



**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CANADA**

**5,000 BILINGUAL POSITIONS TO BE FILLED  
EVERY YEAR:  
THE ROLE OF POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS  
IN PROMOTING CANADA'S LINGUISTIC DUALITY**

**Report of the Standing Committee on  
Official Languages**

**Steven Blaney, MP  
Chair**

**JUNE 2009**

**40th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

has the honour to present its

## **FIRST REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), and the motion adopted by the Committee on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, the Committee has studied the federal government's support for postsecondary institutions and their efforts in promoting bilingualism in Canada and has agreed to report the following:





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# POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND THE PROMOTION OF BILINGUALISM IN CANADA

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The only way the federal government can meet its obligations and ensure there is not a backslide with the departure of a generation and the hiring of a new one is to ensure that universities step up to the plate.

Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages,  
appearing before the House of Commons Standing  
Committee on Official Languages, February 26, 2009

## INTRODUCTION

The Committee's interest in postsecondary institutions derives chiefly from the Government of Canada's efforts to renew the public service. The public service currently has approximately 180,000 employees who are part of the core public administration.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are 300,000 people who work for "a Crown corporation established by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament, and any other body that is specified by an Act of Parliament to be an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada or to be subject to the direction of the Governor in Council or a minister of the Crown"<sup>2</sup> and are therefore subject to the *Official Languages Act*. By comparison, General Motors employed 10,800 people in Canada in 2008.

As the Clerk of the Privy Council stressed in his *Fifteenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada*, the public service has aged a great deal over the last 25 years: "Today, 66% of the public service is over 40 years of age compared to 42% in 1983. Moreover, more than one-quarter of the public service population will be eligible to retire without penalty by 2012, and almost half of our current executives will be eligible to retire in the same time frame."<sup>3</sup> Since 2000, the federal public service has had to recruit between 12,000 and 15,000 employees per year to replace and plan for the retirement of public servants. In other words, the core public administration has to recruit more employees every year than General Motors' entire workforce in Canada, and close to half a million people are currently employed by an institution subject to some part of the *Official Languages Act*.<sup>4</sup>

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1 The core public administration refers to federal departments and certain agencies that report directly to them or to Parliament. Strictly speaking, the core public administration refers to all departments and institutions specifically listed in Schedules I and IV of the *Financial Administration Act*. These distinctions are sometimes complicated since the Commissioner of Official Languages is part of the core public administration but the Office of the Auditor General is not.

2 Definition of "federal institutions" in Section 3 (1) of the *Official Languages Act*.

3 Kevin G. Lynch, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to Cabinet, *Fifteenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada*, for the year ending March 31, 2008, <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=ar-ra/15-2008/rpt-eng.htm>, p. 5.

4 See Canada Public Service Agency, *Annual Report on Official Languages 2006-2007*, Table 16, p. 61.

In the core public administration alone, of the 179,490 positions on record with the Canada Public Service Agency for 2006-2007, 72,138 were designated bilingual. That means that about 40% of the employees recruited to meet the needs of the public service will hold bilingual positions. The public service accordingly needs between 4,800 and 6,000 new bilingual employees per year.<sup>5</sup>

The vast majority of these positions will require postsecondary education and the Committee members are concerned about the ability of postsecondary institutions to train enough bilingual graduates to fill these positions. Their concern is based on two worrisome developments: postsecondary institutions have dropped language competency requirements for admission or obtaining a degree; and the drop in the number of young people aged 15 to 19 who are bilingual.

If there are fewer bilingual high school graduates now than in the past, and if postsecondary institutions no longer have language competency requirements, how will it be possible to train the thousands of new bilingual employees that the federal public service needs to recruit every year?

This basic issue must be addressed in light of two other federal obligations set out in Parts VI and VII of the *Official Languages Act*: the responsibility to ensure that Anglophones and Francophones have equal opportunities for employment and advancement and that the presence of both communities are reflected in the workforce of federal institutions; and the federal government's commitment to enhancing the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities, supporting and assisting their development, and fostering the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society.<sup>6</sup>

First of all, the commitment to offering equal opportunities for employment and advancement must be evident at all levels of the public service. Clearly, the higher you go in the public service, the more the positions are bilingual. Generally, the level of bilingualism among Francophones is much higher than that among Anglophones. So Francophones have a distinct advantage when it comes to securing bilingual positions in the federal public service. According to the Public Service Commission, close to two-thirds of the 5,482 candidates appointed to bilingual imperative positions in 2007-2008 were Francophones.<sup>7</sup> The proportion of bilingual Canadian Anglophones must be increased in order to ensure their greater representation at the highest echelons of the public service. Anglophone postsecondary institutions across the country apparently have little awareness of the needs of the federal public service, although they should feel that the onus is on them to address the shortage of bilingual graduates.

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5 In this report, the words "bilingual" and "bilingualism" mean having knowledge of English and French.

6 Summary of Parts VI and VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

7 Public Service Commission, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, Figure 8, p. 47.

As part of this renewal of the public service, the entire exercise must also be conducted in a way that enhances the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities. The Canadians with the best language competencies are Francophones outside Quebec and Anglophones in Quebec. The federal public service is a prime employer for them. Moreover, minority language communities can provide the first, and sometimes the only, exposure to the other official language that can benefit members of majority communities. This is especially true for Anglophones outside Quebec. Without strong Francophone communities across the country, the goal of holding a bilingual position in the federal public service might seem only a remote possibility for young Anglophones in Canada, essentially available only to those fortunate enough to have been raised in the corridor between Montreal and Ottawa. Francophone postsecondary institutions in Canada should respond by spreading the word about the federal government's requirement for qualified bilingual employees.

Postsecondary institutions play a multifaceted role in training the bilingual graduates that will be needed for public service renewal. Their role is complicated by the fact that the federal government has few tools to address this problem. The provinces have jurisdiction over education, and the federal government can only intervene in the context of shared-cost programs, although it does not control their administration. The federal government does indeed provide billions of dollars for university research and infrastructure, but that does not allow it much input on language training and the programs themselves.

The federal government's role must therefore essentially be to exert influence, along with its power to conclude partnership agreements with the provinces and directly with postsecondary institutions. Linguistic duality is at the heart of the Canadian identity and the federal government is both the guardian and defender of this identity. It must therefore ensure that linguistic duality is reflected in its own institutions, by ensuring that both linguistic communities are equitably represented at all echelons of the federal public service. This commitment to promoting the coexistence of the two linguistic communities ultimately depends on the vitality of official language minority communities, which are the pillars of Canada's linguistic duality.

## **1. THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

### ***Language of service and language of work***

The public service's need for bilingual employees derives essentially from Parts IV and V of the *Official Languages Act*.

Part IV of the Act pertains to communications with and services to the public and articulates the principles of section 20 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. According to this Part, the public has the right to communicate with and obtain services in either official language from all head or central offices of federal departments and agencies: a) where there is "significant demand", and b) where warranted by the "nature of

the office”; and where services are provided to the travelling public, where there is “significant demand”. The *Official Languages Regulations*, adopted in December 1991, defined the concepts of “nature of the office” and “significant demand”.

In accordance with Part IV, the requirement for bilingual employees in the public service is intended to guarantee that all Canadians will be able to communicate with and receive services in either official language from any head or central office of a federal institution. Any member of the public must also be able to communicate in either official language with any office of a federal institution located in a region that is designated bilingual. These regions are identified by Treasury Board and are the National Capital Region, the province of New Brunswick, the Montreal area and some other constituencies in Quebec,<sup>8</sup> Eastern Ontario (Glengarry, Prescott, Russell, Stormont) and the bilingual part of Northern Ontario (Algoma, Cochrane, Nipissing, Sudbury, Timiskaming).

Part V pertains to the language of work of employees of federal institutions in regions designated bilingual. In regions not designated bilingual, members of the official language minority must receive comparable treatment to that of the other linguistic group where the situation is reversed. There are no regulations regarding the application of Part V but its provisions are included in Treasury Board directives.

It is pursuant to Part V that the upper echelons of the public service, up to the assistant deputy minister level, are subject to bilingualism requirements.<sup>9</sup> In regions designated bilingual, employees must be able to communicate with their superiors in their preferred official language.

### ***Representation of linguistic communities in the public service***

Part VI is not discussed as often as Parts IV, V and VII. It sets out the government’s commitment to ensuring that “English-speaking Canadians and French-speaking Canadians have equal opportunities to obtain employment and advancement in federal institutions”. Under this Part of the Act, the representation of Anglophones and Francophones in all federal institutions, and in the core public administration in particular, must be evaluated, as well as the representation of Francophones in the public service as a whole and the representation of Anglophones in the federal public service in Quebec. The findings in this regard are as follows:

- Of the 484,000 employees of all federal institutions subject to the *Official Languages Act*, 26.9% (130,000) are Francophones, a bit more than their share of Canada’s population, which is 23%;<sup>10</sup>

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8 Bonaventure, Gaspé-Est, Brome, Compton, Huntingdon, Missisquoi, Richmond, Sherbrooke, Stanstead, Argenteuil and parts of the Pontiac that are not part of the National Capital Region.

9 Deputy Minister positions are Governor in Council appointments, so the Public Service Commission is not responsible for staffing these positions.

10 Canada Public Service Agency, *Annual Report on Official Languages 2006-2007*, Table 20, p. 67.

- In the core public administration, which has a total of 180,000 employees, 31.5% or 56,000 are Francophones, well above their share of Canada's population;<sup>11</sup>
- Anglophones are underrepresented in the federal public service in Quebec, holding just 7.6% of the 21,000 positions in the core public administration,<sup>12</sup> although they hold 12.2% of positions in all federal institutions.

In other words, Anglophones are underrepresented in the core public service, while federal institutions that are not part of the core public service tend to have more proportional representation of the linguistic groups.

One of the main reasons for this overrepresentation of Francophones in the core public service is precisely the requirement to staff positions designated bilingual. As to the proportion of bilingual positions held by members of the two linguistic groups, the figures are as follows:

- 63.8% of the 5,482 bilingual imperative appointments made in 2007-2008 went to Francophones;<sup>13</sup>
- Of these 5,482 appointments, 1,653 (30%) were positions in the "executive group," the highest echelon of the public service.

Given the lack of unilingual French positions outside Quebec, Francophones in the federal public service are almost exclusively in bilingual positions, resulting in the overrepresentation of Francophones in the highest ranks of the public service.

In keeping with the spirit of Part VI of the *Official Languages Act*, the primary challenge is therefore to attract as many bilingual Anglophone candidates as possible. To emphasize the difficulty and magnitude of this challenge, the Committee wishes to orient the balance of this report by way of a very general recommendation establishing its direction.

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada, as part of the renewal of the public service, develop a strategy to recruit more candidates who are already bilingual at the time of their hiring.**

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11 Ibid, Table 18, p. 65.

12 Ibid; this data excludes the National Capital Region.

13 Public Service Commission of Canada, *Public Service Commission Annual Report 2007-2008*, Figure 8, p. 47.

There are two ways of doing this: by encouraging public servants to learn the other official language and by hiring candidates who are already bilingual. The first option means enhancing the quality of language training offered to federal employees right from the start of their career, rather than when they reach positions at higher levels and the language requirements are regarded as an additional burden or *de facto* favouritism of Francophones. This option was considered in the report presented by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages in March 2008.<sup>14</sup>

The second option involves the education system, especially postsecondary institutions, recognizing that the Government of Canada has very little direct influence over educational institutions. The possibilities suggested by the second option will be the focus of the Committee's attention in the balance of this report.

## 2. PRIOR TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

"Unless we succeed at convincing Anglophones in the rest of Canada that French is necessary, they will not learn French. It is as simple as that. French is not a language that they absolutely need."

Ms. Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor,  
Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation,  
Laval University, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 10:25

### ***Drop in bilingualism among young Canadians***

According to the *Canadian Heritage Departmental Performance Report, 2007-2008*, one of the department's key initiatives was "doubling, by 2013, the proportion of Canadian youth between 15 and 19 years old who have a working knowledge of both official languages." The same objective was set out in the 2003-2008 Action Plan for Official Languages. According to Statistics Canada, the rate of bilingualism among young people aged 15 to 19 dropped from 24.5% in 1996, to 23.9% in 2001, and 22.3% in 2006. Doubling that figure by 2013 now seems unrealistic.<sup>15</sup>

This failure is all the more regrettable since a substantial investment in second language instruction has been made since the Action Plan for Official Languages was launched. The funding for French-language instruction for Anglophones (and English-language instruction for Francophones in Quebec) grew by over 100% from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007, reaching \$90 million per year.

Appearing before the Committee, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages acknowledged this failure:

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14 Standing Committee on Official Languages of the House of Commons. *Leading by Example: Bilingualism in the Public Service and the Renewal of the Action Plan for Official Languages*.

15 The 2003-2008 Action Plan for Official Languages undertook to increase this rate to 50% by 2013. For further details see: *The New Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality. The Action Plan for Official Languages*, Ottawa, 2003, p. 27.



“Setting these kinds of goals and just putting a date on them and assuming it can be done is, I think, setting expectations that may be unrealistic... We want to increase it, but I wouldn't peg it at a specific number.”<sup>16</sup>

For the federal public service to be able to meet its recruitment objectives, especially among young Anglophones, action is urgently needed to reverse this worrisome trend. A number of witnesses suggested possible explanations for this drop in bilingualism among young Canadians.

Some derive from the position of English in a global cultural environment, and there is very little the federal government can do to counter these trends.

“English has dual status in the world today. It has become the *lingua franca*. In the past, French had this status as the language of diplomacy. German was the language of the sciences. There was even a time when Latin and Spanish enjoyed this type of status. Today, English has become the international language of communication. Given that, there is no doubt that Anglophones throughout the world feel much less need to learn another language. The Anglophones of Canada are part of the world community of Anglophones.”<sup>17</sup>

For young Anglophones who still consider it important to learn a second language, it is not obvious to them that their first choice should be French:

“If there is no specific motivation to learn French, they will choose, if they are realistic, to learn Spanish. And if they are forward thinking, they will choose Japanese, Chinese or Arabic. We have seen this clearly at Laval University; there is an increase in learning other languages.”<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the Government of Canada must recognize that French is in competition with all the other languages young people may consider interesting or useful. In a sense, bilingualism has to be “sold” to them.

“I'm convinced that if we really do want Canada's Anglophones to keep French as a second language, Canadian bilingualism has to be valued. [...] Our young people are turning their backs on French. We have international programs because our young people want to learn other languages. They have understood that globalization means knowing other languages. What they do not readily understand, however, is that they need to learn French.”<sup>19</sup>

These challenging observations regarding what could be termed the “loss of prestige” associated with learning French were corroborated by a number of witnesses.

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16 Hon. James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, Evidence, March 24, 2009, 9:50.

17 Ms. Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation, Laval University, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:55.

18 Ms. Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation, Laval University, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:30.

19 Ms. Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation, Laval University, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:45.

“Major challenges for the success of second-language teaching and learning have been identified in consultations on linguistic duality and noted in a number of research projects. They include the lack of prestige of second-language programs in the schools, particularly in competition with certain other subjects... If students drop their second-language courses before the end of high school, few will be motivated to continue those studies at the postsecondary level.”<sup>20</sup>

Parents also lack the information they need to permit them to make wise choices about second language instruction for their children.

“Students and parents often lack sufficient information to make informed decisions about French second-language education. Many assume that French immersion in elementary school is enough to master the language, while others remain convinced that high school students cannot achieve the level of French proficiency required to work or to continue French second-language studies at the postsecondary level.”<sup>21</sup>

As part of public service renewal, the Government of Canada has the distinct advantage that it is by far the largest employer in Canada and can accordingly offer significant motivation to young people and provide more complete information about the most effective programs of study. If employment prospects are better and the path is relatively clear, young Anglophones will more readily choose to learn French rather than another language. The essential condition is that Canadians be well informed.

It appears that the federal government is not doing enough in this regard. Even at the University of Ottawa, the institution best placed to be aware of these needs, the message is not getting through strongly enough.

“That is the kind of message we might be given informally but, to my knowledge, there is no specific forum for relaying that kind of message.”<sup>22</sup>

Witnesses from the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia were apparently unaware of the extent of these needs. Nor did they appear to be aware of universities’ collective responsibilities. They would of course be interested if they could attract students by offering programs that promote bilingualism, but there is no coordinated efforts among universities. Communication between Anglophone and Francophone universities is also insufficient.<sup>23</sup>

One of the reasons for this lack of awareness may be the lack of coordination of the federal government’s efforts to convey this message. Since Treasury Board’s responsibilities for government-wide issues were transferred to Canadian Heritage, it

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20 Mr. John Erskine, President, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:35.

21 Mr. David Brennick, President, National Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:05.

22 Ms. Sylvie Lauzon, Associate Vice-President, Academic, University of Ottawa, Evidence, April 2, 2009, 10:20.

23 See also Ms. Sylvie Lauzon, Associate Vice-President, Academic, University of Ottawa, Evidence, April 2, 2009, 10:50.

would logically seem to be up to the Canadian Heritage Official Languages Secretariat to jointly develop this message with other appropriate departments or agencies. When a Committee member asked the Assistant Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage why the federal government does not promote itself more as a bilingual employer, the reply was:

“It would probably be more appropriate to address the question to my colleagues of the Treasury Board Secretariat or the Public Service Commission.”<sup>24</sup>

The Committee therefore recommends:

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada, in concert with all its departments, conduct an information and awareness campaign directed at educational institutions at all levels, and also at the general population, to raise awareness of its need for a bilingual workforce and the career opportunities opened to young people who make the effort to learn the other official language.**

#### ***Improve agreements with the provinces and territories***

In addition to increasing young people’s interest in learning French by highlighting the career opportunities available, the Government of Canada must also ensure that its investments in education yield results.

The primary tool available to the federal government to influence these trends is federal-provincial-territorial agreements. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages acknowledged this clearly:

“The education agreements are certainly one of the main means of supporting education in the minority official language and second-language learning at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. It is important for Canadians to have the opportunity to improve their proficiency in French and English throughout their education, from primary school through the postsecondary level.”<sup>25</sup>

An annual investment of \$90 million per year for second language instruction alone is substantial, but one must have realistic expectations of what this investment can yield. By comparison, the provinces and territories invest a total of \$100 billion in education per year. The federal government’s efforts to support second language instruction is therefore less than one thousandth of what the provinces and territories invest in education every year.<sup>26</sup>

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24 M. Tom Scrimger, Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Corporate Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage, Evidence, March 24, 2009, 10:20.

25 Hon. James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, Evidence, March 24, 2009, 9:05.

26 See Mr. Jean-Gilles Pelletier, Director, Administration and Communications, Official Languages Programs, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, Evidence, March 10, 2009, 10:50.

But this is no reason not to make sure that the investment produces results. The federal government does not know why its investments in second language instruction have not produced the desired results. One of the reasons is clearly that the provinces manage the programs; in addition, it is not stipulated clearly enough that the federal investments are conditional on results or at least on more detailed reporting about the success or failure of initiatives. The Commissioner of Official Languages highlighted this problem:

"I think that's because the federal government has not figured out how to target secondary education. [...] But the provinces are quite jealous of their responsibility for primary and secondary education. Despite the fact that there are federal-provincial agreements concerning financing of second language education, I've expressed my concern in the past that there is not the same kind of follow-through to ensure that there are results for the federal funding that goes into those agreements."<sup>27</sup>

The difficulty of knowing how effectively the provinces use the federal transfers for second language instruction was eloquently explained by the representative from the *Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne*:

"This summer, we tried to determine exactly how much money was going to postsecondary institutions for second-language learning, and also for teaching in French at the university level. It is very difficult, given the way that money is invested in the provinces under the federal/provincial/territorial education agreements. Essentially, the funds are incorporated into the provinces' budgets. Except in the case of one-time, specific projects, where there is a special agreement between the federal government and a university, or in cases where there is only one Francophone postsecondary institution in a province, it is very difficult to know how much money comes from the province and how much comes from the federal government, and how much of the total envelope of money goes to the postsecondary level."<sup>28</sup>

The Committee is anxiously awaiting the outcome of the ongoing negotiations on the renewal of the federal-provincial-territorial education agreements. The representative from the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, made an early announcement to the Committee of features that could address some of the weaknesses identified by the Commissioner.

"I am pleased to tell you that, if ratified, the new protocol will include a very specific outcomes framework that will define common outcome areas for each language objective, that is, minority-language education and second-language education, and offer examples of indicators for each area. This time [...] there will be a specific area for post-secondary education, and the outcome areas in question will relate specifically to access to postsecondary education, that is, indicators that can be used to monitor progress in that regard somewhat, and support for teaching personnel and research."<sup>29</sup>

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27 Mr. Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Evidence, February 26, 2009, 10:25.

28 Mr. François Charbonneau, Director General, *Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne*, Evidence, March 10, 2009, 9:05.

29 Mr. Jean-Gilles Pelletier, Director, Administration and Communications, Official Languages Programs, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, Evidence, March 10, 2009, 9:10.

The Committee would like to support these initiatives to improve the management of education agreements. It therefore recommends:

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada, as part of the renewal of the Official Languages in Education Protocol carried out with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, encourage the provinces and territories to provide more detailed information on the use of funding allocated to programs for second language instruction.**

The Committee will be especially interested in the proportion of funding attached to this protocol specifically earmarked for postsecondary education.

#### ***The hope of immersion programs***

Throughout this study, witnesses stressed to the Committee the importance of maintaining and enhancing French immersion programs at the primary and secondary levels. Despite the undeniable popularity of these programs, a very small proportion of Canadian students are enrolled in them.

“It is important to note that over 85% of Canadian students learning French learn French as a second language through the basic or core French program in Canada right now. Currently, of those FSL students, a mere 16.5% complete their French high school graduation requirements. Only about 300,000 students are enrolled in French immersion programs.”<sup>30</sup>

In the spirit of the previous two recommendations to recruit more bilingual Anglophones and increase young people’s interest in learning French, an effort must also be made to promote the best way of achieving these objectives: immersion programs.

Access to these programs is problematic at present.

“High school French immersion programming is essentially delivered primarily via advanced-level courses geared to university-bound students, despite the fact that general-level students will enter service sector jobs in greater numbers. While only 13% of Canadians hold university degrees, a full 30% hold postsecondary diplomas or certificates granted by community colleges.”<sup>31</sup>

The Committee wishes to adopt the recommendation made by Canadian Parents for French and accordingly recommends:

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30 Mr. John Erskine, President, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:35.

31 Mr. David Brennick, President, National Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:05.

#### Recommendation 4

**That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, expand the scope of and access to French immersion programs in primary and secondary schools without limiting the access of eligible Francophones to their schools.**

One of the main reasons cited by witnesses to explain the limited access to immersion programs is the shortage of qualified teachers and the quality of the instruction provided.

“There is a shortage of qualified language teachers to deliver quality second language programs, and this has been brought forward across the country. Many school districts have difficulty staffing the FSL positions for speciality areas, such as teaching sciences or math *en français*. So for immersion, it's very important. You have to speak French, but you also have to know mathematics.”<sup>32</sup>

In this regard, postsecondary institutions must offer specialized French-language programs for students interested in a career teaching French immersion.

“Only 32% of the FSL teacher respondents actually held a specialist certificate — in other words, they actually had specific training to teach French as a second language. Our reality is that if you're in B.C. and you happen to speak German, you're the French teacher.”<sup>33</sup>

It is relatively easy to train future second language teachers at Anglophone institutions. It is much more difficult to train students to teach math in French to Anglophone students. The problem is worse the further one strays from large urban centres.

“If you're thinking of Newfoundland and Labrador, one of their biggest dilemmas right now is that they have no specialist teachers to teach core French programs in grades 10, 11, and 12. They're actually working on distance learning so they can have two or three students from different towns online at the same time with one teacher in St. John's teaching core French.”<sup>34</sup>

If there is no one available to teach core French, one can imagine how difficult it would be to find teachers qualified to teach other subjects in French.

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32 Ms. Nicole Thibault, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:40.

33 Ms. Nicole Thibault, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:40.

34 Ms. Nicole Thibault, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 10:25.

The quality of instruction also suffers:

“The French taught is too often an approximate French, patterned on English, whether it be in the Anglophone schools that have immersion programs or in the Francophone schools of our region. This situation is a particular concern for the Acadian population living in Nova Scotia as a minority in an Anglophone majority province. Paradoxically, many Anglophone students who come from immersion programs face the same challenges. When these students arrive at the university, their language errors are set and difficult and, in some cases, indeed even impossible to correct.”<sup>35</sup>

So there is a desperate need for graduates who can teach in immersion programs. In addition to raising awareness of requirements in the public service, postsecondary institutions should also make a greater effort to promote the career opportunities available to education students studying in French. The University of Toronto, the largest university in Canada, trained only 173 future teachers of French as a second language in the last three years, or about 60 per year. And yet graduates of these programs are almost guaranteed to find employment immediately upon graduation:

“A study by the Ontario College of Teachers recently showed that 70% of graduates from a French teacher training program, whether it be for French as a second language or as a mother tongue, find a permanent job in the year after they complete their education, compared to only 25% of graduates from English-language programs.”<sup>36</sup>

Given this worrisome shortage of teachers for immersion programs, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 5**

**That the Department of Canadian Heritage, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, substantially enhance the federal-provincial-territorial agreements on second language instruction to provide specific funding for postsecondary institutions to train immersion teachers, both for teaching French as a second language and for teaching other subjects in French.**

Efforts must also be made to encourage students to continue their French studies, especially at high school, where they often drop French. Obviously, if there are few opportunities to continue instruction in French or if students are unaware of them, they will regard it as a useless exercise that will eventually end at an English-language postsecondary institution. French will have been a passing interest only.

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35 Ms. Janice Best, Director, Department of Languages and Literatures, Acadia University, Evidence, April 30, 2009, 9:15.

36 Mr. Normand Labrie, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Evidence, May 7, 2009, 09:15.

“A great deal of money has been invested in immersion. In general, it's working well. [...] However, where there is a big problem is that, once students have finished immersion at the primary and secondary level, there's absolutely nothing to encourage them to continue in French at the postsecondary level.”<sup>37</sup>

The federal government must continue to promote the benefits of continuing instruction in French and postsecondary institutions must join forces in delivering this message and promote the opportunities they offer students to study in French.

“Despite the fact that young people are more supportive of linguistic duality and bilingualism than older generations, and despite the fact that they recognize the academic and employment benefits of official-language bilingualism, secondary and postsecondary French second-language programs are characterized by low enrolment and retention.”<sup>38</sup>

To really master the language, the ideal is of course to continue French instruction in a French-speaking environment for as long as possible. Yet few students choose their postsecondary institution based on the language instruction it offers. They choose the best training available in the field they are interested in. The language of instruction is secondary.

Francophone postsecondary institutions in Canada will continue to attract students who are motivated to improve their language skills, despite the fact that Anglophone institutions receive the vast majority of students graduating from immersion programs.

“We have 350,000 students across the country enrolled in immersion. The question is what happens to these students when they leave public school? They are not all going to the University of Ottawa. They are not all going to Université du Québec en Outaouais, Université de Moncton, or Faculté Saint-Jean at the University of Alberta. They are going into Anglophone universities. Our question to Anglophone universities is what are they doing for this population?”<sup>39</sup>

This is a crucial issue that goes to the heart of the subject of this study. What responsibility do Anglophone postsecondary institutions have to promote bilingualism, an essential component of Canada's linguistic duality?

The Francophone institutions in Canada are doing their job. Consider for example the efforts made by the University of Alberta.

“The work of the Saint-Jean Campus on second language learning deserves special attention since the mission that the campus has established is to teach French and English as second languages. You should know that 67% of the 670 students on campus today are Anglophones from French immersion programs, and 5% come from outside

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37 Mr. Greg Allain, Past President, Canadian Association of University Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 10:30.

38 Mr. David Brennick, President, National Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:05.

39 Mr. David Brennick, President, National Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 10:10.



Canada. The percentage of Francophone students is declining and now stands at 27%, while the percentage of immersion and international students is rising. In view of these circumstances, you will understand why the efforts of the Saint-Jean Campus have gradually shifted toward the training of non-Francophone students, whom we call Francophile students. The French program, which is tailor-made for that population, is one of the biggest programs on the campus, after the education program.”<sup>40</sup>

Francophone assimilation has meant that some postsecondary institutions originally established to serve the Francophone population have become geared to students learning French as a second language.

In the following section we will look at potential solutions that Anglophone postsecondary institutions could consider in order to better fulfill their responsibility to promote bilingualism.

Before we consider these solutions, there is one final element of primary and secondary education, and it is one that the Committee has rarely had the opportunity to consider: second language instruction for allophones. This important matter was raised with the Committee by Canadian Parents for French.

“Currently, no federal or provincial policies explicitly ensure allophone students access to French second-language education. Such gaps in policy have led to the possible exclusion of allophone students from French second-language studies and language planning.”<sup>41</sup>

In consideration of this new issue, the Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Department of Canadian Heritage, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, ensure that allophone students are given opportunities for instruction in French as a second language.**

### **3. RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**

#### ***Admission criteria and university requirements***

In considering the best ways to promote bilingualism among students, the Committee’s first inclination was to suggest that language requirements be reinstated for admission to postsecondary institutions or to receive a degree. In the past, knowledge of a second language, usually French, was an admission requirement at a number of Anglophone universities. These criteria have become much less stringent and in some

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40 Mr. Donald Ipperciel, Assistant Dean to Research, Saint-Jean Campus, University of Alberta, Evidence, April 30, 2009, 9:25.

41 Mr. David Brennick, President, National Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:05.

cases have been dropped entirely except for specific programs for which knowledge of another language is an obvious requirement.<sup>42</sup> University representatives expressed strong reservations about any kind of strict requirements.

Given their reservations, it would be surprising if the universities would agree to any initiative by the federal government to tighten up language requirements for admission to programs. The Committee will therefore not make a recommendation in this regard, although the majority of members still believe such measures would be effective, in combination with other measures to encourage students to learn the other official language.

### ***Standard second language competency tests***

The Quebec ministry of education is considering including students' second language competency level on college report cards:

"We're currently concerned with establishing a college-level finishing standard for second-language learning. It will apply both to Anglophone colleges, for proficiency in French, and Francophone colleges for proficiency in English."<sup>43</sup>

The situation is simpler for Francophone students since the benefits of learning English are more obvious to them. Moreover, the benefits apply not only for a career in the federal public service but for any career at all. This cannot be compared to the tremendous effort that must be made to convince Anglophone students of the benefits of learning French.

Outside Quebec, 85% of students take core French at high school. Only 16.5% of them continue to take French during their last year of high school. This is an indication of the magnitude of the challenge that must be met.

One of the problems that could be relatively easy to resolve is the difficulty understanding what bilingualism entails. Young people in an immersion program might well consider themselves bilingual without being able to meet the standard for a public service position designated bilingual. Moreover, since there is no competency standard, each university and each province uses its own evaluations, which are not the same as Public Service Commission tests. This uncertainty regarding the requirements creates linguistic insecurity among students.

"There is probably a dearth of standards in Canada today. We all discuss bilingualism, and perhaps it is clear for everyone what is meant by bilingualism in each institution. However, I am not so sure there is a pragmatic and applicable definition of the term. To me, pragmatic and applicable would involve obtaining a given score on a given test, for

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42 This finding is confirmed by the study by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Second-language learning opportunities in Canada's universities. Preliminary report: Summary of key findings*, May 2009, pp. 4-5.

43 Ms. Marielle Poirier, Member of the Board of Directors, *Fédération des cégeps*, and Director General, *Cégep de l'Outaouais*, Evidence, March 26, 2009, 10:25.

instance. I do not want to oversimplify things, but the question we ask is whether young people know what is expected of them when we refer to bilingualism. What are they expected to do? Speak, understand, say a few words, read? We believe that the federal government could greatly contribute to a solution by helping universities to come up with a pragmatic, accessible and coordinated definition of the required degree of bilingualism, perhaps by field of expertise or for given positions. We have looked for a definition. If one does exist we have not seen it.”<sup>44</sup>

While there may not be a clear definition of bilingualism, the Committee was very pleased to learn that there are excellent ways to arrive at a “pragmatic and applicable” definition. The Committee was very interested in the initiative developed at Acadia University.

“Our university recently became an approved centre for administering the TCF, the Test de connaissance du français. This test, which was developed by France's national ministry of education, is administered by the Centre international d'études pédagogiques, the CIEP. It is a standardized and calibrated French-language test that ranks candidates at one of the six levels of the scale established by the European Council under the European common framework of reference for languages. This test gives our students, and any member of the public who would like to know their level of French, the opportunity to gain international recognition for their accomplishments in French as a second language. We organized our very first TCF session on April 4, and we are very satisfied with the conduct of the test and the results obtained.”<sup>45</sup>

The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers and Canadian Parents for French made a similar recommendation to us.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the Quebec Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities is already using a version of this test to determine the level of French possessed by prospective newcomers.

The Committee could not determine whether the Public Service Commission was involved in discussions to establish this test across the country, but would very much like for it to take an interest since it is responsible for second language evaluation for staffing purposes in the federal public service.

## **Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada encourage postsecondary institutions to use the Test de connaissance du français (TCF) developed as part of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.**

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44 Ms. Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation, Laval University, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:25.

45 Ms. Janice Best, Director, Department of Languages and Literatures, Acadia University, Evidence, April 30, 2009, 9:20.

46 Mr. John Erskine, President, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:35.; Mr. David Brennick, President, National Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:10.

## **Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the Public Service Commission and the provincial and territorial governments, investigate the advisability of adopting a Canadian version of the Test de connaissance du français (TCF), developed as part of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, as a standard for evaluating language competency.**

### ***Encourage student mobility***

Committee members were not surprised to hear once again during this study that the best way to learn the other language is through intensive exposure in a cultural context that is conducive to learning. It is also preferable for young people to learn the other language as early as possible.

It must be kept in mind that “bilingual competence is most effectively developed at the elementary and secondary levels and that universities should encourage prospective students to have acquired a working knowledge of the other official language.”<sup>47</sup>

The importance of learning the second official language as early as possible was mentioned again by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages with regard to the difficulty of requiring deputy ministers to be bilingual: “People become deputy ministers after years of service in the public service, sometimes after they have reached their 40s or 50s. It is more difficult for these individuals to learn French.”<sup>48</sup> The Committee finds it regrettable that these senior public servants have not achieved the expected level of knowledge of the two official languages.

This fact also poses a challenge to Anglophone students who have few opportunities for exposure to a Francophone environment where they could improve their knowledge of French.

“The ideal would be for all students to find themselves in Francophone environments for more than one year. Based on the model we've selected, students spend two years with us — and we of course offer them language training during that period — and subsequently one year abroad. That year is mandatory as part of the BA program. We've chosen to send them abroad in the third year for all kinds of reasons. When they arrive at university, after grade 12, they are 17 years old and lack maturity. They also need intellectual maturity to take advantage of the experience outside their environment.”<sup>49</sup>

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47 Mr. André Dulude, Vice-President, National Affairs, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Evidence, March 26, 2009, 9:05.

48 Hon. James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, Evidence, March 24, 2009, 9:45.

49 Ms. Claire Trépanier, Acting Director, Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, Simon Fraser University, Evidence, April 30, 2009, 10:00.

The ideal environment for language learning is clearly not available to all Canadians. There is however a series of steps that can be taken to approximate this ideal depending on the person's interests and the resources that governments invest in learning. The first step is to continue taking French courses at college or university in an Anglophone setting. The second is taking intensive training at a nearby postsecondary institution. The third step would be a brief stay in a Francophone community in the summer. The fourth step would be to spend at least a year at a Francophone university in Canada, ideally in a Francophone community. The fifth step and certainly the ideal would be to combine a period of study for as long as possible at a Francophone university in Canada with a period of study for as long as possible at a Francophone university abroad. The key is that access to one step could stimulate interest in moving on to the next step and that, regardless of the final step reached, any encouragement for learning the second language is beneficial.

There are many opportunities to make the first two steps and they are readily identifiable for interested students. The preliminary report of the Commissioner of Official Languages indicates that Anglophone universities offer a very good range of French courses.<sup>50</sup> Colleges also make a contribution in this way, both for students and for the language training of public servants and allophones.<sup>51</sup>

The third step, short stays in a Francophone setting, is available through many programs, including Explore and Accent, which are federally funded under agreements with the provinces and territories.

Some witnesses spoke favourably about these programs which, at a cost of about \$20 million per year, are relatively inexpensive for the federal government.<sup>52</sup> Prior to April 2009, there were four programs: Explore, Destination Clic, Odyssey and Accent. Explore is a bursary program that allows universities to host students, about 8,000 per year (5,000 Anglophones and 3,000 Francophones), for five weeks of second language learning. Destination Clic is also a bursary program but designed for young Francophones living outside Quebec who want to improve their knowledge of French. Odyssey and Accent are language assistant programs. Odyssey offers participants nine months of full-time employment (25 hours a week), while Accent is a part-time program (eight hours a week) for young people who are already enrolled in postsecondary studies outside their province and would like to work part time. Accent was cancelled last April.

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50 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. *Second-language learning opportunities in Canada's universities. Preliminary report: Summary of key findings*, May 2009, p. 3.

51 See Mr. Yves Chouinard, Administrator, *Réseau des cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada*, and Director General of the *Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick*, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:00.

52 See for example Ms. Claire Trépanier, Acting Director, Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs, Simon Fraser University, Evidence, April 30, 2009, 10:10.

Some concerns have been expressed about the decrease in the number of bursaries awarded under Explore.<sup>53</sup> It is entirely possible that five-week study periods are not suitable for students wishing to work in the summer, which could explain the drop in popularity of these programs. It must not be concluded however that they are ineffective; on the contrary, the evidence we heard convinced us of their value. The Committee therefore recommends:

### **Recommendation 9**

**That the Department of Canadian Heritage maintain the funding to the Explore program, while considering the advisability of making it more flexible and better suited to students' needs.**

The next step is to promote opportunities to spend a longer period of time learning the second language at a postsecondary institution in Canada. There are two possible ways of doing this: students can either enrol at a Francophone institution offering instruction in French in an English-speaking province or participate in exchange programs offered by the institutions. The first option is examined in the next section of the report.

With respect to exchange programs, the Committee noted that the institutions' practices in this regard varied widely. The University of British Columbia, for example, has exchange programs with 14 Francophone universities, both in Canada and abroad, but it appears that few institutions offer that range of opportunities.<sup>54</sup>

The Commissioner of Official Languages also expressed concern that it is sometimes more difficult for students to participate in exchanges in Canada than to travel to a university abroad:

"One of the things we discovered is that there are all kinds of universities that have junior years abroad and semesters in second-language universities outside the country, but it is extremely difficult to have interchange between English-language and French-language postsecondary institutions. It's very hard for someone at the University of Calgary to spend a semester or a year at Laval, because there has not been the kind of effort to make that possible."<sup>55</sup>

This observation was confirmed in an analysis of the data collected by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in its study of postsecondary institutions.

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53 Ms. Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation, Laval University, Evidence, April 23, 2009, 9:20.

54 Hon. Stephen Owen, Vice-President, External, Legal and Community Relations, University of British Columbia, Evidence, May 7, 2009, 10:45.

55 Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, Evidence, February 26, 2009, 10:25.

While many Canadian universities offer or facilitate exchange-type opportunities for students to improve their second-language skills, it appears that more exchange opportunities are in fact offered with institutions in other countries; exchange opportunities with institutions within Canada remain limited.”<sup>56</sup>

The Committee considers it very unfortunate that it is often easier for an Anglophone student to study French abroad than in Canada.

“Establishing interprovincial mobility programs enabling students from Brandon, Manitoba, to go and take courses in Trois-Rivières for a semester or a full year as part of a program comparable or similar to their own and then recognizing those studies would be a major event in the history of university education in Canada. That would be magnificent. That already happens internationally. For example, a student from McGill can go and spend a year at the Université de Bordeaux in France. However, if that exchange is possible between McGill and Bordeaux, why wouldn't it be between Brandon and Trois-Rivières, between the Université Laval and UBC or between Simon Fraser University and the Université de Moncton?”<sup>57</sup>

The *Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada* also stated that it would like to see a Canada-wide student mobility program re-established that would enable Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to support this type of exchange.<sup>58</sup>

The Committee therefore recommends:

### **Recommendation 10**

**That the Department of Canadian Heritage, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, implement federal-provincial-territorial agreements to encourage student mobility initiatives between English-language and French-language postsecondary institutions in Canada for the promotion of second language instruction.**

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56 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Second-language learning opportunities in Canada's universities. Preliminary report: Summary of key findings*, May 2009, p. 4.

57 Mr. Luc Rainville, Coordinator, Office of the President and Senior Advisor, Francophonie Affairs, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Evidence, March 26, 2009, 9:20.

58 Mr. Yves Chouinard, Administrator, *Réseau des cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada*, and Executive Director, *Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick*, Evidence, March 12, 2009, 9:00.

#### 4. ROLE OF FRANCOPHONE UNIVERSITIES IN CANADA IN SECOND LANGUAGE TRAINING

Francophone universities offer Anglophone students specialized training in their second language, in proximity to their primary residence.<sup>59</sup> Very few Anglophone universities offer courses taught in French.<sup>60</sup> Francophone universities also offer students the opportunity to pursue courses in French in a Francophone environment, which would not be the case for students taking French courses at an Anglophone university.

“A clear distinction needs to be made between the educational opportunity for students offered by Ontario’s bilingual universities and the Francophone universities outside Quebec, on the one hand, and the possibilities that might be afforded by French-language instruction in Anglophone universities, on the other. In the former case, bilingualism for Anglophones is an all-encompassing experience as opposed to a specifically classroom activity,<sup>61</sup>

Teaching French to Anglophone students is certainly an important role for Francophone postsecondary institutions, but we must bear in mind that it remains secondary to their primary purpose.

“The primary purpose of the vast majority of our institutions is to serve Francophone communities by offering them an opportunity to acquire a university education in French.”<sup>62</sup>

Since the proportion of Francophones outside Quebec, New Brunswick and the National Capital Region is relatively low, it is essential that Francophone postsecondary institutions be able to attract Anglophone students, especially immersion program graduates, so these institutions can continue to serve their primary purpose.

In view of the complementary roles that Francophone postsecondary institutions play, one might assume that offering French-language training to Anglophones alone is sufficient for public service renewal. That is only true at first glance. Examining these roles more closely, one realizes that the capacity of these institutions to offer quality postsecondary education is their first priority, the condition on which the rest depends, including that of recruiting young bilingual Anglophones for the renewal of the public service.

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59 See for example Mr. François Charbonneau, Director General, *Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne*, Evidence, March 10, 2009, 9:00.

60 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Second-language learning opportunities in Canada’s universities. Preliminary report: Summary of key findings*, May 2009, p. 4.

61 Glendon College, York University, *Brief to the Standing Committee on Official Languages: Study on federal government support to postsecondary institutions for the promotion of bilingualism in Canada*, p. 6.

62 Mr. François Charbonneau, Director General, *Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne*, Evidence, March 10, 2009, 9:00.



The following three elements must be considered: the instruction offered to Francophone students, the instruction offered in French to Anglophone students, and the French courses offered. It is a simple argument but there are a number of elements to it. If the instruction offered to Francophones is not high quality, they will not be attracted to those institutions, which will in turn gradually decline. Francophone students will turn to Anglophone institutions or opt to study in Ottawa, Quebec or New Brunswick, taking the best-educated people away from their communities of origin. If the institutions decline and Francophones do not attend them, why would Anglophones choose to attend? Immersion graduates will choose to pursue their studies at Anglophone postsecondary institutions. Not being drawn to what is offered at local Francophone institutions, parents and young people will rightly question the rationale for immersion programs, especially at the secondary level. It would also be increasingly less appealing to take French courses at those institutions since the Francophone environment, which is the value added these institutions offer, will be increasingly diminished and postsecondary students will instead simply take French courses at the Anglophone institution they attend. Thus only the first step in the path to becoming bilingual would remain and postsecondary institutions would in turn produce fewer bilingual graduates than they do presently.

With strong Francophone institutions, this entire argument would be completely reversed: there would be stronger renewal of Francophone communities, the instruction offered to both Anglophone and Francophone students would be better, there would be more options for graduates of high school immersion programs, these immersion programs would in turn be more attractive and finally the pool of potential candidates for bilingual positions in the public service would be larger.

For prospective public servants interested in becoming bilingual, the weakness of the Francophone institutions would leave them with only the options of attending a Francophone institution far from their homes or taking language training after they have joined the public service. We have seen repeatedly that the second option is far from ideal. While the first one is excellent, it is much less accessible to a large number of students. In other words, strong Francophone postsecondary institutions outside Quebec, New Brunswick and the National Capital Region allow the preservation of the intermediate steps on the path to bilingualism. This is true even disregarding the primary purpose of these institutions, which is to serve Francophone minority communities.

Witnesses from Francophone universities told the Committee that the key to maintaining the quality of instruction at their universities lies in the research opportunities available to faculty members. Institutions that spend most of their resources on teaching and little on research are less likely to attract faculty that will enhance the university's reputation and attract students.

“A university with a weak research component is thus an inferior institution, with all the consequences that can have on its reputation, available funding and services that can be offered. Only an academically strong university can fully carry out its community mission. Only francophone minority universities and campuses face structural barriers in the field of research that undermine their competitiveness and reputation.”<sup>63</sup>

Yet it appears that the way research budgets are allocated actually widens the gap between large and small universities.

“The number of Canada Research Chairs [is] also allocated based on the institutions' ability to obtain research funding from the main funding bodies. While Quebec Anglophones can count on one of the most prestigious university research institutions, universities in Francophone Canada are most often, and not always, but in a large majority of cases, small institutions that do not have doctoral programs or do not have a tradition of obtaining research funding. Those institutions are put at a disadvantage by the present system. The obvious consequence is that the large institutions become more attractive to students in the major centres where there is not always the opportunity to study in French.”<sup>64</sup>

A great deal could be said of course about the impact of this on the vitality of official language minority communities. Looking only at the quality of instruction in French available to Anglophones, especially immersion graduates, Francophone institutions must be able to retain their best faculty members by allocating funding in a way that does not systematically work against them. The Committee therefore recommends:

### **Recommendation 11**

**That the Government of Canada, through federal funding bodies, establish a formula for the allocation of university research funding that offers attractive research opportunities to professors at small universities.**

Francophone institutions in Canada are also somewhat suspicious of the new trend among Anglophone universities of offering a few programs in French. Some of these programs, such as those at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia or at Université Sainte-Anne in Nova Scotia, receive federal funding under auxiliary federal-provincial-territorial education agreements. The Francophone institutions fear that this could negatively affect their own ability to recruit Anglophone students:

“The federal government, in recent years, has begun to encourage the supply of courses in French at Anglophone universities. As part of that initiative, which was not prepared through a clear strategic plan, no one considered either the negative impact it would have on Francophone institutions operating in minority settings or the perverse effect that diluting the supply of French courses would have on the ultimate objective of achieving optimum development of second-language learning. We believe that a clear distinction

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63 Mr. Donald Ipperciel (Assistant Dean to Research, Saint-Jean Campus, University of Alberta), *Evidence*, April 30, 2009, 09h30.

64 Mr. François Charbonneau (Director General, Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne) *Evidence*, March 10, 2009, 09:05.

must be drawn, for the purpose of distributing federal funding, between institutions whose primary responsibility is French, like Campus Saint-Jean, and institutions that only secondarily offer courses in French.”<sup>65</sup>

In its brief to the Committee, Glendon College expressed the same concern: “In localities where bilingual or Francophone universities already exist, it makes little sense to seek to expand French-language programming in neighbouring universities.”<sup>66</sup>

For the time being, some Committee members consider that the programs offered in French at Anglophone universities are so limited that they do not pose a real threat to Francophone institutions in Canada, especially since the latter can promote the competitive advantage of a Francophone environment that supports language retention. As the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out to the Committee on May 28, there is no “one size fits all” solution. The Committee would not like to see the government eliminate support for programs in French at Anglophone institutions and thereby prevent Anglophone institutions from taking initiatives that would improve postsecondary education in French. Obviously, in any given region, federal investments must first support the institutions that already have the capacity to offer a variety of programs in French. The Committee will remain vigilant to the risk posed by programs offered in French by Anglophone universities to the growth of Francophone institutions.

## CONCLUSION

The role of postsecondary institutions in promoting bilingualism in Canada is both essential and ambiguous. In terms of public service renewal, they are the primary providers of training for candidates to fill the thousands of positions that open up every year. The quality of the work done by the federal government depends directly on the quality of education provided by these institutions. Their role is also ambiguous however since, in contrast to federal institutions, they are not subject to linguistic requirements as such and their programs are based on the needs of the provinces, which have jurisdiction over education. The federal government’s role is therefore limited to providing encouragement by making its needs known and providing financial support for provincial programs.

Since 40% of positions are designated bilingual and 100% of management positions are designated bilingual, postsecondary institutions should address second language training. In the opinion of Committee members, second language training did not appear to be a priority for the large Anglophone institutions and they did not appear to be aware of the extent of the need for a bilingual workforce in the public service. Postsecondary institutions appear to be somewhat disengaged and, at the same time, the federal government is not insistent enough about its needs and linguistic requirements.

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65 Mr. Donald Ipperciel, Assistant Dean to Research, Saint-Jean Campus, University of Alberta, *Evidence*, April 30, 2009, 9:30.

66 Glendon College, York University, *Brief to the Standing Committee on Official Languages: Study on federal government support to postsecondary institutions for the promotion of bilingualism in Canada*, p. 6.

This lack of awareness becomes a problem given the government's responsibility under Part VI of the *Official Languages Act* to give members of both linguistic communities equal opportunities for advancement in the public service. Since Anglophone postsecondary institutions do not produce enough bilingual graduates, over two-thirds of the positions designated bilingual are held by Francophones. This offsets the fact that there are hardly any unilingual Francophone positions outside Quebec and ensures the equal representation of Francophones in the public service. At the same time, however, it leads to the overrepresentation of Francophones at the highest echelons of the bureaucracy. Committee members could easily overlook this problem and simply say that it is up to Anglophones to learn French if they are interested in high-level positions in the federal public service. This would be ignoring the obvious fact that young Francophones have much more to gain in their career by learning English. This is an obvious incentive and it applies to every field. The career incentive for young Anglophones to learn French if they do not live in Quebec, New Brunswick or the National Capital Region is much less obvious. Why not learn Spanish or Mandarin instead? Why spend that precious time acquiring specialized career skills rather than learn a second language that might perhaps someday lead to a job in the federal public service?

The reality is that much more creativity and effort is needed to actively promote the benefits of learning French to Anglophones and allophones than is needed to encourage Francophones to learn English. The Committee accordingly recommends that the federal government develop a real strategy to recruit bilingual employees that sends the clear message to Anglophone institutions in Canada that the federal public service, the largest employer in Canada, needs bilingual employees.

Once this message has been sent, it must then be sent directly to elementary and secondary schools. The most promising approach is to increase access to immersion programs. In order to do this, however, there must be enough teachers who can provide quality instruction in those programs. Not just French teachers are needed but also teachers who can teach other subjects to Anglophones in French. Postsecondary institutions could help address the shortage of immersion teachers.

Students must also have a clear idea of what the federal government expects of them in terms of linguistic competency. Linguistic competency levels must be assessed in the same way by the federal government and by the institutions that teach prospective employees.

Students must also have access to mobility programs so they can apply their knowledge of French in a Francophone setting. They must be able to do this at Francophone postsecondary institutions in Canada through short or longer stays.

Finally, the vitality of French in Canada depends on the vitality of Francophone communities, and Francophone postsecondary institutions in a minority situation play a crucial supporting role in this regard. Their mission of serving minority Francophone communities is strengthened by their ability to offer quality instruction in French to Anglophones, especially immersion program graduates. To do this, they must be able to attract highly qualified professors, who in turn are attracted by the opportunity to pursue

their research interests at those institutions. Since the majority of university research budgets come from federal funding agencies, these agencies' funding allocation policies must not work against smaller institutions by depriving them of research funding and awarding it to larger universities instead.

The Government of Canada cannot tell postsecondary institutions what to do. It does not have jurisdiction over them and it must respect their academic independence. What it can do, however, is send a strong and clear message about its own needs: 5,000 bilingual positions will have to be filled, year after year, as part of the renewal of the federal public service in a wide range of fields. The Committee is hopeful that postsecondary institutions will respond to this message. It is in their interest to do so and this would support the federal government's commitment to providing exemplary service to all citizens and to strengthening linguistic duality, which is an increasingly fundamental aspect of Canadian identity.



# APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages</b> Graham, Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages	2009/02/26	5
<b>Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne</b> François Charbonneau, Director General	2009/03/10	8
<b>Council of Ministers of Education, Canada</b> Jean-Gilles Pelletier, Director, Administration and Communications, Official-Languages Programs		
<b>Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers</b> John Erskine, President Nicole Thibault, Executive Director	2009/03/12	9
<b>Canadian Association of University Teachers</b> Greg Allain, Past President Penni Stewart, President		
<b>Department of Human Resources and Skills Development</b> Mark Hopkins, Director General, Learning Policy and Planning Directorate Sylvain Segard, Director General, Program Policy and Planning Directorate		
<b>Réseau des cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada</b> Yves Chouinard, Administrator, Director General of the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick Laurier Thibault, Director General		
<b>Department of Canadian Heritage</b> Hon. James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	2009/03/24	10
<b>Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada</b> André Dulude, Vice-President, National Affairs Luc Rainville, Coordinator, Office of the President and Senior Advisor, Francophonie Affairs	2009/03/26	11

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Fédération des cégeps</b>  Marielle Poirier, Member of the Board of Directors,  Director General, Cégep de l'Outaouais</p>	2009/03/26	11
<p><b>Canadian Institutes of Health Research</b>  Pierre Chartrand, Vice-President, Research  Johanne Lapointe, Team Lead, Institute Affairs</p>	2009/04/02	13
<p><b>Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada</b>  Barbara Conway, Corporate Secretary, Executive Vice-President's Office  Suzanne Fortier, President</p>		
<p><b>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada</b>  Chad Gaffield, President</p>		
<p><b>University of Ottawa</b>  Richard Clément, Director and Associate Dean, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute  Sylvie Lauzon, Associate Vice-President, Academic</p>		
<p><b>Canadian Parents for French</b>  David M. Brennick, President, National Board of Directors  James Shea, Executive Director, National Office</p>	2009/04/23	15
<p><b>Laval University</b>  Silvia Faitelson-Weiser, Professor, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation</p>		
<p><b>Acadia University</b>  Janice Best, Director, Department of Languages and Literatures  Robert Perrins, Dean, Faculty of Arts</p>	2009/04/30	17
<p><b>Simon Fraser University</b>  Danielle Arcand, Associate Director, Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs  Claire Trépanier, Acting Director, Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs</p>		
<p><b>University of Alberta</b>  Donald Ipperciel, Assistant Dean to Research, Saint-Jean Campus</p>		



<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>University of Calgary</b> Ozouf Amedegnato, Assistant Professor, Department of French, Italian and Spanish Dan Maher, Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities	2009/04/30	17
<b>Université du Québec en Outaouais</b> Bernadette Kassi, Director, Arts Module, Department of Language Studies	2009/05/07	19
<b>University of British Columbia</b> Hon. Stephen Owen, Vice-President, External, Legal and Community Relations		
<b>University of Toronto</b> Normand Labrie, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education		
<b>Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages</b> Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages Mark Goldenberg, Consultant Carsten Quell, Director, Policy and Research Mylène Thériault, Team Leader, Policy and Research	2009/05/28	23



# **APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS**

## **Organizations and Individuals**

**Acadia University**

**Association of Canadian Community Colleges**

**Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada**

**Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers**

**Canadian Parents for French**

**Council of Ministers of Education, Canada**

**Department of Human Resources and Skills Development**

**Glendon College, York University**

**Laval University**

**Réseau des cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada**

**Université du Québec en Outaouais**

**University of Alberta**

**University of Ottawa**



# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings ([Meetings Nos. 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Blaney, MP  
Chair



BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS DISSENTING OPINION ON  
THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ON POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND THE PROMOTION OF  
BILINGUALISM IN CANADA

TABLED TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

June 2009

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First and foremost, the Bloc Québécois would like to thank all the witnesses who appeared before the Committee on Official Languages during its hearings in Ottawa. Their evidence illuminated for us the problems of staffing bilingual positions in the federal public service, and the role that universities and other postsecondary institutions can play in training the next generation of public servants.

Generally speaking the Bloc Québécois agrees with the thrust of the Committee's study – that bilingual positions within the federal public service should be filled by bilingual employees – but notes that a number of considerations were obscured by the Committee in the drafting of the report and that the recommendations ignore Quebec's linguistic reality and its difference. Now recognized as a nation by the House of Commons, Quebec must be able to insist on recognition for its own attributes, including its linguistic reality. As a result, the Bloc Québécois can only oppose the report, and wishes express serious reservations about it.

First of all, the report establishes that there are major differences between the situations and needs of the different language groups. For example, it notes that Francophones in the public service are currently overrepresented in key (and thus bilingual) positions, given their population share, and that one of the main problems is that Anglophones see little reason to learn French. These observations alone, in our opinion, are enough to justify proposing different

approaches, adapted to the two groups' realities and needs. Some of the recommendations in the report quite simply do not apply to Quebec.

Moreover, the strategy promoted by the report focuses on the role of educational institutions, and education is clearly one of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

The Bloc Québécois would have hoped to see the following added after recommendations 8, 9 and 10: "That Quebec, which has the expertise, the network and the contacts to identify and meet the needs of its citizens, must have the right to opt out unconditionally, with the full compensation, from any program that the federal government introduces in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction."

While some provinces may welcome or accept federal government involvement in introducing educational programs or allocating research grants, this is clearly not the case with Quebec, which is still paying the price for the federalist parties' paternalistic and centralist attitude.

Lastly, given that Quebec has been working for years to make French the public and shared language of the people of Quebec and thereby put the brakes on assimilation, it is inconceivable for the Bloc Québécois to support a recommendation that calls on the federal government to promote bilingualism both in Quebec's educational institutions and among its population, and without the assent of the provinces, what is more.

Under the *Official Languages Act* the federal government is required to guarantee the bilingualism of its institutions, but it has never received a mandate



to promote bilingualism among the public at large. In addition, the Bloc Québécois considers that the federal government, rather than fixating on schools, colleges and universities, should demonstrate greater political will and do more to promote bilingualism within its own institutions.

