



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Official Languages

LANG • NUMBER 060 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, November 20, 2012

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Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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•(1100)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 60th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Tuesday, November 20, 2012. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), today we are going to study the issue of linguistic duality during the 150th anniversary celebrations of Canadian Confederation in 2017.

Today we will hear from four groups, including Mr. Corbeil and Mr. Nault from Statistics Canada. Welcome.

[English]

We also have Ms. Hylland and Mr. Kenny, of the Canada Games Council.

[Translation]

Also joining us is Mr. Wilson-Smith from the Historica-Dominion Institute.

[English]

We are also expecting Mr. Jedwab and Madame Perrone, from the Association for Canadian Studies. I'm not sure when they'll be arriving; the clerk is looking into that.

Nevertheless, we have three of our groups here, and we'll begin with an opening statement from Statistics Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil (Chief Specialist, Language Statistics Section, Statistics Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for inviting Statistics Canada to appear before you to provide input to your reflection on the evolution of linguistic duality as we approach the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation in 2017.

As you know, on October 24th, Statistics Canada released the language results from the 2011 Census of Population. That release highlighted two key elements of Canada's linguistic portrait—the country's linguistic diversity and duality.

Canada's linguistic diversity is illustrated by the fact that more than 200 languages were reported as a home language or mother tongue in the 2011 Census of Population. The country's linguistic duality is reflected in the fact that 98% of its population reported that it was able to conduct a conversation in either English or French. Similarly, either English or French are spoken at least on a regular basis at home in Canada by 94% of the population and are spoken most often at home by 89% of the population.

I would like to point out that during the 1871 census, only four years after the creation of the Canadian Confederation, Canada's total population—based on the current territory—was about 3.8 million people. At that time, no question on language was asked in the census but we know that about 62% of the country's population was comprised of people of British origin, 29% of French origin and 9% of other origins, including Amerindian.

In 2011, 140 years later, 20.6% of the Canadian population, or 6.8 million people, reported having a language other than English or French as their mother tongue, that is, as the language first learned at home during childhood and still understood at the time of the census. Among this population, native languages were reported by just over 213,000 people. In comparison, English was the mother tongue of 57.8% of the population, and French was the mother tongue of 21.7% of the population. As for the languages spoken most often at home, 66.3% of the population reported speaking English, 21% French and 12.6% a language other than the country's two official languages.

[English]

Although the demographic weight of the population with a mother tongue other than English or French is almost identical to that of the French mother-tongue population, this group consists of more than 200 languages and is therefore far from homogeneous. In fact, the language reported most often as a mother tongue is Punjabi, a language reported by 460,000 people, or 1.4% of the Canadian population.

Among the other language groups in 2011 with a population of more than 300,000 people are Chinese, Spanish, Italian, German, Cantonese, Tagalog—a language from the Philippines—and Arabic.

More than 80% of the population that reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home lived in one of Canada's six major metropolitan areas—namely, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Ottawa-Gatineau.

While Canada is increasingly diversified linguistically, its two official languages, French and, to a greater extent, English, exert a strong pull as languages of convergence and integration into Canadian society, especially as languages of work, education, and the provision of government services to the public.

The two official languages also exert an influence on the languages spoken at home. In 2011, of the roughly 6.6 million Canadians who reported speaking a language other than English or French at home, 68% reported also speaking English or French most often or regularly.

In addition, although the proportion of the Canadian population that reported speaking only English or French at home is decreasing, mainly due to the growth in international immigration, the proportion that reported speaking English or French in combination with a non-official language is on the rise. In 2011, 17.3% of Canadians reported speaking an official language in combination with a non-official language, up from 12.8% 10 years earlier.

Although linguistic duality is at the heart of Canada's linguistic dynamic, the 2011 census data show that the influence exerted by English and French varies from region to region across the country.

While the demographic weight of persons speaking English at home or having English as their first official language is on the rise, that of the population speaking French at home or for whom this language is the first official language continues to decrease.

In the past 30 years, between 1981 and 2011, the Canadian population has increased nearly 38%. By comparison, the population whose mother tongue is French grew 16%. The population with French as the language spoken most often at home or as first official language spoken increased by 17.6% and 21.3% respectively.

•(1105)

In the past 30 years, the growth in the population who have reported being able to conduct a conversation in French, that is, 30%, was the most similar to the growth of the overall Canadian population, which was 37.5%. During this period, this population increased from about 7.7 million to about 10 million people.

The evolution of French and the francophonie in Canada can be explained by a number of factors. Aside from a low fertility rate and, outside Quebec, incomplete transmission of French as a mother tongue to the children of French-speaking parents, international immigration has the strongest effect on the evolution of French in Canada. On average, over the last 20 years, roughly 235,000 new immigrants have come to Canada each year, more than 80% of whom have neither English nor French as their mother tongue.

In general, of the country's two official languages, a large majority of these immigrants know only English and use it at work and in their daily lives. Accordingly, over time it is usually English that is used in the homes of immigrants outside Quebec. Of the some 200,000 immigrants who settle outside Quebec each year, slightly less than 2% have French as their first official language spoken.

In Quebec, French has also experienced a decline in its demographic weight as mother tongue and language spoken most often at home. In contrast, the portion of the population having French as its first official language spoken in that province has remained relatively stable, a factor attributable to the fact that a growing number of people with an immigrant mother tongue tend to adopt French as the language of use in the private and public spheres. As to the relative share of English in this province, it has increased slightly or remained stable as mother tongue, home language, or first official language spoken.

We have mentioned that linguistic duality in Canada is illustrated by the fact that 98% of the population reported being able to conduct a conversation in English or French. We should mention that in 2011 the share of the population that reported being able to conduct a conversation in French was 30.1%, down from the 30.7% in 2006. In

contrast, the percentage of the population that reported being able to speak English was 85.6% in 2011, up from 85.1% in 2006.

•(1110)

[*Translation*]

Linguistic duality is also expressed by the self-reported ability to speak both of the country's official languages. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of persons who reported that they were able to conduct a conversation in both of Canada's official languages increased by nearly 350,000 people to 5.8 million. The English-French bilingualism rate within the overall population went from 17.4% to 17.5%. This growth of English-French bilingualism in Canada was mainly due to the increased number of Quebecers reporting that they were able to conduct a conversation in English and French. In fact, Quebec accounted for 90% of the net increase in the number of bilingual persons between 2006 and 2011. In Quebec, the English-French bilingualism rate increased from 40.6% in 2006 to 42.6% in 2011. In the other provinces, bilingualism declined slightly. The largest decreases were recorded in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, where, in each case, the bilingualism rate decreased by half a percentage point.

The acquisition of French as a second language remains a challenge in Canada outside Quebec. Given that French is generally learned at school, the bilingualism rate reaches its peak in the 15 to 19 age group. Many of these young people are completing secondary school, having been in French-as-a-second-language or immersion programs.

Since 1996, bilingualism has been losing ground among youth with English as their first official language spoken. The proportion of these youth able to conduct a conversation in both of the country's official languages was 15.2% in 1996. It has decreased steadily since then to 11.2% in 2011, a decline of four percentage points.

Despite a rise in the number of youth registered in French-as-a-second-language immersion programs in the past 20 years outside Quebec, the number of young people in primary and secondary school exposed to French instruction has decreased. Since the 1991-1992 school year, the number of children registered in immersion programs has increased from 267,000 to almost 329,000, a growth rate of 23%. In contrast, the number of youth registered in a regular French-as-a-second-language program has decreased from 1.8 million to 1.38 million, a negative rate of 23%. In short, despite a rise in immersion program registrations, the proportion of young people outside Quebec exposed to the instruction of French as a second language over the past 20 years has decreased from 53.3% to 44%.

The loss in the ability to maintain the knowledge of French among youths who have learned French and the fact that immigrants are less likely to be able to conduct a conversation in that language explains in part the decrease in English-French bilingualism outside of Quebec.

The census data are an important source of information for monitoring the evolution of the language situation.

In concluding, I would like to mention that in 2017, year of the 150th anniversary celebrations of Canadian Confederation, Statistics Canada will be releasing the results from the 2016 census on language. Rest assured that Statistics Canada will continue to make every effort to inform Canadians on this key aspect of the country's population.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Corbeil.

We are now going to hear from the Canada Games Council representative.

[English]

Ms. Sue Hylland (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canada Games Council): Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee members.

[Translation]

Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee members.

[English]

Thank you for the invitation to speak before the Standing Committee on Official Languages today to discuss the role the Canada Games could play in celebrating linguistic duality during the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

Appropriately, the Canada Games were born as a nation-building, government-led centennial project in 1967. Under the games motto, Unity through Sport, these first Canada Games in Quebec City paved the way for what is now Canada's largest multi-sport competition for young athletes. Held every two years, alternating between winter and summer, they represent a key step in the development of Canada's future household names. Canada Games athletes are our next generation national, international, and Olympic champions. We saw many of them standing on the podium in Vancouver 2010.

The Canada Games are a catalyst.

[Translation]

The Canada Games and their lasting legacies continue to be the catalyst for the growth of sport and communities across the country.

[English]

Close to 100,000 athletes representing 800 to 1,000 Canadian communities have competed in the Canada Games, with hundreds of thousands having been in qualifying events and competitions that lead to the honour of representing your province and territory on a national stage. Thus, there have been human legacies of 5,000 to 6,000 volunteers and staff at every edition of the games, enhanced legacies for coaching and officiating, and many, many other community legacies that live on to this day in over 23 communities and in 500 venues.

•(1115)

[Translation]

We are a centennial project that continues to inspire and deliver.

[English]

The Canada Games are not only a unifying force in sport, they also incorporate a cultural program and promote fundamental Canadian values, such as linguistic duality, diversity, multiculturalism, health and wellness, citizen and community engagement, the promotion of different cultures, and minority group inclusion, including athletes with a physical and intellectual disability. The games reflect those things that matter most to Canadians.

[Translation]

As an organization, we are committed to recognizing Canada's linguistic duality as it is entrenched in what we do and in the core values of the Canada Games.

We are proud of the way our host societies have embraced our official languages requirements in their own communities. We are also proud to have received letters of praise from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for our efforts in promoting Canada's linguistic duality.

[English]

Sport must be a pillar of the 150th anniversary celebrations. Canada and sport developed side by side in this country, and Canadian sport is intertwined with Canadian culture. They cannot be separated. The Canada Games deserve to be the sport cornerstone of our 150th celebration in 2017.

The Canada Games is a unifying force for sport, governments, corporations, and many other stakeholders like no other event. We work with organizations such as the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, Participaction, AthletesCAN, the Aboriginal Sport Circle, and Special Olympics Canada, among others, to ensure that the games are barrier-free, inclusive, and representative of all Canadians.

As fate would have it, 2017 also represents the 50th anniversary of the Canada Games movement. The country will converge in the centre of Canada for these great anniversary celebrations, in Manitoba, where we know there is important history about minorities and their impact on the entrance of that province into Confederation. We plan to once again allow the Canada Games to represent positive change and to be an exemplary leader in promoting Canadian ideals.

[Translation]

The Canada Games Council is exploring major initiatives that will take advantage of the Canada Games' unique positioning with stakeholders.

[English]

We are in the planning and research phase, working with a very reputable Canadian company in the Twentyten Group. Our celebration in 2017 will target and promote sport and physical activity to Canadian youth, will raise our awareness levels across our great country, and will shine a great spotlight on the 2017 Canada Games in Manitoba.

This past September, more than 61,000 children and youth from schools across Canada participated in Canada Games day events and the national school challenge in support of sports day in Canada. In the last four years, over 129,000 children have participated in our education program.

In 2017, through our expanded schools program using multi-media, social media, and in-classroom tools for teachers, we will work to reach the millions of Canadian youth who are aspiring to be on a Canada Games team. We will encourage participation in sport and physical activity. We will teach them about our country.

As we revamp and extend the learning opportunities of our successful program, we will add in a linguistic duality component that celebrates diversity, culture, and language appreciation. We will challenge each school to educate themselves on why sport and physical activity are important for our health as a nation.

We believe that national awareness rates of the Canada Games can only grow and celebrate our national potential for celebration. Through a national awareness campaign in the lead-up to the Canada Games, we will use creative vehicles, including a unique mass media mix, a public relations campaign, and national Canada Games flag and torch relay events from coast to coast to coast, culminating in the centre of Canada to showcase our past, present, and future stories, and help share the Canada Games spirit country-wide.

[Translation]

Our campaign would not be complete without the promotion of our changing country and those things that enrich our nation today: culture, language, diversity, multiculturalism and a healthy nation through sport and physical activity.

[English]

We will also celebrate and highlight our crown jewel and most prized opportunity, the Canada Games. No community ever hosted the games without legacies and positive change for the entire community—province, territory, or country—and 2017 will be our tipping point and defining moment.

Our cultural program will showcase history, our nation, our diversity, and our language duality. Our broadcast strategy will be promoted as never before, and we will optimize our broadcast coverage with specialized content available in both official languages nationally.

• (1120)

Our public relations activities and outreach will achieve unprecedented media coverage of the Canada Games for 2017 in all languages. We will feature stamps available nationally commemorating all past Canada Games, a coin collection, national and retail partners, sport partnerships, and an alumni celebration of our sport heroes from across Canada, bigger and better than any celebration before.

[Translation]

Much like all 150th celebrations, we are currently in our planning and development stage. Environmental scans, research and strategy development will help us ensure that our efforts have a return on investments, that our partnerships are as strategic as possible and that

our Canada Games efforts will take advantage of Canada-wide initiatives and meet national objectives. It is the perfect time to talk.

In 2017, our strategic positioning and long-standing history in sport will re-ignite the country's national celebratory culture, the way it was done through the Olympics in 2010 and will renew the drive of young Canadians to lead active healthy lifestyles.

[English]

To close, I would like to share a comment that a former prime minister said in reference to the Canada Games:

The Canada Games are about the fulfillment of dreams, and the development of outstanding young athletes. ...the...Games exemplify the many values that we share as Canadians.

The Canada Games are a catalyst.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll have an opening statement from the Historica-Dominion Institute.

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith (President, Historica-Dominion Institute): First of all, thank you,

[Translation]

Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

[English]

We're very grateful for the opportunity to talk about who we are, how we can contribute to celebrating Canada's sesquicentennial, and the role of our two official languages and language communities within that context.

[Translation]

The Historica-Dominion Institute is the largest independent organization in Canada dedicated to promoting history, identity and citizenship. We share the past with Canadians by showing them how it influences our present and our future. We are also helping Canadians be better informed and more engaged.

[English]

We run, on average, 10 to 12 national programs a year, and all of those are bilingual. Our best-known products, as some of you may know, are the Heritage Minutes. There are 66 of them now. Over the last 20 years, they have covered everything from the history of young Irish orphans coming to Quebec—and keeping their names while picking up a new language to live in—to Jacques Plante, the great goaltender, inventing the goalie mask. Some of those minutes are iconic. We'll actually immodestly suggest that in teaching Canadians about our heritage, we think they've become part of it themselves.

Some of our other projects include the Memory Project, which has been in the news to a good degree recently. It records veterans—primarily World War II and Korean War, although now some veterans of the Afghan conflict as well—talking about their wartime experiences for an online archive. We bring veterans and current servicemen and servicewomen into classrooms and community groups. Just in the last month alone, we have arranged more than a thousand visits, coast to coast to coast, to schools in this country. We've archived more than 2,500 Canadian war testimonies that will exist long beyond the lifetime of any of us, well into centuries beyond.

Another of our programs, Passages to Canada, arranges for volunteer speakers to tell their stories about their diverse backgrounds—how they came here, what they found here, how they've lived here—in talking to students and community groups.

The Canadian Aboriginal Writing and Arts Challenge invites aboriginal youth to interpret an aspect of their heritage through art or writing.

The Canadian Encyclopedia is the definitive online and regularly updated source for reliable, verified information about our country.

Here in Canada, we offer Encounters with Canada, the largest youth forum in the country. Every week of the school year, more than 100 teens from across Canada discover our national institutions here in Ottawa, meet accomplished Canadians, develop civic leadership skills, build lasting friendships, and live an extraordinary bilingual experience.

All of those programs that I mentioned are, of course, bilingual.

We also regularly poll to measure knowledge and attitudes among Canadians in order to identify areas of interest, ones where we feel we need improvement as a country and citizens, and programs to address those needs.

• (1125)

[Translation]

We not only support official bilingualism, but we also live it. More than 70% of our national office staff in Toronto is bilingual. Our historians, who are mostly in their 20s or 30s, all have PhDs or masters degrees. Almost all of them are bilingual. One of them is also the official historian for the famous Van Doos of Quebec.

[English]

We understand that linguistic duality involves representing and speaking to linguistic groups in a culturally sensitive environment. For example, in creating our *Black History in Canada Education Guide*, we prepared English and French versions. In the English version, we offered expanded focus on the black community's historic presence in Halifax. In Quebec, on the other hand, we looked at the Haitian community in particular.

At the same time, we teach essentials to both language groups. For example, our most recent exploration into black history in our Heritage Minutes is the story of Richard Pierpoint, a former slave who at the age of 68, in 1812, formed the coloured corps of former slaves who fought in the War of 1812.

We know that Canadians are sometimes unaware of contributions of members of the other official language group, so we looked for ways to educate, improve, and engage, and to consider subject material in this context.

[Translation]

The year 2014 will mark the centennial of the First World War. We also note that the Van Doos was founded in the same year, when French Canadians really started to feel at home. In two years, it will also be 400 years since the French explorers who settled in Quebec started to invest in and build on Canadian lands as well as the lands of what is now the United States. We should celebrate that.

[English]

When we mark, for example, the 200th anniversary of Sir John A. Macdonald's birth in 2015, we should also remember his partner, George-Étienne Cartier. In modern times, the fact of having two official languages has shaped everything from our role at G-20 meetings, where our bilingual prime ministers often bridge the gap between unilingual leaders of some of the world's other biggest countries, to our success in bringing immigrants here from other countries.

While English, as we know, is the lingua franca of much of the world, the French fact is of specific interest to potential newcomers in places ranging from France itself to other parts of Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. These are elements we celebrate, bilingually again, in our Passages to Canada program.

That's one of the lessons of citizenship, as well as history.

We're here to help and to promote these issues. We have a pool of bilingual historians, as I mentioned, and activity coordinators from across the country. We have contacts everywhere at the grassroots and national levels. We understand the languages, and at the grassroots the community is engaged.

The government has recently indicated that it may wish in future to engage not-for-profit groups to assist the public service in some projects. Don't forget us if you do.

[Translation]

Canada is open to people of all languages and all cultures. Having two official languages enables us to reach more people and to send a positive message to the whole world.

[English]

Canada's bilingual heritage is not only part of our history; it is also linked to the future, as it opens us up even further to the world. Those goals are central to us at the Historica-Dominion Institute, as we know they are to Canada, and that's why we're so pleased to speak to and support these efforts.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilson-Smith.

I want to welcome Mr. Jedwab and Madame Perrone from the Association for Canadian Studies.

We've heard from our other three witness groups, and we'll now have an opening statement from you.

[Translation]

Ms. Julie Perrone (Assistant Director, Association for Canadian Studies): Good morning.

First of all, we are very pleased to have the opportunity to present our views on the issue of linguistic duality during the 150th anniversary of Confederation. I plan to—

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): I am sorry, Madam, but is your presentation available in both languages?

Ms. Julie Perrone: Yes.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, it is. It should be in front of you.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Oh, okay.

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Julie Perrone: I can switch to English, if you prefer.

The Chair: No, no, French is fine.

Ms. Julie Perrone: I am versatile.

Given the limited time that we have, I plan to introduce the Association for Canadian Studies, to briefly explain what we do, to give you a few survey results and, finally, to talk about the reasoning behind our recommendations.

In a nutshell, the Association for Canadian Studies will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year, in 2013. Our grand mandate—you have more details in the presentation—is really to enhance the knowledge of Canadians. Although we have a small international component, we basically really focus on the mandate I described. There are three parts to it. Those parts will allow you to better understand why we wanted to be here to talk about linguistic duality.

We have two quarterly publications: *Canadian Issues* and *Canadian Diversity*. They are both bilingual.

In addition, we organize an annual national conference on teaching history. One year it is in English, and the following year it is in French, so as to truly reflect this duality. The conference in French is a way to help us build a francophone network with history teachers, because no such network exists. That is very important to us.

Finally, we also have one-time research projects that seek to increase our knowledge. Let me quickly say that our projects are also bilingual. We would like to develop a bilingual teaching guide on the War of 1812. We have a website on the War of 1812 and the

Canadian francophonie, so that we can reach francophones in this way. We are also waiting for funding for a guide on French-Canadian history.

All that goes to show that we are immersed in linguistic duality on a daily basis. Linguistic duality is at the heart of our concerns, and that is why Jack is going to present our survey results and our recommendations to you today. We feel that we can contribute to ensuring that linguistic duality will be a major part of the 2017 celebrations.

• (1130)

Mr. Jack Jedwab (Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies): Thank you, Julie.

I would like to quickly talk about the results of the surveys we have conducted on various aspects of identity issues in Canada, including bilingualism, official languages and the public's knowledge of Canada's history.

Since time does not permit me to go into detail, I will only make a few comments, and let you look at the presentation and the survey results, including those related to linguistic duality. My comments will deal with the survey on the knowledge of Confederation.

If you take a look at the results of our survey, you will see that there is a major need to make Confederation and its many aspects better known, as well as to picture Confederation's dimension of duality as a key aspect of the 150th anniversary celebrations.

Let me just mention one of my own concerns with the surveys that we conduct. We are going to celebrate the 150th anniversary, and I hope that the celebrations will have a far-reaching impact. However, I feel that people should be more familiar with the topic, so that they can understand the reason behind these celebrations.

[English]

If I may, and consistent with our duality, I'll offer some personal duality. It would be extremely important, I would think, in any commemorative activity around our 150th to improve our knowledge of the Confederation arrangements.

I think our surveys that we've shared with you this morning, at least in the paper version you have, illustrate that there is a gap in terms of the degree of knowledge. In the same way, if you want to do a 200th anniversary commemoration of the War of 1812, which we are currently in the process of doing, you want to ensure that one of the principal elements of doing it is that people know more about the War of 1812, hence the various ads we see around us that are building such knowledge. The work done by various organizations—like the organization that my colleague is responsible for—and the work we do is very geared toward improving that knowledge. My principal message here is in fact that we need to do more in that area as we go forward to build that knowledge. That's illustrated in our surveys.

Now, to be fair, our surveys also indicate that 78% of the population want to focus on what we've accomplished over the 150 years, and 63%—not in this survey—want to talk about our challenges and problems and so forth, so there's a greater desire amongst Canadians to focus on what we've accomplished rather than focusing on the things that were challenges and problems over the course of our 150th anniversary. Some 63% want our priority in our commemorations to be on the role of the French, British, and aboriginals in the founding, if you like, and the evolution of Canada. Those are I think important aspects illustrated in our surveys, as I've mentioned.

There's another thing, though, that I'll note. I'll say this in closing. On the language duality issue, while Canadians in general—65%—do support bilingualism, and while in fact around the globe most people you ask would probably say that they have no objection and are very supportive of their children or their population knowing more than one language, the other dimension of our survey, which is a bit more of an area of concern, is the extent to which people say they don't feel enriched by our linguistic duality.

Notably, that's the case among a lot of English Canadians. In other words, they'll value the idea of learning the second language, but they don't feel the enrichment from it, I think in large part because they don't have contact with it. When I look at our surveys and at the relationship between those who say they do have contact with francophones and those who say they very often have contact with francophones, amongst English Canadians they have much more, if you like...they have a greater inclination to say that they benefit from our duality.

• (1135)

[Translation]

So there is an important link between the frequency of contact between anglophones, francophones and allophones, and the level of enrichment these people say they get through the cultural contribution from francophone or other communities.

I do not think it is enough to have documents and speeches translated in the context of the 150th anniversary. It must be done; I'm not saying not to do it. However, we must go beyond translation. We need to ensure that people truly have contact with the various fundamental aspects that enrich our country, culturally speaking. It is critical that the importance of linguistic duality, which is at the very heart of Canada, be a central element in everything we do as part of the commemoration activities, as I mentioned.

I know that you can read the documentation and ask questions afterwards. So I will end there by saying that, in all the commemoration activities that we will have, we are certainly going to pay attention to the importance of understanding the *raison d'être*, the justification and the origins of the event we are commemorating, in every way possible.

I will end there. I'm certain you have questions for us. I am available to provide more clarification.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Jedwab.

We have an hour and twenty minutes for questions and comments.

First, I want to say one thing that will be of great help to the committee members and the analysts. You know that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage has already done a study on the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The purpose of our study is to examine this celebration from the perspective of Canada's linguistic duality. So, it will be very helpful to us if your questions and comments focus on linguistic duality in the context of the 150th anniversary.

Mr. Dion, you have the floor.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Point of order, Mr. Chair.

Are we giving the witnesses enough specific information so they know that we are not another Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage?

The Canada Games are very important. I will come back to that later.

An hon. member: Debate.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, but I have a question.

We wrote to the witnesses, and they responded that the Canada Games were very important. It was not the time to tell us that. It was the time to tell us whether, when 2017 rolls around, they were going to be properly equipped to respect linguistic duality, whether they were going to make sure that it would go well, that they were going to focus on it and that everything would be done in both languages. That is the purpose of our committee. We really must give that information to the witnesses.

[English]

The Chair: We are doing that. The clerk is sending out a one page...every witness is receiving a one-page e-mail detailing what we are looking for. We are doing exactly that. I'm just reinforcing it.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Can we have a copy of that?

[Translation]

The Chair: Absolutely.

[English]

We'll make sure that e-mail is forwarded to all members' offices.

I'll just reiterate. If we can focus on the linguistic duality context of the 150th celebrations, that would be helpful to the analyst, and also official language minority communities and their role within the 150th. That would be of great use to us. We only have a couple more meetings left and we need material to help inform the report.

Without further ado, I will give—

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Chair, I have a comment, as well.

In all the years I have been here, we have always had briefing notes from the Library of Parliament. Now, we aren't receiving them. They help us prepare questions to ask the witnesses. So I would like us to get them.

The Chair: We can do that.

Mr. Godin, it's your turn.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll try to keep the linguistic aspect in mind.

I have been watching how things have been developing for the past few years. We are currently commemorating the War of 1812. I don't know when we'll commemorate the deportation of the Acadians, which happened in 1755. It was an event that affected us, the francophones. They were the first francophones in Canada.

In the pamphlets you gave us, Mr. Wilson-Smith, you mention the largest youth forum in Canada. You gave us a very nice package of the wonderful work you are doing.

Here we are, saying that we want to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017, that we want to include the linguistic aspect and recognize the two founding peoples. The Commissioner of Official Languages is telling us that the 150th anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate and promote the official languages. That's what it says in the Roadmap. He is also suggesting an increase in the number of linguistic exchange programs in the schools.

However, this is the same government that eliminated the Katimavik program, which was important for promoting Canada's two founding peoples. This is the same government that appoints unilingual justices to the Supreme Court, that appoints unilingual officials of Parliament—

• (1140)

The Chair: Mr. Godin, Mr. Gourde has a point of order.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): I would like to come back to the comment you made at the start of the meeting, Mr. Chair. I would like us to ask the witnesses questions to give our committee added value and find out what recommendations our witnesses have for the 150th anniversary celebrations.

I think that Mr. Godin could perhaps cut his comments short and ask a question, rather than use his five minutes to engage in a debate. We can use the House of Commons for debates, but we should work when we are in committee, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: One moment, please.

[*English*]

I've always given members lots of latitude in asking questions. We need to get information from the witnesses about the context of linguistic duality and official language minority communities for the 150th anniversary. That being said, if it's tangentially related to the topic at hand, I'm going to allow the question or comment—there doesn't have to be a question—because I've always believed that members should have that latitude. So I'm going to give the floor back to Monsieur Godin and he can continue with his line of questioning.

[*Translation*]

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

I'll continue with my list. We can talk about the closure of the search and rescue centre in Quebec City, the only bilingual centre of this type in Canada. What are we going to celebrate in 2017? Given all these closures and the lack of respect for bilingualism in Canada, I'm wondering what our history will look like in 100 years.

I know that you are making efforts to promote bilingualism. Mr. Jedwab said earlier that 65% of Canadians were in favour of bilingualism and that the others wondered if it was worth the trouble.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but you don't have to be bilingual to be an official of Parliament or a Supreme Court justice. Speaking about the 150th anniversary celebrations in 2017, that's all well and good, but certain things are going on right now. Is it this government's retreat from bilingualism that we are going to celebrate?

[*English*]

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: I'm happy to begin.

First, of course, we're an independent institute politically. I'm not here to speak to overall policies of the government.

I certainly think that 2017, in the linguistic area as well as in other areas, does offer much to celebrate. But I'm also not here to say that Canada has had a perfect history in any of the activities that have been undertaken over time.

I think 1969 marks the declaration, as I recall, of official bilingualism in Canada. I think that would be one of the things to celebrate.

I would also tell you a couple of things in terms of our activities at HDI. Not only do we not pretend to be the definitive source of all things historical in this country, but rather, we always make a point, for example, of saying that in our 66 Heritage Minutes, the best-known feature that we have produced to date, we discuss largely the triumphs of this country in many different areas. We also do discuss failings. Certainly we've had programs that have dealt with the treatment of Acadians over time, and we've discussed that.

I will also tell you, for example, that in the citizenship area, where we discuss the experiences of new Canadians coming here, longer-established Canadians, and otherwise, we routinely have people who have recently arrived or, again, whose forefathers arrived here, who had a very difficult time when they arrived. They go into schools and they talk about that experience. That program is now being expanded to include in fact francophones, and specifically francophones from outside of Quebec, as well as members of the various first nations.

We don't tell those people what to do. We receive requests from schools or other community groups saying they'd like someone to talk about this, and then we bring someone over. Inevitably, and I know for a fact, a number of our speakers will go out and say they've had a very hard time here, that it hasn't been what they'd hoped it would be. They came here and they had great difficulty. Sometimes they'll say they surmounted it; sometimes they'll say it hasn't been what they wanted. That's the human experience, and that's what we're here to reflect as well.

So there are the warts, the flaws, the blemishes, and there are also the triumphs. I will say that in our perhaps haphazard manner we do represent all of those.

•(1145)

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I would wholeheartedly agree with that.

[*Translation*]

If I may, I will add that, at the association, we have always tried to bring together the diverse opinions surrounding the difficult issues in our history. If we cannot do that, we risk transforming our history into propaganda. I hope that will not be the case, whatever the commemoration may be.

We strongly believe that we need to contribute to the debate and commemorate several events, be it the Constitution, the Charter or something else. This provides an opportunity to discuss issues from a variety of perspectives and to point out the problems and challenges. I mentioned that 78% of Canadians would like to commemorate our accomplishments. However, 63% of people say that we need to look at our challenges as a society. We need to do both. I hope it will be possible to do so together, in the context of various segments or formations of society. Having debates is normal. And I would hope there would be debate on it.

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. I will put a great deal of energy into trying to inform the media that it is an anniversary to be commemorated, but not necessarily celebrated. This anniversary might just help us see the progress that we have made since then. It is very important to do this.

Mr. Yvon Godin: We can consider the progress made—

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I would like to raise another point—

Mr. Yvon Godin: But we can also see how we have moved backwards.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: Yes, yes—

Mr. Yvon Godin: It goes both ways.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: Mr. Godin, if you'll let me, I would like to raise another point—

Mr. Yvon Godin: When I leave New Brunswick to go to Ottawa, the same route takes me home. It goes both ways.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: Yes.

I have spoken fairly frequently in the media about my disappointment with the rate of bilingualism in the national capital. A week ago, I shared a fairly detailed report in the *Ottawa Citizen*, and four weeks previously, I shared another fairly detailed report. I am disappointed with the lack of progress that has been made here. I don't think this is a good symbol for the rest of the Canada when, at the very heart of the country, no progress is being made in that respect.

But I'm not giving up. I am trying to devote my energy to the recommendations so that we can improve the state of bilingualism. That's why I came to the conclusion I mentioned at the beginning. We need to ensure that there is contact between anglophones and francophones, particularly when it comes to anglophones. I'm speaking as an anglophone. I consider myself 60% anglophone. I adopted French in Acadia. My friends in Acadia told me I was an honorary Acadian. I think there is a lot of work to be done in this respect, and we must not give up. We need to continue working.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

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

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here this morning. This is very interesting for us. It is very important to take advantage of this celebration to promote bilingualism.

Mr. Corbeil mentioned an interesting statistic about young francophones outside Quebec—primary or secondary school students—who are exposed to French. It seems that the number is dropping. I don't know if you have any statistics on preschool-aged children. I suppose the trend is the same. If you do have that information, could you let me know?

What initiatives could we take to expose young people to the second official language in the context of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Confederation? What I mean is, if you are an anglophone, you need to be exposed to French, and if you are a francophone, you need to be exposed to English. I am thinking about the areas of sports, education and history. Perhaps there might be a way to have history programs.

Mr. Corbeil, could you tell me if you have collected statistics for preschool-aged children? After your answer, I'll let the other witnesses respond.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Thank you for your question.

With respect to preschool-aged children, the percentage of bilingual children is relatively low. The level of bilingualism peaks with the 15 to 19-year-olds. But in 2011, we obtained the highest level among the 10 to 14-year-olds for the first time.

•(1150)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I have a question about that.

Do you have any statistics that show that preschool-aged children who are exposed to both languages manage to become bilingual by age 14? They start learning at age 8, 9 or 10, but those children who start at age 3, 4 or 5, do they have a real advantage with respect to learning both official languages?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Of course, learning a language when you are very young makes it easier to maintain that language. We are seeing one thing, in particular, with respect to exogamous unions; in other words, couples where the two spouses do not share the same mother tongue. The number of exogamous couples is growing. Children of exogamous couples are much likelier to maintain their bilingualism because the francophone parent chooses to send the child to a minority school or places them in an immersion program.

The biggest obstacle is this: even if you have learned a language, not having contact with groups who speak that language or opportunities to speak that language lessens the ability to maintain that language. As Mr. Jedwab said, we have seen, in most of our studies, that when contact is frequent, language maintenance is much higher. Children who attended immersion programs are much more likely to be bilingual than other Canadians who had a standard French-as-a-second-language education, even six or seven years after leaving the immersion program.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

How could we give our young people opportunities to acquire both languages in the context of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: First of all, there is a difficult issue which is that education is a matter of provincial jurisdiction. That is not necessarily a problem, but it is a reality.

However, certain technologies are available. For instance, I made a suggestion in a paper I wrote quite recently. With the help of Skype, we can twin schools, that is to say an English-language school with a French-language school, in order to allow young people to communicate directly amongst themselves. For instance, anglophones in an immersion class absolutely need opportunities to practise French if they are to improve.

However, that is not sufficient, and the figures show it. Jean-Pierre, who is here with us, is the pre-eminent expert in Canada on this subject.

[*English*]

I don't say that lightly, by the way. I mean that.

Take this region, the Gatineau and Ottawa area. In Gatineau you are going to see the francophones learn English at a later stage, according to the census, in their educational cycle. Very often it's not until they hit the workplace that they acquire the English language, but they acquire it en masse once they hit the workplace.

Often the anglophones who get the exposure to French in the schools, once they get out into the workplace, don't have the opportunity to use it in a sufficient way, and hence you're seeing a drop in the extent to which they retain the language, despite the important investment in their acquisition of the language at the school level. What they need is more opportunities for contact, both at the early stage of their education....

[*Translation*]

First, they need to add communication to their learning. Currently, they do not necessarily have the opportunity to do so, even if the new technologies would allow this at a reasonable cost. We know that we are in a difficult financial period. However, I think the new technologies can provide opportunities to offer this type of communication or encourage it, in creative ways.

There are also other programs. Mr. Godin mentioned Katimavik. I don't want to comment on Katimavik, but allow me to point out that whatever the program that is in place, the principle remains important. The principle being that opportunities to create this type of contact are becoming increasingly numerous. It is true that opportunities come up in the workplace. We could say that this happens naturally, but certain regions in Canada are located outside of those areas where direct contacts can occur naturally. I think that with technologies and programs that utilize new technologies to advantage, we can set up or support such contacts. There are other programs where the principle of promoting such contacts could be furthered. This is all the more important in the context of our 150th anniversary, if we want to do more than just talk about having a bilingual country. In fact, the majority of Canadians think that Canada is bilingual. In all of the surveys I conducted, francophones outside Quebec also think that Canada is a bilingual country.

I do not entirely share the opinion that we are a bilingual country. I look at reality. I think that we are bilingual from the legislative point of view. However, from the practical point of view, if you look at the rate of bilingualism, that is to say peoples' real capacity to speak both languages, the situation of Canadian anglophones is very close to that of Americans who do not speak Spanish. Bilingualism here is not on a par with bilingualism in Europe.

• (1155)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Hylland, please answer briefly.

[*English*]

Ms. Sue Hylland: I just wanted to comment because a piece of our presentation...and Mr. Dion, if I could just comment on your first comment, and I think it's valid, with respect to what sport is doing; there are a lot of stats and a lot of history. The message we were trying to give was that we are a catalyst. We have reach and impact, scale and scope, the Canada Games, like no other organization, and we happen every two years. There is a powerful message I was trying to send about being a catalyst.

To your comment, one of the pieces we did mention is that we already have an education kit that celebrates Canada. That's what it does.

Three or four weeks ago, I was at a French high school in Ottawa, Louis Riel High School, where they had 300 or 400 kids learning about Canada, integrating culture. The Canada Games itself has some of the best practices for the integration of our linguistic duality.

In Sherbrooke, Quebec, which is the next host of the Canada Games next August, there are English Wednesdays going on in that whole society. In Prince George, B.C., which is the site of the 2015 Canada Winter Games, they are about to implement French Wednesdays.

I think we have some of the greatest practices through sport, and our reach and impact is great.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: It's okay. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dion, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: There's no doubt that you're right when you say you're a catalyst. The question for this committee is whether you'll be a catalyst in both official languages, from A to Z, perfectly. Do you need some help from the government to be a perfect bilingual catalyst? This is the question of this committee. There was very little in your brief.

Tell us that we will be safe in that—not only about the Canada Games but about sports in general, because big mistakes have been made, even recently at the Olympics. We don't want that any more. This committee would fail in its duty if we did not recommend to the government that everything possible is being done to ensure that both official languages will be respected. That will be the question for you.

[*Translation*]

I would like to put my questions one after the other, because we have little time, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Corbeil and Mr. Nault, from Statistics Canada, thank you very much for this presentation. It was excellent. The fact that French is losing ground is to be expected, given the hundreds of thousands of new Canadians who, for the most part, do not speak French. However, the fact that bilingualism among Canadians outside Quebec is on the decline is very worrying. It is very worrisome that the rate of bilingualism is declining among the young. And so I would like to know whether you can help us to understand this phenomenon, using some very specific statistics.

For instance, we know that in the case of exogamous couples, when the non-francophone parent speaks French, the rate of transmission of the French language to the children is much higher than when the non-francophone parent does not speak French. Do you have any specific statistics on that for us? That would help us a great deal, as a committee, to pinpoint the problem. It is at the heart of the problem, in my opinion, insofar as the future of bilingualism in Canada is concerned. Anglophones and francophones intermarry, and they have to be able to transmit their dual linguistic heritage to their children. We need your help in that regard.

Also, you told us that the regular French as a second language program is on the decline. From 1992 to today, I believe, we went from 1.8 million to 1.38 million, i.e. a decrease of 23%. Can you tell us in which provinces this happened, for the most part? This would help us to speak to these governments. I understand that this falls under their jurisdiction, but our role is to ensure that French is taught everywhere in Canada in the regular curriculum, and not only in immersion schools. As for immersion schools, if I am not mistaken, you have all of the necessary figures to show us how things have increased. Those are all of my questions for you.

Thank you, Mr. Wilson-Smith and Mr. Jedwab. I found your presentations very impressive.

Very quickly, I have one question. You seem to be well equipped within your organizations. You are not asking for anything at all. Nevertheless, in order to ensure that the message regarding history and research on Canada will be well conceived in both languages, what recommendations would you make to the government?

• (1200)

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: You have raised a few points that are important to us. The challenges in Toronto—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Just a minute, I would like to do this in order. Perhaps Ms. Hylland could reply first, because I put my question to her first. Oh no, first I would like to hear your reply regarding statistics; I don't want to miss that one.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Thank you, Mr. Dion. I will answer quickly.

Over the past two years, Statistics Canada has published 11 statistical portraits extracted from the Survey on the Vitality of Official-Language Minorities conducted in 2006, and data from the censuses. Each province publishes one report for official language communities, and in exogamous couples, there is a very clear link

between the fact that both spouses speak French, or are bilingual, and the growth of the use of French in the home. You are quite right, that is a reality. However there are challenges regarding school attendance. We know that outside Quebec, generally speaking, one young francophone out of two goes to a minority school and 15% are in immersion programs. However, close to half of the parents whose children do not attend a minority language program mentioned that if they had had that opportunity, they would have chosen to send their children to such a school. The lack of availability and accessibility is the problem, and that is due to the fact that the distances involved are too great. So there are some issues in that respect.

Soon, Statistics Canada, in the context of its new electronic publication policy, will be publishing a study on the factors that have influenced the development of bilingualism over the past 20 to 30 years. We will use different files, some of them from the provinces, specifically to determine which factors have been at play.

You are quite correct regarding the teaching of French. West of Ontario, there is no obligation to learn French as a second language. In British Columbia, for instance, French is one of six languages on the menu, so to speak. A large proportion of immigrants settle in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. The fact that that obligation is not felt west of Ontario means that, consequently of course, there is a drop in the number of young people who register in French as a second language programs. There are reasons for that. We would have to be able to study that more in detail. The census data would allow us to do that, but of course our resources are limited. That said —

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Wilson-Smith.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I just want to make sure that the committee will contact Mr. Corbeil to have him provide whatever studies are available on the topic he has just been discussing.

The Chair: Very well.

Mr. Wilson-Smith, you may reply.

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: You mentioned several important points. From time to time, in Toronto, I get the feeling that you can hear every language on earth except French. Right now I'm learning a bit of Russian. Well, it's easier to find people to practise that language with than to find someone to speak French with in Toronto.

So, when the time comes to hire historians, finding some who can speak both French and English is a real challenge for us. I don't know if the government could

[*English*]

have a program to provide language support or assistance so that we would be able to hire...not at the starting point of unilingual, but people who have done some training, to augment that, to bring them up to speed. That would be very helpful for us. We've looked into other means, and of course there's a not-for-profit that can be—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Your main recommendation would be?

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: If there are programs to help, for example, not-for-profits that are assisting in fields of national interest, such as these efforts—a training program that would help us, when we look for professional historians, to give them training in a language if they're not up to speed in it.

• (1205)

The Chair: Mr. Jedwab.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I'm going to start from the recommendation and go backwards, if that's possible, as opposed to explaining why, because I know Mr. Dion wants to get the recommendation.

Again, I want to reiterate that we didn't come here to ask for resources. When you mentioned resources, I didn't think that was the mandate here, so I don't want to sort of tie the recommendation idea to a request for resources. But if there's one thing I could focus on, it would be—whether it's us or other organizations with which we work—to try to strengthen the network of people and the francophonie who work to promote a knowledge of history.

Now let me go backwards. Julie mentioned earlier that we alternate our national history conference between an anglophone conference and a francophone conference, which is not the way I had hoped it would happen. My initial hope was that we could have anglophone and francophone teachers together, historians together, and we could translate the whole thing and it would work. But three years ago—and I hope I do this in a way that doesn't offend anyone I've worked with in the past—when we were doing our conference with the history teachers' association, because that's who we work with in provinces, in Ontario it was a big struggle to get them to have any French at the conference.

Thankfully, that's changed, and now they're working with a group of francophone historians, but it was a struggle. They didn't think there was value in incorporating that particular piece because their teachers were largely anglophones and they didn't feel the interest was there.

I am very determined personally and professionally to make sure that piece is there, but now that is happening in the conference we're doing shortly in Niagara Falls.

[Translation]

It would be really important to strengthen the network of francophones who teach history at the high school level throughout the country, not only for young francophones in those schools who need to find out about their history, but also for those who outside of those schools also need to learn the history of the country and the important place linguistic duality occupies at the heart of it.

A lot of immigrants who arrive in Canada—and I don't mean that this is a matter of immigrants or non-immigrants, you have to be careful—also need to know, even if they don't learn French in British Columbia or elsewhere, that the support provided to our minority francophone community is an essential element of our history and is guaranteed in our country.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Trottier, you have the floor.

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

I thank the witnesses for being here with us today.

I learned something today, which is that we are going to be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Canada Games. That is a very important anniversary. I would like to ask you some questions, because in my opinion, sport and athletics are a good way of communicating with people and getting them together.

[English]

Just to clarify, in 2017, you mentioned Manitoba. The games will take place in Winnipeg?

Ms. Sue Hylland: We're talking with the Government of Manitoba now to finalize where it will be.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: And it will be a summer games?

Ms. Sue Hylland: It will be a summer games.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: That's terrific.

We've had some experience with summer games, and I am wondering if in previous summer games we've identified gaps in the ability of the participants to interact with officials, referees, or umpires in either official language. I know that the Canada Games rely heavily on volunteers. When you're dealing with volunteers, you're dealing with local people as much as possible, so that can create some challenges in allowing athletes from across the country to compete in the language of their choice. I know a lot of communication with officials can be done through gestures and so on, but to really make that experience a full one for all the athletes, what kinds of challenges have you had in the past and what do you anticipate doing going forward?

Ms. Sue Hylland: The games grow from a single person about five years out to 6,000 people in a short four and a half years.

We have standards with respect to providing the language of choice to the athletes. In certain areas it's even more important when it comes to security, medical, things like that. We actually have standards that communities that bid to host have to adhere to.

Are there, at moments, some issues that do arise? Yes. Certainly, in my time here I can't think of an immediate one that's come to my attention. To the contrary, we have received a positive response from the Commissioner of Official Languages for most games in and around what we do and how we've implemented official languages at the games.

We're very cognizant of it, as we said in our comments. We believe we have standards, and I believe people embrace it with the games. Communities are embracing the notion of having to deliver the games to live the linguistic duality of our country.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Can you pick a sport, just to illustrate how that would work? I'm thinking again of officials and so on. Baseball is a sport in the Canada summer games. If an umpire is calling balls and strikes, for example, he would shout those out. Would he, on one hand, say, *Prise!*, or would he say "Strike!"? How would that work?

• (1210)

Ms. Sue Hylland: In that case, I don't know if it drills down that deep, and it probably doesn't at the moment. It could be something we could discuss with our NSOs, but at the moment we don't necessarily drill down that deep.

I think what happens, though, when our issues are happening on the field of play, the capacity in and around that to deal with those issues is there because it has to be there, based on our standards.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: You mentioned also the access to medical facilities, and I imagine you're relying, again, on some volunteers in some cases.

Ms. Sue Hylland: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What kinds of measures do the Canada Games take to make sure that volunteers...? Is there a qualification at the individual level, or at a higher level in terms of the team level?

Ms. Sue Hylland: It's at both. Certainly, in respect of the organizing committee, the leadership, there are some language requirements there. But then as you build the volunteers...we do have standards that say you have to have a minimum of this amount of bilingualism within your volunteer group to be able to meet the standard for the games.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What do you expect to do differently for 2017 compared to previously? This being a 50th anniversary, is there going to be more of a cultural element to the summer games? Or is it going to be really focused on sport?

Ms. Sue Hylland: To me, the games may be a sporting event, but they're so much more to our country. They are a major cultural celebration of our country.

With the convergence of the 150th and the 50th happening in the centre of our country, it is a huge opportunity for us. With the reach and impact we do have into our provinces and territories, with millions of kids vying to be on a Canada Games provincial team, we think we have a great opportunity to reach out and speak to the linguistic duality of our country in a better way than we've done before.

We're already doing it and meeting certain standards in a positive way. We speak about the games as a multi-sport event, but I look at it, as the president and CEO, as being more about our country and the celebration of our culture. The unity through sport is what we do. That's where we're at.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll take a brief pause here of five minutes to allow members to take a health break.

- _____ (Pause) _____
-
- (1220)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: The 60th hearing of the Standing Committee on Official Languages will now resume.

Ms. Bateman, you have the floor.

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

I am very conscious of the fact that we are welcoming witnesses who are very well-respected in their profession. They have the potential needed to help us establish our master plan for the

Confederation celebrations. That was for Mr. Dion; in fact, my comment was addressed to both of you. You missed the joke.

I have a few questions to ask. Firstly,

[*English*]

I have to say, Mr. Wilson-Smith, that my family at the lake have enjoyed those Historica moments for so many years.

[*Translation*]

There was some discussion about the largest youth forum in Canada, and that is of great interest to me. For everyone, this represents the future.

Do you have any concrete ideas about how to integrate your youth forum into the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation?

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: Thank you, Ms. Bateman.

Mr. Godin, you mentioned the former Katimavik program. One could say that with the current program, we share the spirit and some of the principles of the Katimavik program.

[*English*]

As I mentioned, Encounters with Canada is every week of the school year. For 30 weeks we bring in between 100 and 130 students from coast to coast to coast. This is a very validly bilingual program, and we draw from every community you can imagine. I was there recently and met someone who had been organizing for us, for example, in Îles-de-la-Madeleine for years, and others from small towns across the prairies, and on from there.

The idea is not only to present a bilingual program, but also to engage people in different cultures, and of course also again to build up these relationships. I'm fairly certain it's had a deep impact. If memory serves, for example, I believe Mr. Kenney is one of those who took part in one of the early iterations of the program. It's 30 years old now. I also believe we do have other MPs, who I can't recall at the moment, who have been engaged in it as well.

This is the aspect of our programs that focuses on civic engagement. When you ask how we might engage otherwise, one occasion we had not mentioned is that 2014 will mark an anniversary of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference, as many or all of you will know. Prince Edward Island has a very ambitious and seemingly well-structured program in regard to that. We have had preliminary discussions with them about whether we would be able to move some of our sessions of our Encounters program to take place in P.E. I. These programs presently reside at the Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre, which we own and operate here in Ottawa, a former school. If we could break that away from Ottawa for one of the first times in our history and locate it somewhere else, there would be an opportunity to learn about that.

If that were to be successful, we would similarly wonder whether there were other opportunities to move this program out of the national capital on occasion, while still keeping the same principles inherent within it.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you.

Mr. Jedwab, you talked about ideas to enrich the bilingualism experience among anglophones and even among francophones. What are those ideas? I come from Winnipeg. Both of my children are bilingual. Our family values being able to speak both languages.

You mentioned the difficulties that occur after the BA level, concerning positions. Do you have any concrete ideas that could improve exposure to both languages?

Mr. Jack Jedwab: As I mentioned earlier, the best idea, in my opinion, would be to create opportunities to allow young people in schools to interact with other youngsters in the other official language. Technology makes that possible. Using a big screen, young people could speak both languages. In conversing with others, they could use what they have learned in their second language.

We have to take into account the fact that education is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, but it is always possible to twin schools, for instance a school in St. Boniface can be twinned with an anglophone school in Quebec. There would be a partnership between the two schools. That is one example, and I am going to have to stop here.

The Chair: Fine, thank you.

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor.

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you very much. Time is indeed flying by. I am going to try and hurry.

My first question is for Mr. Corbeil.

The statistics you presented are interesting. The ones on the language spoken at home and the mother tongue were already known, but as you know, some doubts were raised concerning the reliability of that data, or our capacity to interpret them or use them properly.

Those issues are going to be raised with respect to the next census as well, since the changes made are what caused them. In order to ensure that our official language minority communities are well represented in the celebrations and are given the necessary resources, we have to have a good picture of the vitality of our communities and have reliable data on them.

How can you normalize this situation or improve things so that we have reliable data to continue our study?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Thank you for your question. It's not an easy one.

Previous Statistics Canada experience has shown that changing a questionnaire or moving some of its questions around will certainly influence the results obtained. That's not news. Of course, the fact that the 2011 census questions were asked in a different context led to a loss of comparability. That is not insurmountable, but it has been shown that we must be careful in interpreting the comparisons between the data from 2011 and that from previous censuses.

As you know, next May, Statistics Canada will release the first data from the National Household Survey, which is voluntary. We

don't know yet what the quality of that survey's data will be. That has been mentioned already. The information is available on the Statistics Canada website. In terms of geographic location and subpopulations, we are still not sure what the quality of that data will be. It is important to point out that the 2006 long form census contained questions not only about linguistic issues, but also about profession, industry, education, immigrant status, and so on.

• (1230)

Ms. Éline Michaud: So we now have a less clear picture we can use to understand what the situation really is in our official language minority communities and to potentially better identify their needs for those celebrations. That is my understanding.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I would simply say that we still have to wait for the data released in May or June to be able to assess whether the data we have is sufficient to paint a complete picture.

Ms. Éline Michaud: This will surely not be your last appearance before our committee, so we will likely have the opportunity to ask you questions again.

Quickly, I have another question for Mr. Wilson-Smith and Mr. Jedwab.

Both of you said it was important for the two linguistic groups to have a better understanding of history. We know that historical knowledge varies from one person to another. You also mentioned that it's important for the information made public to be truthful—otherwise we will end up surrounded by propaganda.

I asked the Canadian Heritage representatives a question when they came to testify. I wanted to know how we can really ensure that our most controversial historical figures, such as Louis Riel—or Louis Joseph Papineau, in Quebec—are well-represented, so that people can properly understand their role in history.

As you are a bit more specialized in that area, I would like to hear your comments.

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: Sometimes, slightly different approaches are needed.

[*English*]

As I mentioned earlier, for example, we tried to operate within specific language groups, in studying the black Canadian community, focusing on the Haitian community within Quebec and then elsewhere. But then you bring up the opposite of that. It really comes down to very methodical research in our presentation. For example, we have done polling that shows that the War of 1812, perhaps not surprisingly, resonates less among francophones than it does among English Canadians. Having said that, the figure is about seven out of 10 who say they have a knowledge of it and believe it should be taught within Canadian schools to a degree.

Our challenge in researching that was to ask, when we discuss the War of 1812, how do we make clear the implication of the francophone population in it, primarily in Quebec in this case? There are a number of issues. I'm not here to play history teacher, but when you look at 1812, you had a Swiss leader in the British army who was posted to Montreal, who was considered to be part of the English-speaking community of Montreal, and yet made his peace, because of his fluency in French, with the French community in Montreal. You had a degree, frankly, of language conflict in Montreal, but also language resolution, which, as a native Montrealer, I would suggest exemplifies, for better and for worse, the history of the city, with the communities working together.

So we've looked at the focus of that. We've looked at the degree to which the French Quebec community took part.

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud: I asked you to keep your answer brief, as I would like to give Mr. Jedwab an opportunity to speak.

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: That is my example.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jack Jedwab: I think we should make sure to recognize the event or those figures, and let various stakeholders within the system—for instance, people working in our museums and schools, our professors, our historians and researchers—talk honestly and truthfully about those figures, and not only spread propaganda. According to our surveys, generally speaking, Canadians like us to recognize the good and the bad parts of our history, and not only emphasize what seems good by thinking—mistakenly, in my opinion—that talking about something negative undermines people's attachment to Canada. I think our population appreciates debates. By the way, John A. Macdonald, George-Étienne Cartier, George Brown and other important figures from the Confederation were not necessarily very likeable people. There are some important debates, which must be part of our commemoration.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

[English]

Mr. Chisu.

[Translation]

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

I want to thank today's witnesses for their presentations. I am bilingual, as I speak Romanian and Hungarian. In addition, I love English and French. But above all, I love Canada.

• (1235)

[English]

I have the following questions.

For Statistics Canada, what is your recommendation, based on your area of expertise, for encouraging bilingualism in 2017, on the 150th celebration of Confederation?

For the Historica-Dominion Institute, how do you encourage bilingualism in schools, using our own treasure of having English and French in the same country? You mentioned that you were

encouraging scholars to get together, but I think the youth are the base for the promotion of bilingualism in this country.

For the Canada Games Council, sport is fantastic for meeting between peoples. Is there any promotion that you are doing right now? Five years from now, we will have the 150th anniversary. In 2015 we will have the Pan American Games, mostly in the province of Ontario, so that is an opportunity to start to promote the Canada Games.

My last question will be for the Association for Canadian Studies. Immigration is very important for Canada. I understand that you are doing a fantastic job in Canada. However, outside of Canada you are not doing a very good job. For example, in Romania there are seven chairs of Canadian studies, but no Canadian participation. Because Europeans are used to languages, it is important that the immigrant communities be familiar with the nature of bilingualism. Our country is unique in the world in that it is a bilingual country. In Switzerland, they have four languages, but that is another story.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Corbeil.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Stats Canada's mandate is not to make recommendations, but I'll mention a few elements. What we've shown in most of our surveys and studies is that, in general—and we alluded to this earlier—when we have people who have contact, the understanding of the other group's perspective or standpoint increases. Even in Montreal, contact between anglophones and francophones causes each group to identify more closely with the other.

We tend to look at bilingualism or learning the other official language in a somewhat utilitarian way. We think it has to serve something. Often we refer to economic reasons for learning the language. But in learning the language there is also a transmission of culture, an understanding of the other's differences and perspectives. I think that learning the culture along with the language is a nice way to bridge the gaps between these linguistic groups.

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: First of all, thank you for your question and your comments, which I appreciate. I am prefacing that because I think my answer won't be entirely satisfactory to you.

As Mr. Jedwab mentioned earlier, one of the challenges is that education is a provincial jurisdiction, so that means 10 different areas as well as the territories to deal with. Only four of 10 provinces currently teach history as a mandatory subject, and trying to improve that is a great preoccupation of ours.

I believe within this context, for reasons I've mentioned, the bicultural, bilingual nature of the duality of this country is such that it's an essential part of our history, so the greater teaching of history would produce that result.

Four years ago we also produced a report card specifically on the teaching of history, and which provinces were doing well with regard to their focus and otherwise. We're looking at doing that again. It may be that we could include a component on bilingualism. I wouldn't be prepared at this point to say we would do that specifically.

I would just mention to you that all our staff at the meeting level, at the coordination level, are bilingual. We go to pretty much every teachers' conference I can think of in this country and we make our materials available bilingually. That includes, for example, always bringing a good quantity of French language material to English conferences, and the reverse, in addition to the language of that conference.

We've had a heavy preoccupation with Quebec, and despite controversy in some quarters over Quebec's approach to the teaching of history, it should be mentioned that they had either the highest or one of the highest scores in terms of the focus they put on it traditionally, so that may be something we'll be looking at.

Again, I apologize. I can't tell you that we have a specific focus on bilingualism in what we're doing right now. It's more of a means than an end.

• (1240)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dionne Labelle, go ahead.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Hello and welcome. Thank you for being here.

My questions are mostly for Mr. Corbeil.

I was very persistent in asking the committee to invite you. I impatiently waited for this year's statistics to be published. Those statistics are the most useful element that helps our committee properly grasp the linguistic situation.

I have heard a great deal said in the debate on interpreting those statistics. So I would like to go over some of the elements with you. I don't know whether we will have enough time, but I would like to discuss three topics: the demographic factor, the choice of allophones and the assimilation of certain francophones.

Let's look at the statistics on the language spoken at home. In Canada, in 2006, the number of people who spoke French at home was 6,608,000, while that figure was 6,827,000 in 2011. In Quebec, that number was 6,027,000 in 2006 and 6,249,000 in 2011. The increase basically comes from Quebec. Is that correct?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Given Quebec's demographic weight within the federation, yes, you are entirely right.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Thank you.

At the same time, let's look at the use of French by francophone communities outside Quebec. In Manitoba, the number of people who use French has gone from 19,500 to 17,900. There has been an incredible drop in British Columbia, where the figure has gone from 15,325 to 7,135. Ontario has also registered a drop, with the number going from 289,000 to 151,000.

What will 2017 bring? At what point must we say that linguistic minorities are in jeopardy? If I look at the statistics—I also looked at previous years, including 2001—the situation is frankly rather worrisome.

If the trend continues, when do you think we will lose our first francophone linguistic minority in Canada?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: I would probably need more time to explain what a linguistic minority is. There is actually no consensus on that. For instance, in Ontario, the province with the most francophones outside Quebec—over half a million—the definition varies greatly from one region to another. It is different depending on whether we are in the north of the province, in the Ottawa region, in western Ontario or the southwest. The location makes a big difference. What clearly stands out is the contact issue. Being part of a very small minority within a municipality will clearly influence the transmission of languages. That leads to an increase in what we call exogamy—where a person's spouse is someone from another linguistic group.

However, there is also a little-spoken-of phenomenon, whereby many francophones use English in public. Ottawa is certainly a very good example of that. Francophones make up 17% of its population. Yet a very small percentage of francophones in Ottawa use French in their everyday lives, with the exception, of course, of people working for the federal public service. Naturally, all kinds of factors are involved. It is difficult to answer with certainty, but we clearly know that the vitality of French is weaker in some provinces than in others.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: I wish you could be here for at least four meetings. That way, we could really have a constructive discussion and find out exactly where things stand. In fact, I don't think we are able to break down much of the data that comes from Statistics Canada in order to get a fuller picture.

My second point has to do with allophones. According to your documents, 2% of the 200,000 allophones who come from all over the world settled in francophone communities outside Quebec. And those communities make up 14% of Canada's population. The birth rate in francophone communities is down 50% over a decade ago.

When only 2% of immigrants are choosing to settle in French-speaking communities, how are these communities expected to survive? It's mathematically impossible.

• (1245)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: There is no doubt that the number of French-speaking immigrants is lower, even lower than that of francophones outside Quebec. The fact that the majority of immigrants who settle outside Quebec mainly opt for English-speaking communities is an important consideration. We have observed that frequently.

However, you might be interested in hearing a few other figures. Let's look at some demographic projections. In the 1960s, for every francophone living in Europe, there was one francophone living in Africa. In 40 years, for every francophone in Europe, Africa will have six or seven. What that means is the increase in the world's French-speaking community will happen mainly in Africa. And we know that African-born immigrants make up an ever-growing portion of francophone communities outside Quebec. So that is definitely an important avenue to explore.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dionne Labelle.

[*English*]

Mr. Wilks.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair, and thanks to everyone for coming today.

I have two short questions, Mr. Chair, and if I don't use all my time, I'll deflect it to whoever or let it go by.

My first question is to Ms. Hylland and the Canada Games. It's interesting because sport is one of the things that brings our country together. One of the things that it's missing, not only in sport but in most of our national events, especially as we move out west—and I'm from British Columbia—is trying to exploit the French language more. As we get past the Manitoba border, it becomes less.... Once we get into Alberta, it's really less...and then there is British Columbia.

I wonder if there is a way, when the Canada Games woos its way out west from time to time, of trying to enforce the French language even more through linguistic duality. It seems to me as though, with all due respect, it's the lesser of the two languages the further you go west. It shouldn't be that way. It should be, in my opinion, 50-50. How do we get there?

Ms. Sue Hylland: Again, I have seen nothing but communities, whether east or west, wanting to embrace this. I mentioned earlier that in Sherbrooke, Quebec, where the next Canada Games will be held 10 months from now, they're hosting English Wednesdays, and in Prince George, B.C., they are in the process of doing the same but in the reverse, French Tuesdays. People are embracing it. We have certain standards.

David...Mr. Wilks, we could—

Mr. David Wilks: It's okay. My name's Dave.

Ms. Sue Hylland: We could review those standards, certainly, and see if there's a need to move linguistic duality further, and how the standards need to shift to be able to do that 100%, because we have control of the standards. We can do that.

Mr. David Wilks: Thank you.

To the Historica-Dominion, I'm quite passionate about the military. My son was in the last combat mission in Afghanistan with the Van Doos, which was interesting because he's from Edmonton, out of 1 CER. There was a little bit of a challenge, shall we say, between the two languages, but when under combat, language seems to be the secondary instrument to ensuring everyone understands what they're doing.

One of the things that I think we could work toward in 2017, Mr. Chair, is to expand upon how important it has been for our military beyond 1812, so from the First World War to the present, and the input that not only our English-speaking but our French-speaking forces have had in the wars. The Van Doos have been around since 1914. They were formed in 1869, but classified as the Royal 22nd in 1914.

It would seem appropriate to me, Mr. Chair, that we really work toward explaining how important both official languages have been to the military in all of the combat we have participated in. When we look at 1812, although it is a very significant event, I would suggest that the other conflicts that we've been in throughout the years have been just as important. We sometimes fail to recognize that.

I want your comments on how we can better explain the importance of Canada's official languages within the context of military conflict.

• (1250)

Mr. Anthony Wilson-Smith: Thank you, Mr. Wilks.

First of all, on a personal note, my admiration and respect for your son.... I was actually in Afghanistan in a different war about 20 years back for a very short time. I have a very small appreciation of the amount of time he spent there, but enough to give him my great admiration.

All we do in our veterans program, as with everything else, is done bilingually, and with this focus, both present and past. The average veteran of World War II is now 89 years of age, and they are leaving us at a rate of 500 a week. So the time to pay respect to them and to hear their stories, of course, is now, not to wait. We send, sometimes, native French speakers into English communities, or the reverse, but we certainly tell those stories. I mentioned that we have 2,500 taped archival memories in our archives of World War II and the Korean War, which includes veterans from both language groups.

In particular, at the beginning the year we started to introduce more recent serving or currently serving men and women, or those who just recently left the forces, talking about their Afghanistan experiences as well. Again, of course, that represents the two groups as well. There's a very real linkage where we are now crossing all generations.

I was with Minister Blaney when he visited an Ottawa school recently. We had a 31-year-old who had done two tours of duty in Afghanistan. He was fluently bilingual—I guess, as they say, *moitié-moitié* in his upbringing—and he was at a bilingual school bringing out those experiences.

I often say that if you take a veteran of World War II and bring him into a classroom such as the one where my 11-year-old son is now...in 2039 my son will be 38, and he will be able to say, "I heard of the contributions of our great people in a war fully a century ago."

Primarily, our focus is on telling those stories, but again, I want you to know that all we do in that is send veterans wherever they want. If it's a French school in B.C., whether an immersion school or otherwise, we will make sure they get somebody in French. If it's an English school in Sept-Îles or Baie-Comeau, they will get their presentation in that language as well.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Ms. Morin, you have the floor.

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Actually, I am going to give my time to Mr. Dionne Labelle.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: How generous! Thank you.

I hope the other witnesses will forgive me, but I am going to continue with my questions on statistics. There is a celebration coming in 2017, and I'm trying to figure out what we'll be celebrating, exactly. I share Mr. Dion's concern.

Mr. Gourde, I find your comments troubling. Don't get me started on that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: I understand Mr. Dion's concern about bilingualism, especially since part of his career, not to mention that of some of his friends, has been built on the idea that Canada is a bilingual country.

Looking at the statistics, I see that bilingualism among francophones has risen, reaching 43.4%. But as for the 17.5% of people who identified themselves as bilingual in Canada—a jump of 0.1%—we should keep in mind that the increase in bilingualism is primarily attributed to francophones, as well as anglophones in the Montreal area. But bilingualism in other parts of the country is either stagnating or declining. The rate among young people is said to have dropped between 1996 and 2011, going from 15.2% to 11.2%. Members of that age bracket usually identify themselves as bilingual because they have taken immersion or language classes at school. And yet, 10 years later, those same young people report being less bilingual.

How many of the 11.2% of young people who call themselves bilingual today will be left come 2017?

• (1255)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: That is an excellent question. I will keep my answer very brief. It is possible to draw some clear conclusions. The bilingualism rate for that age group peaked in 1996, when young people reported being able to speak both official languages. Now, 15 years later, the individuals in that same cohort are between 30 and 34 years old. When you track them over time, it is very obvious that their level of bilingualism is now quite low.

It is a fact that the situation has deteriorated, but there is an explanation. Compare it to playing the piano. If you've learned how to play but don't practise afterwards, obviously you will lose the skill over time. The same goes for a language. It has to do with speaking the language and having opportunities to use it. The phenomenon is purely mathematical.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: For a few minutes, I want to pick up on something that is closer to home, Quebec's ability to integrate immigrants, which has gone up. Could you please comment on that?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: Without a doubt, what we're observing in Quebec is basically the culmination of the province's language and immigration policies aligning. It is fact that beginning in the early 1980s, actually as soon as Quebec gained some control over immigration selection, the province largely chose to accept immigrants who were more likely to live in French than in English. They were often Spanish speakers, people of European descent, those who spoke Romance languages or individuals from countries where the language was somewhat similar to French.

Another clear phenomenon has emerged, in terms of the languages used in public and in the home: there is a very big difference

between these immigrants and the ones who come from more English-speaking countries. The distinction is pretty clear. At the end of the day, the many immigrants who speak English in Montreal are usually second-generation immigrants, those whose parents settled in Quebec after the Second World War and who joined English-speaking communities. It was after that when we saw language laws redirecting children whose parents' mother tongue was neither French nor English to the French-language system. That most certainly had an impact on integration into French-speaking society.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: You brought up immigration policies and language policies, and I am glad you did. For certain people around this table, Bill 101 was a slap in the face, a bitter pill to swallow. Would Statistics Canada go as far as to say that, because of Bill 101, Quebec's French-speaking community will carry on for generations to come?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: In fact, what I said is, as soon as immigrants and their children were required to enter the French-language system, those children were more likely to use French in the public arena. That is a clear phenomenon, with the figures to prove it. It's statistics, pure and simple.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Thank you very much.

What is the outlook for French in British Columbia, as compared with the other languages spoken there? You said there were six main languages in the province. Will Mandarin soon take the place of French? I don't have any figures on that.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Corbeil: In the case of British Columbia, there are obviously differences, depending on the factor used. To give you an idea, I would say that, in 2011, the province had nearly 71,000 native French speakers. Conversely, 300,000 people reported being able to speak French. The challenge there has more to do with figuring out whether an arena for communication exists, because there are people who can speak French. Is there an opportunity for these people to speak French in public? That is the challenge.

Earlier, the discussion focused on Toronto. For the record, Toronto is home to 100,000 native French speakers, as well as 450,000 people who report being able to speak French. So as far as an arena for communication goes, what is being done for all those people with the ability to speak French in common?

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dionne Labelle.

Thank you to our witnesses.

[English]

Thank you to our witnesses. It's been very helpful.

[Translation]

Meeting adjourned.

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