring together young people from all over the country. Will there be a funding envelope set aside for the 150th anniversary? That is still to be decided, but these are ideas that we are in the process of studying.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Fine. Thank you.

Madam, I see that your title involves every region of Canada. I really appreciate your position on our great country's linguistic duality.

However, do you also have a plan to include immigrants? It seems to me that francophones are immigrants too. Anglophones like my grandparents are immigrants, of course. For the celebrations, do you have a plan to celebrate everyone who came here?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Very likely. But we do not have a plan yet. The plan is being developed.

However, it is absolutely essential to include what you say. We want to involve new Canadians. Some have already been here for several generations or more. We also want to reach young people. We see that in all our initiatives. We were talking about First Nations a little earlier. We are taking about francophone groups and minority language groups, but also about new arrivals to our country and about the diversity of our communities.

In our work, we are always trying to present the history of all Canadians so that they can buy into it and get to know their country better. In its programming, our department is committed to try to reflect that and to get citizens, new arrivals and young people involved in the same way. That is part of what we are doing and what we are presently examining for the 150th anniversary.

• (1215)

Mr. Denis Racine: It will be a challenge for whomever will be proposing activities to celebrate the 150th anniversary. As we mentioned at the outset, the Canada of 1967 and the Canada of today are very different demographically. We were talking earlier about the franco-saskatchewan community that is undergoing very major changes with the arrival of French-speaking immigrants. Because of that new reality, we have to find ways to listen and to feature activities that will reach out to a community that has changed greatly, with the tools that we are beginning to use.

That means young people too. There are applications, for example, that bring young people together and that work well. There is a new way to present activities that commemorate events like the 150th anniversary to a new audience.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have the floor, Mr. Dionne Labelle.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Good afternoon. My thanks to the witnesses for being here. I have two questions.

In 1964, the government approved a budget of \$743 million, in today's dollars, for the centennial celebrations. How much will be set aside for the 150th anniversary?

Now, during your presentation, you said that people all over the country have started to think about and work on certain projects. The Department of Canadian Heritage sent some documents. The department has produced documents. Is that correct? Are you engaged in any correspondence about the thinking that is going on in the communities?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: We have not produced any official documents. People submit ideas for projects to us. They send us documents describing their ideas and their activities. The department has no formal program yet. The budget has not been determined yet. The minister will decide that.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Okay.

I would like to address this question more generally. As you know, there are presently budget cuts at Radio-Canada and at Library and Archives Canada. To what extent will Canadian Heritage be able to ensure the quality and the quantity of the services provided to francophones across the country, given the current cuts? A little earlier, Mr. Godin was talking about the fact that the public broadcaster was filming the plane while the torch was off somewhere else. At the moment, there are cuts at Radio-Canada that are particularly targeting the corporation's services in French. How are you going to make sure that contact with French-speakers, both inside Quebec and outside, will be of the same quality and that the services to that population will be guaranteed?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I cannot speak for the minister or for my colleague who is responsible for official languages in the department. The government has committed itself to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. The department's reports and plans demonstrate that. As for the programs we deliver to Canadians, our department does have an obligation in that respect and I also do not foresee—I can speak to this—an impact on francophone minority communities because they are requirements of our programs.

Do not forget that, when we are given funding envelopes, organizations are responsible for making things available, making sure of the quality of the French and that communications are done in both languages. That does not change. Our department is responsible for official languages, among other things. Our leadership role in this area remains.

•(1220)

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: We will certainly be looking out for that as and when the government chooses which type of organization will manage the 150th anniversary celebrations. We will be very interested to see the documents promoting the Official Languages Act and the big picture. By that I mean the big picture within which these activities will be held. I hope that the provisions dealing with the promotion of both official languages will be part of that big picture. I hope that is a concern for you.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Each contribution agreement, which we usually call Schedule E, is very detailed. They are public document detailing the obligations of organizations that receive funding from the government.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Personally, I was very disappointed to hear about the recent decisions made by your department about the museum and about the section of the Trans Canada Trail that someone wants to rename the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Trail.

I wonder what the big picture of the activities commemorating the 150th anniversary of Confederation will look like. Do we not already have an idea through these kinds of preparations, through name changes, through royalizing our symbols? What exactly is the

150th anniversary going to be celebrating if, in the years prior, all Canadian symbols have been royalized?

I think that puts the celebrations in an awkward light. You are heading off in a strange direction.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: The Minister has already spoken publicly about the road to 2017. He has said that the government's intention for the road to 2017 is to celebrate key moments and key figures.

As to your other remarks, I am not able to reply on behalf of my minister.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

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

When you are organizing events on such an ambitious scale, I feel that you have to keep in mind a sense of openness. You also have to be optimistic from the outset, given the challenge of implementing the plan. You really have to make sure that you surround yourselves with people who have the same idea in order to focus completely on the celebration and to make it a success.

Along the way, of course, you will meet people who are more negative, who will nitpick, who will say that you should have done things this way or that way. They are not often the people who are going to work hard to organize celebrations. We will always have critics; celebrations will always have critics. Even so, at the end of the day, they will be very happy to participate.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: You aren't talking about me, are you?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: No, no. I have no one in mind. I did not look at anyone.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I have organized events as well in the past. In the first meetings, there are always critics. After a while, they go away. They are not up to the challenge. It requires them to give too much of themselves.

Will volunteers play a major role in these celebrations? Of course, you cannot put on major events like this and not ask Canadians to become interested and involved. Personally, I feel that the people who volunteer a lot will ensure that the celebrations are even more impressive. That goes without saying.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I am happy that you brought up that point. Earlier, I mentioned consultations that other organizations are conducting. Volunteer Canada is consulting Canadians about the 150th anniversary.

In terms of community initiatives, I agree with everything you say about volunteers. Without the support of thousands of people, it would be difficult, of course. We saw that with the 2012 Olympic torch relay. We see it in all the events we hold. There are even thousands of volunteers for Canada Day on Parliament Hill each year. They really make the difference. They help in defining the scope of the activity; they think of things to be done or people to be involved that we would not have thought of.

When we look at the demographics of volunteers, we see that we need a renewal and a way to get young people participating. Otherwise, the people sitting on the committees as volunteers will have the same colour hair as I do, or as Mr. Dion does, since I dye mine.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Nicole Bourget: It is important to reinvigorate the movement. It is important to get the country volunteering for all kinds of activities. It is certainly important for the 150th anniversary.

•(1225)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I have another question.

I am sure that Canadians are going to want to contribute money. When a celebration or a commemoration is held, there are always people who are ready to give or to collect money so that the events can be improved.

Are you going to recognize the ways in which people want to take the initiative and make financial contributions to the celebrations?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: We hope so. I believe that everyone would be happy to know that corporations and Canadians in general are investing in their communities in order to get projects done.

Additionally, even though these may not be direct investments, some large Canadian institutions are celebrating important anniversaries in the same year as the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, just as one example, is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2017. I assume that it will hold some activities to celebrate that major point in its history.

We can only encourage Canadians to come together and to make a contribution to their communities. We can only encourage people to make that kind of gift, whether through contributing to events or through legacies.

As always, another ingredient is very helpful—the fact that people give their time and their money. As far as I know, the government will not be organizing any formal fundraising so that Canadians can contribute, but we will never discourage people from getting involved and making things happen in their own communities.

The Chair: Thank you.

We now move to Mr. Godin.

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

I would like to quickly go back to Mr. Gourde's comments.

He was talking about people complaining. He also said that they should either put up or shut up. That comes a little close to home for me.

If what he says is the case, I do not know why we are having a meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages today. Here is one of the reasons. We have said that we want to make sure that some things happen or do not happen. He used to say that we must not miss the boat. If you do not complain, you do not get anywhere. People have good reasons to complain. Some things have not been done, in fact.

I personally had cause for complaint when Radio-Canada showed the plane rather than the torch. It was insulting to see the way in which francophones were treated. It was annoying to see how such an important event was covered. That must never, ever happen again. As Mr. Dion said earlier, sometimes the little things cause the most harm and cause beautiful things to break. I can never say that enough.

Do the contribution agreements that you are going to draw up have provisions about bilingualism? If so, are you going to be able to share them with members of the committee so that we can follow up to make sure that it is done properly?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Those clauses are already in place. They exist and they are already available. They are standard clauses on bilingualism, on each party's roles and responsibilities, on the need to ensure that material is produced in both official languages and that communication is done appropriately. Yes, Mr. Godin, those clauses exist, they are already there.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The clauses should also enshrine the bilingualism. People who want to participate must respect the country's two official languages, not just where numbers warrant.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Those clauses exist. They are part of our contribution agreements.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would like to address another aspect of the situation. A little earlier, we talked about the war of 1812 that we are celebrating at the moment and the celebrations around the 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation and so on. I hope that the 150th anniversary of Confederation is not going to replace Canada Day on July 1.

Let us use the agreements as an example. Try to imagine the situation in my riding. I do not want to insult the Queen. I do not want to do that here today. But first we have the Queen and then we have the war of 1812. If we wanted money to celebrate Canada Day on July 1—I thought that the Queen's day was June 1—we had to set up programs dealing with the Queen or the war of 1812. If the little Acadian community in Caraquet wanted to talk about something else, to talk about its own Canada, it either had to tell lies or be shafted.

Are we going to see that for the 150th anniversary of Confederation? Is Canada Day money going to be used to promote the 150th anniversary of Confederation? That is what happened with the celebration of the war of 1812 and the Queen's jubilee. Money that is normally used in the way we like it, to celebrate Canada, was taken away.

•(1230)

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Mr. Godin, our program criteria are clear. We encouraged people who wanted to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II or the war of 1812. No money was taken away if people did not celebrate those occasions. The Canada Day program has specific envelopes all across the country. Those sums are still available and are project-based. No directives have been given to take money away from people if they did not celebrate those occasions.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I will check my sources of information again and I will provide them to you myself. I will apologize if I am in error.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I look forward to it. I too will apologize if I am in error.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I am not saying that money has been taken away. I think there was a subsequent decision that it would not be appropriate to take it away. Not everyone was ready to do so. There were instructions saying that, if they wanted money, one of the two things had to be included. I will get more information about it.

We were talking about budgets for the celebration. If you look at Expo 67, it left a legacy. We had something. What are the people from Canadian Heritage waiting for? Are they perhaps not at that point yet, of deciding what they are going to do so that people remember it?

Our colleague Mr. Benskin said that he arrived a year after Expo but that it left a great impression on him when he arrived in Canada. He went there often. There was something about Expo that we remember. No one can forget Expo. Does Canadian Heritage have any idea about something that we will remember, some symbol here in Canada that will make us remember this occasion?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: As I mentioned, plans are being studied. Nothing has been formalized. What I can say with certainty is that Canada's economic situation is not the same as it was in 1967 and that, whatever the financial investment may be, we will have to keep that in mind. Don't forget that, as well as Expo, there were centennial celebrations. The price tag was over \$1 billion. I think it was \$1.4 billion in today's dollars.

I am not the government. I am not going to express an opinion about this, but I can say that what we do for programming will take into account the economic times we are in. It will be financially prudent, I am certain, and it will consider what Canadians can afford.

The Chair: Thank you.

You have the floor, Ms. Bateman.

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

I appreciate the comments from both of you, that you are planning and getting all kinds of ideas organized. But, following on from Mr. Godin's point, I do realize that we now have different tools, like Facebook, on which we can keep the memories of all the events. It was not available at the time. So it is a new time, a new century, with everything that entails.

In terms of including young people, you have already discussed using Facebook and social media. I hope that, during your planning process, you will remember young people of all ages. I remember the time very clearly when I was younger, very young. It was not just Expo, because, since it was held in Montreal, it was not accessible to all Canadians. However, I remember celebrations at school, with little books, and physical activities that were part of the process of celebration and were also good for the health. Things like that.

So there are a lot of possibilities. Perhaps Facebook is not perfect, or even good for very young people. But, in my opinion, it is very important to include young people of all ages because we are all Canadians.

• (1235)

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I quite agree with you. I was very young at the time. There were centennial celebrations right across the country.

It was a time for a lot of infrastructure, community arenas, community centres. It really was a vibrant time.

In the activities planned for all across the country, we must reach out to the youth, for sure. This is also their future and the county belongs to them. So it is a goal that everyone shares. We have to find ways of reaching out to young people of all ages. You are perfectly right.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: The monument that Expo left was perhaps good at the time. Perhaps we now need a monument that would include young people and have stories of the old ones, their grandparents and things like that. It is possible now with social media.

I hope that we will use them. They are part of your plan, right?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: They are certainly important. I am thinking of using social media, like Twitter, applications and so forth. An application for young people of school age on the war of 1812 has already been made. The NFB made it. It is animated. It is great.

So yes, we are concerned about young people. They certainly have to be part of this.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dion's contribution will be the last one.

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

How many minutes are you giving me?

The Chair: Five minutes.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Ms. Bourget, I agree with you. We cannot celebrate the 150th anniversary like we celebrated the centennial. First of all, the 150th anniversary is less important. Let us keep something in our tank for the bicentennial.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Hon. Stéphane Dion: But the reason you gave does not seem to be the right one to me. Canada is much richer now than in 1967. Our GDP has grown considerably. Just look at the extent of the growth. We are much richer now than we were then. The efforts of the leaders of the time were incredible.

I would like to go back to the road to 2017. Can you remind us of the milestones along that road?

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Of course, there are a number. There is the war of 1812, the diamond jubilee that we are celebrating at the moment and the 200th anniversary of the Red River Selkirk Settlement.

In 2013, there will be the centennial of the first Canadian expedition to the Arctic and the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. There will also be the 20th anniversary of the Battle of Medak Pocket, which took place in Croatia in 1993. Our soldiers were part of the United Nations Protection Force.

In 2014, there will be the Charlottetown and Quebec City conferences, the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, the 75th anniversary of the Second World War and the 200th anniversary of Sir George-Étienne Cartier.

In 2015, there will be the 200th anniversary of Sir John A. Macdonald and the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Canadian flag.

• (1240)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Don't forget the 375th anniversary of Montreal the same year.

Mr. Denis Racine: The 375th anniversary will be celebrated in 2017.

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: I am sorry, I did not get to 2017.

The Chair: In 2017, we will have the 225th anniversary of the creation of Canada.

[English]

It's open to debate, but the first time the word "Canada" was used formally was in the Constitutional Act

[Translation]

of 1792.

[English]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Well, if you want to start a debate—

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We created *le Haut-Canada* and *le Bas-Canada*—
[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, there are legal texts from the French monarchy that talk about Canada. People from Boston wanted to conquer Canada too.

[English]

The Chair: But formally, the name, *la nomenclature*—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Formally it starts when it is in English. You're right.

The Chair: Anyway, sorry for the interruption.

Go ahead, Mr. Dion.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Thank you. I will use my five minutes.

It seems very important to me that in this list, you also keep in mind the need to respect Canada's linguistic duality. If there are failures, even if you pull out all the stops in 2017 for the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the atmosphere would already be ruined. So, I presume that you are well aware of that.

I would now like to go back to Mr. Gourde's comment. Mr. Gourde pointed out that there are bellyachers who complain about everything, all the time. That is true. There always are, but it doesn't mean that sometimes they aren't right.

As I listen to Ms. Michaud and Mr. Dionne Labelle, what worries me is that they are echoing a generally held view that exists outside of the francophone world. It is also present among anglophones. I know that you are public servants and that this is a very political question, but we need to see how to correct things. I am concerned.

I think 1812 should indeed be commemorated. I think that it was an important event and in any case, by nature, I am always in favour

of commemorating historical events. That was an important moment. The Americans did indeed want to conquer Canada to punish the British for all of the irritants they imposed on them at the time. They did not succeed in conquering Canada, and we had to talk about it.

However, something did not quite work. You may not agree, but I saw it on the ground. It just didn't work. People complained about seeing publicity about 1812 during the Olympics. They could not see what war had to do with the Olympics. They had comments along those lines. The transplant did not take. It remained a government effort.

I would have one suggestion to make. Would there be some way of showcasing someone besides the minister, because the minister's credibility as a historian is rather weak; perhaps some people who have expertise in the area and could have some credibility? I am thinking of historians. They would not necessarily try to put today's attitudes into the minds of the people of that time. That was to some extent the feeling people had given the government's approach. That is unfortunate, because I do think that 1812 could have captivated the population more.

You will not agree with me. You are going to tell me that there are a lot of indications that this did captivate the population, but I will not believe you. As a politician who travels across the country, I can tell you that this did not work in any province I went to. It continued to be perceived as a government effort. Moreover, governments in Canada are never as popular as they are unpopular. They are always more unpopular than popular. There are always more people against them than for them, even when they have a majority. The very last thing to do, with celebrations of this type, is to identify them with the government and with the political party in power and its views. To summarize, there is certainly something politicians need to do.

On your side, you must be aware of that because otherwise, you are going to lose a lot of players. You will have to be very proactive to reach people again after that.

• (1245)

Mrs. Nicole Bourget: Thank you for your comments, Mr. Dion.
[English]

The Chair: *Merci, monsieur Dion.*

Merci à nos témoins. Thank you very much for your testimony.

We're now going to the second item on the orders of the day for our committee, which is the consideration of the motion from Monsieur Godin, who has given us notice of motion....

I see Mr. Wilks waving at me.

Yes, Mr. Wilks.

Mr. David Wilks: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that we move in camera for committee business, please.

The Chair: All those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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