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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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**Thursday, November 17, 2016**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Denis Paradis**



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Thursday, November 17, 2016

•(0855)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.)):** My friends, we are still waiting for photocopies of the documents. It will take a few minutes, but we will begin today's meeting anyway.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are continuing our study on the roadmap and immigration in francophone minority communities.

This morning, we are pleased to have with us the president of the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, Cyrilda Poirier.

Good morning, Ms. Poirier, and welcome.

Welcome also to Gaël Corbineau, the organization's director general.

We will proceed as follows. You have about 10 minutes to talk to us about the roadmap and the game plan that should result. There will then be a round of questions and comments from members of the committee. You will talk about immigration for 10 minutes and that will be followed with another round.

You have 10 minutes to talk to us about the roadmap.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier (President, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador):** Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, my name is Cyrilda Poirier. I am President of the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, or FFTNL. Beside me is our director general, Gaël Corbineau.

First, we want to thank you for your invitation to appear, thereby giving our community the opportunity to express its views on the roadmap.

Since 1973, the FFTNL has been working for the advancement, development and recognition of the francophone and Acadian communities in our province. Today, the federation has six members, three of which represent the principal French-speaking regions of the province, and three other provincial organizations working in early childhood and youth development, and in economic development.

With a presence dating back more than 500 years, our communities today are mostly found in three regions, separated from each other by distances from 800 kilometres to 2,100 kilometres. You can guess, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, that, for us, geographical distance is a major handicap.

According to the 2011 census, our community represents 0.6% of the provincial population. In addition, about 25,000 people in the province are bilingual.

Mr. Chair, you asked us here to describe the positive aspects and the challenges associated with the roadmaps of 2008-13 and 2013-18.

With no shadow of a doubt, we can state the following. The interdepartmental approach that the successive roadmaps have made possible has without doubt assisted our development in all our principal areas by emphasizing the responsibilities of all federal departments in the development of our communities, and doing so with quantifiable commitments.

Of course, the roadmaps address many community sectors; given the limited time we have this morning, I will not have time to list them in detail.

Let us start with the positive aspects of the recent years. I will specifically mention the significant improvements in health care in French and in francophone immigration.

In health, investments in recent years have made a major contribution to the development of this sector to the benefit of our communities. Specifically, maintaining funding for the French-language Health Services Networks does not just allow health service activities for, and delivery directly to, the members of our communities. It also greatly enhances our ability to network and maintain relationships with provincial authorities and institutions with expertise in this area. This allows us to make our case with them and move forward.

I will not spend too much time now on the importance of francophone immigration for our communities, because that is on the agenda a little later this morning. However, I will say that the roadmaps have allowed the establishment of permanent francophone immigration networks. These finally allow us to work with less worry and a medium-term vision. Nevertheless, we have also faced challenges.

Without any doubt, the main challenge in these last 10 years was the initial launch of the 2013-18 roadmap. Many sectors had to wait for a long time—for too long a time—for the federal departments involved to establish their programs according to their responsibilities.

I have just talked about health. Health Canada took more than a year to implement its programs. That adversely affected many health networks across Canada, a good number of which had to let staff go, thereby losing the operational capacity and expertise that had been hard-won over the years.

In our province, the health network is a file that the FFTNL handles internally. We dearly wanted not to lose the only employee working in the area. We therefore had to compensate financially for the structural deficit that these unacceptable delays caused. Of course, that had to be done at the expense of our organization's other files.

But things get worse. I will specifically single out Service Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada. That department has just allocated social development funds, in 2016, three years after the roadmap began, for seniors, youth, parents and women's groups. The roadmap only lasts for five years, and it is simply unacceptable for the government to fail to allocate those funds until three years have gone by.

● (0900)

That does not make it easy to have a medium- or long-term vision; it puts a whole aspect of our community development at risk.

The behaviour gets even worse. Once again, Employment and Social Development Canada unfortunately gets the black mark. To this day, we still do not know where the funding for adult education and essential skills went. The department issued a call for proposals two or three years ago, but we have had no news since.

In the Atlantic provinces, where 42% of the population has problems with literacy, we find it difficult to accept the explanation that this kind of investment no longer has any use. Because of it, our organization has lost precious support from the Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences, often known by its acronym RESDAC. The network, whose mission is to mobilize its partners around strategies designed to improve literacy and skill levels among francophone adults, no longer has the means to help us today as it was able to in the past.

A province like ours has no organization dedicated to that area. So there is a lack of expertise that deprives us of precious support. The contradiction is that the funds are identified in the roadmap. But where have they gone? Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, the department will be harming our communities if it does not change its approach.

Let us now talk about the future, and the particularly pressing needs that we see for the period from 2018 to 2023. It is impossible for me not to repeat what I said a moment ago about the major needs for literacy and essential skills. Ignoring such a large proportion of Canadians would simply be going counter to the values on which our society was founded. I also want to point out the virtual lack of Justice Canada investment in our province. You are certainly all aware that a judge from Newfoundland and Labrador was recently appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. For us, it was a time to recognize that justice in French does not exist.

We are in dire need of the means to provide legal aid in French to our citizens, but also the means to identify and encourage French-speaking lawyers. To us, it seems urgent for Justice Canada to draw

up an action plan so that the provinces and territories, still deprived of everything in this area, can quickly respond to the needs of their francophone communities.

I will also mention the lack of core funding for our national association in this area, the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law inc., or FAJEF. Although a strong national organization is indispensable for us in our provinces, the federation receives anemic financing that allows its office staff to work only one day a week. I hope you will agree, ladies and gentlemen, that this is a highly irregular situation that cannot be allowed to continue.

Investments in community infrastructures are without doubt a topic that will occupy a lot of our attention in the coming years in Newfoundland and Labrador. Since 2015, we have been in a long period of identifying the needs. The main one is for early childhood and community activity centres. In many cases, they could be combined with schools, and therefore with the provincial government. In both traditional and emerging communities, our needs are great.

Yes indeed, ladies and gentlemen, we have emerging communities; they are proof of the dynamism of our communities and the result of the efforts in the last 40 years to promote the country's bilingualism, and francophone and Acadian cultural identity. However, now is not the time to abandon those citizens, who also have needs and rights. So that leads to the very problematic status quo, in effect since 2004, of our budgets from the province for the core funding of our organizations.

For more than 12 years now, inflation has done its work and mathematically reduced the operational capacities of our community organizations. A number of them have very few opportunities to diversify their income; today, they are struggling to keep their staff, without even the means to pay for one full-time position. So we are losing our vital lifeblood on which the vitality of our communities depends, especially in rural regions. I do not have to tell you that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, that status quo has never allowed us to serve our emerging communities, which does considerable harm to our development.

As the time I was given has likely run out, I will conclude my presentation here.

● (0905)

Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, on behalf of the francophones of Newfoundland and Labrador, we thank you for your attention.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Poirier.

We now move immediately to the period for questions and comments.

Mr. Généreux, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, Ms. Poirier and Mr. Corbeineau.

Ms. Poirier, things really are not going well at all!

You clearly seem to be facing a lot of difficulties.

So will a new roadmap restore your hope for the future?

There were difficulties when the roadmap was launched. That took three years. But it is now done.

Do you feel that, in the new roadmap, the wheel will keep turning from now on, or are you going to be facing the same difficulties?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** You said earlier that things are not going well. The description we provided was accurate. That said, we will never lose hope. If we did, we would shut up shop.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Going back to—

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** Going back to the roadmap and to answer your question, we are hopeful that it will be launched in 2018, as scheduled. Given all the consultations we have held, I feel that things augur well for the future—and I think that is Gaël's opinion too.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Okay.

You alluded to the province earlier.

What is the relationship between the province and the feds in terms of implementation?

As I understand it, money was allocated to the province, but you never found out where it went, especially the money for adult education.

Federal money is transferred to the provinces in the great majority of cases and is then redistributed into a number of areas of activity related to the francophonie.

Are you telling us that there is no accountability at all?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** In the case of the federal-provincial agreements, I would not say that there is no accountability. I would say that accountability is at a minimum, and it is difficult, even for an organization like ours, to find out where that money goes.

I will use the Official Languages in Education Program as an example. It is a federal-provincial agreement. Actually, I will let Mr. Corbineau speak to this, because he works more in the operational area. He will be able to handle the question more technically.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau (Director General, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador):** Clearly, with federal-provincial agreements, the accountability must be improved. There could certainly be a debate about that.

To answer your question specifically, these are not funds transferred to the provinces. These are federal funds earmarked for education. For literacy, the situation is quite unique in terms of the division of jurisdictions. Those funds were distributed by Service Canada—formerly HRSDC and now Employment and Social Development Canada—to community organizations through the OLES, the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills.

Two or three years ago, there was a national call for proposals. We never heard what happened then: who got the contract, and so on. RESDAC, another organization of which we are a member, had the previous contract. Their activities covered the entire country.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Are you saying that the program has not been available to you for three years?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We no longer have RESDAC's expertise, as they have practically no funding any more. They no longer even have an office today because they operate elsewhere, thanks to some other modest funding. They have lost much of their operational capacity. RESDAC was a national organization that supported the provinces and territories. For us, it was an enormous support, given that we have no organization that works solely in this area. At home, we simply have no full-time expertise for it. The organization is no longer able to help us because it has lost its national funding. So, in this specific area, the provinces are not involved.

• (0910)

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** In your opinion, why did they need three years to start up the roadmap?

Do you have any clues that leave you to believe that it is because of red tape?

What could the reasons be?

It is curious, but I have to tell you that, since our consultation began, this is the first time—unless I am mistaken—that witnesses have told us about a delay in the implementation of the roadmap. Perhaps there were difficulties here and there, but I do not understand how the implementation could take three years.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** I feel that there are a number of factors. First, the consultations for the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018 were held very late, unlike what is happening now. At the moment, the consultations are being held one year earlier than in the process five years ago.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Right.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** At the end of March 2013, when the new roadmap was announced, with a supposed starting date of April 1, were they ready? Clearly not. The government of the time wanted to look at certain aspects again. You cannot criticize a government of any kind for wondering whether it is doing things correctly and whether something needs to be changed. Unfortunately, on April 1, it was not ready. If I recall correctly, the roadmap was announced on March 24 or 28, approximately. The programs were not ready.

I can confirm the story about three-year funding. There were a lot of questions about how the funds were supposed to be distributed. National community organizations—not ours—were approached to distribute the money. That was last year, shortly before the elections, I must say, not wanting to be political. They wanted to get rid of the amount set aside in the roadmap. Under those conditions, the organizations first stalled, saying, for example, that it was not up to francophone organizations to divide up the envelope among francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec. That was a point of discussion.

I recently signed the first funding agreements for seniors. We are one of the first provinces to receive funding. I signed them three weeks ago, I think. These are the first sums of money for that purpose that come from the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018. It involves four groups that are working together and that are dividing up the envelope: seniors, parents, youth, and women.

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

The floor now goes to Darrell Samson.

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** I will give my turn to Ms. Lapointe.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Lapointe.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, and welcome to our witnesses. Like all my colleagues, I am happy that you are here with us. I was lucky enough to go to Saint John, New Brunswick, with the Standing Committee on International Trade.

I have done a little reading about demographics and the Maritimes are where the smallest number of francophones are to be found. I am pleased that you are here.

You say that there are three places with francophone communities and they are a very long way from each other. They make up 0.6% of the population. How many people is that?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** In the last census, it was 3,015 people.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** You were saying that 25,000 people are bilingual.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** That is the official number, according to Statistics Canada.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** You mentioned between 800 and 2,800. So it is quite a challenge to keep things going.

Witnesses who have come to see us have stated that, sometimes, francophone community services are provided by anglophone organizations. Is that something you have seen?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** It can happen that we have projects in partnership with anglophone analysts; translating legal documents, for example, or for seniors and health. It happens, but they are real partnerships and we distribute the information in French. No anglophone organization provides bilingual services on a permanent basis.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** You said that the principal services were in literacy. How many people does that involve? Can you calculate how many people have needs like that?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** I was involved in compiling the official statistics for this area. For the Atlantic provinces, it is 42%. So you have to do the math. It would be 42% of 3,000 francophones,

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** Thank you.

You were here when there was a consultation in 2015. I hope that I will not be talking to you about immigration—

**The Chair:** That comes later.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** So I must not talk to you about immigration right now.

• (0915)

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** I thought I was here to talk about immigration, actually.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** Yes, but we won't talk about it right now. I will talk to you about it in my next turn.

Earlier, you said that the successes were in immigration and health in French. I am impressed. You have succeeded in delivering health services in French.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** That is an evolving situation. We are talking about the roadmaps, specifically the most recent ones. In our presentation, we did not want to go back over 40 years of development. Some things existed beforehand. We still do not have services in French in bilingual medical clinics. We are not there yet. However, we have made a lot of progress at community level and those projects have worked well.

A number of examples come to mind. We started projects on healthy eating, on physical exercise, and the projects have remained in place. We funded that kind of initiative in schools. When we started, for example, students went to a swimming pool every week. The funding stopped after three years, but the schools continued the activity. It created a momentum that has continued since.

We also organized physical exercise sessions for seniors and similar activities through the health network. Since then, two sport activity rooms have been opened, such as on the Port-au-Port peninsula.

These are very rural regions. They have no private fitness centres. The only other services are those that come from the communities themselves. The community managed to get organized and to set up two rooms with sports equipment that people can use year-round at a modest cost. It was that kind of activity that the health network was able to bring to the communities.

As for services in French in institutions, there is a huge amount of work to be done. The work is being done in collaboration with the health network. However, an enormous amount of work remains. We will speak about that again shortly. We have been trying to work on it for two years.

There is one situation peculiar to Newfoundland and Labrador that we will bring up when get into immigration. The French-speaking presence in Newfoundland is aided by the proximity of the Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** Yes, of course.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** This is a very specific situation that the other provinces do not have.

Since last year, I have been the co-chair of the health sub-committee that is part of the regional cooperation between Atlantic Canada and Saint Pierre and Miquelon. The committee's mandate is to further the work in health being done with the authorities on the Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago. For 30 years, residents of the archipelago have been coming to Newfoundland in medical evacuation situations. They come to Newfoundland more than 1,000 or 1,100 times per year for health care that is not available on the archipelago because their hospital does not have specialists in all fields.

So areas like that provide us with health funding in Canada that we can use as leverage for services of that kind.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** How many people live in Saint Pierre and Miquelon?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** About 6,000.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** We have heard a lot about early childhood. My colleague will certainly continue with the topic. Do you have enough early childhood service capacity in French?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We have early childhood services in French, but they are not enough by a long shot. That is not one of the successes, because a huge amount of work still remains to be done. Currently, there is only one francophone day care in the province and that day care is in St. John's. There is room for several more.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** You say that you serve three remote communities.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** There are none in the other communities.

One day care is about to be established. A group recently became involved; we had to change the province's legislation on cooperatives to move things along. It was a matter of principle.

Basically, the act only allowed the word "cooperative" to be used in English. The people on site, who had our full support, did not want the name of the organization to be in English. The matter moved forward and the legislation was changed last June. You have to go step by step. A francophone day care should open soon in Labrador City.

**Ms. Linda Lapointe:** Thank you very much.

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

We continue with François Choquette.

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for coming.

Your comments are very interesting. People often forget that Newfoundland and Labrador has French-speaking communities. I appreciate your being here today to remind us of your presence in the province.

I have some questions about Employment and Social Development Canada. The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) has criticized the fact that some money from the roadmap has not yet been spent or allocated. You spoke about that too.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** Are we talking about the same amounts?

**Mr. François Choquette:** Yes, that is what we are talking about.

That is why we rattled the cage a little. The amounts were allocated after the FCFA exerted some pressure. That happened quite recently, if I understand correctly. Does that whole area include seniors, children and women?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** It includes young people too.

**Mr. François Choquette:** Is this a new component of the roadmap? How do you explain that it took so long? A little earlier, we were told that the consultations had perhaps not been done correctly. If this is not a new component, it should not have taken so much time, should it? What is the explanation?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** I don't know.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** To my knowledge, the FCFA has not received an explanation. When we were told about the amounts—it seems to me that it was last winter—it was like a \$3.5 million present, or like manna from heaven.

● (0920)

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** It was last year, just before the federal elections.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** We got the impression that the department had found the money at the back of a drawer and realized that it had to get rid of it quickly before the elections. That's our impression, anyway.

We only had a very short time in which to decide what to do with that \$3.5 million. That is when the FCFA rattled the cage, as you say.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** In my experience with Employment and Social Development Canada's administration in particular, formerly HRSDC, my feeling is that they just do not have the management capacity. I will give you two examples: RDEE and RESDAC. The department is not able to manage all kinds of projects itself, and it delegates the entire management to national community organizations.

So, the department found this on its hands. It wanted to call for tenders to improve things in the areas of literacy and essential skills. But it was not able to follow through.

My feeling is that, in terms of managing this money, there is a huge capacity problem in that department.

**Mr. François Choquette:** That is really very interesting. We talk a lot about horizontal or transverse governance, and so on. Let me give you a concrete example of a problem situation. We have done a lot of work in recent months on the translation bureau. When problems arise, there is no one to make decisions. They tell us that each person has responsibilities. However, as we see it at the moment, they do not really have the skills. That is our feeling, and yours too. Honestly, I too have been noticing it for some time.

You talked about RESDAC no longer having funding. What specific consequences does that have for you?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** When RESDAC had its funding, we were able to conduct a needs analysis in our communities. So we did a wonderful study that was supposed to be implemented. We had their support in drafting funding applications. The direct service is provided provincially, because it's in provincial jurisdiction, but RESDAC's support was invaluable for us.

I am not a literacy expert. When a funding application has to be made, you have to have people with that skill in order to be accurate with all the details, and so on. As we do not have our own organization, we normally look for support from organizations of that kind. Today, RESDAC is no longer able to do it. They only have one part-time person left. There is no RESDAC office any more. They have only their own money from a reserve fund they had set aside. It is a major problem.

The national network they used to get us working no longer exists either. We have needs in a lot of areas. We are working in partnership on projects for seniors as far away as Alberta, as was mentioned earlier. We are working with seniors in Alberta because our health needs are similar. We had someone come in from Thunder Bay because our situations were similar. We did things like that. Now, in that specific area, we are no longer able to be so active.

**Mr. François Choquette:** I only have a minute left. I would like to hear what you have to say about access to justice. You slipped in a mention of it earlier. Access to justice is extremely important to me. So I have introduced a bill to make sure that Supreme Court judges are bilingual. We do not just want a policy, we also want a bill.

Furthermore, a report from the Commissioner of Official Languages said that we perhaps have to ensure access to justice in the superior courts as well. One of the things we have to do is to ensure better access to justice in French in the superior courts.

In your province, what are your needs in terms of access to justice?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** As I said in my presentation, networking is one of the things that we really need. It is something we have to be able to do. We also need to be able to identify judges, even lawyers, who are bilingual. We know that they are out there. The question is knowing how to keep track of them. We must also ensure that they have the training they need to hear legal proceedings in French. That is critical.

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

Thank you very much, Mr. Choquette.

The floor goes to Mr. Samson.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the witnesses for joining us today. We like being able to fully capture the points of view of people all across Canada. You are the far east for us. We appreciate your visit very much. Afterwards, we are going to hear from my fellow Nova Scotian about immigration. It is very interesting to see perspectives from different parts of the country, from places that are not so densely populated and where the needs for services are certainly enormous.

You have touched on a number of interesting topics. I just want to make sure that I understood completely. Are the agreements between the FCFA, yourselves and the federal government, or does the province sign them? From my experience with education, everything goes through the province. The money goes to the province, then to the school boards, then all kinds of questions arise about it.

Can you tell us a little about that?

• (0925)

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** Do you want to talk specifically about official language programs in education?

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Exactly.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** The agreements are bilateral, and federal-provincial. We are not involved in them at all.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** I am not talking about education; I know about education. I am talking about your agreement.

**Mr. Gaël Corbiveau:** Our funding agreements for our various networks never go through the province. This has been the case for the management of community centres, but has not been the case for three, almost four years.

Going through the province added an enormous delay. In addition, administrative problems posed major cash-flow problems for the associations managing the community centres. So we shortened the circuit.

Otherwise, everything happens between us and the federal government or between us and a national community organization. For example, in health care, Health Canada works with the Société Santé en français, and the Société Santé en français takes care of allocating funding based on the situation or on the projects submitted. This is the national community level.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** The networking of organizations in the health care sector seems to work much better. They are directly linked to the flow of funds and are involved in their implementation, which is different.

You said that, when the province was involved in the funding agreements, it took much more time. What happened? Personally, I would have stood on a chair shouting every day to demand where my funding was.

It's unacceptable.

Have there been any changes?

I know that the minister also ensured that the projects of \$75,000 or less are processed much faster, which provides much quicker funding for employees and other people.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** Let's say that the funding or receipt of the amounts has greatly improved in recent years. As Mr. Corbiveau said, since the funding no longer goes through the Ministry of Education, the school and community centres that were funded through federal-provincial agreements actually receive their money.

And, yes, we shouted for the funds to be released, but it fell on deaf ears the entire time it was like that.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you for saying that. We will certainly note it in our report.

I now have a more specific question about early childhood. The question is essential for the survival of Acadians and francophones living in minority situations in Canada's Atlantic provinces.

In your region in particular, there are three francophone regions that are quite spread out. You need something concrete to get started.



Do you agree that a child who starts in an anglophone day care will probably go to school in English?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** There is no doubt about that.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** Absolutely.

You know better than anyone, Mr. Samson, that students from a francophone environment going to English-language day cares causes a real problem. It hinders the development of French in the other students in the class, and it drags them down. The more students who do not speak French when they arrive at kindergarten, the more it pulls the class down and the more it prevents others from making progress.

This can indeed be a disadvantage. It is absolutely important to work from age zero, from birth, if not before, to make parents aware of the importance of speaking French at home, especially for exogamous couples.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** It will be difficult for us to achieve this before birth, but we will certainly work on it after birth.

I agree with you 100%. We offer a day care service in Nova Scotia for children four years and older. It is open to all students who want to study in French before entering the school system.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** It is essential.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** It is essential.

That's the point I will make and will stress, definitely.

Do I have any time left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have a minute left, Mr. Samson.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Right. I'll give it to Mr. Lefebvre. I rarely have any time left.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Lefebvre.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's rare for there to be time left.

I know that we are sort of seeing the negative side of things. In your remarks, you mentioned the dynamic nature of your communities. Could you expand on that?

• (0930)

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** Just having emerging communities indicates that there is some dynamism. There is a certain need and desire to live in French in the communities that are not necessarily structured the way the three western communities, Labrador and even St. John's are.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** West of Newfoundland.

For us, the west coast is Newfoundland, not Vancouver.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** Yes.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** How can the roadmap support the dynamic nature of emerging communities?

Whether we like it or not, we take a step back and look forward. I know that in your remarks you spoke about your problematic situations, but I would like to hear your suggestions.

Funding is a basic aspect. That said, what can we do better compared with the old roadmap, were it not for the funding shortfalls

or delays? Aside from funding, what can we do to improve the situation?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** I'll let Mr. Corbineau answer.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** I would like to come back to the example of emerging communities that we gave in our presentation.

Earlier, a member of Parliament asked us about the number of francophones in the province. There is one thing that is remarkable. Between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, the francophone community in Newfoundland and Labrador increased by 36%. Some will say that it's because of the oil in St. John's, but when we look at the numbers very closely—which I did—it is surprising to see that over 40% of people are not in the traditional francophone regions. The number of francophones increased in all regions, including those not affected by the oil boom or the mining boom at the time.

In some regions, like in the Burin peninsula, for instance, the increase was even more than 1,000%. The numbers have risen from 10 people to 120. Many regions are not economically favoured in Newfoundland, but the number of francophones still increased significantly there. So this cannot be due solely to economic reasons.

How do you explain that? I think it's because of the work done in the past 40 years to promote a bilingual Canada, bilingualism and cultural identity. When people completed the census, they began to understand that their roots were francophone and checked the "French" box. Previously, they weren't interested.

Personally, that's what I am seeing, and that's what inspires me with dynamism. Among the emerging communities, I would mention Corner Brook. There is no school or organization, but from 2006 to 2011, there was a 59% increase in the francophone population, one that we are unable to serve today. Even the mayor of Corner Brook is francophone, but we can't provide services because we lack funding.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** It is the second largest urban centre in the province.

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

We're going to pick up the pace a bit. So I will have to ask you to move on to immigration, which is the second part of your presentation.

Could you give us a brief presentation of about five minutes on that? We will then go around the table again, but I will have to reduce the time each committee member has because of the time we have left.

Mrs. Poirier, go ahead.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** In that case, Mr. Chair, I will skip the introduction since it is the same as the earlier one. I won't remind you of the importance of this for our communities and for maintaining their demographic weight. You are probably already very familiar with it.

As we have already said, the multi-year funding of the francophone immigration networks in our provinces by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada was an important step in the development of our communities.

As a result, we have been able to establish long-term partnerships with stakeholders, including employers, chambers of commerce and anglophone organizations working in this field.

Unfortunately, there are still several challenges that we must face every day. The lack of direct French-language services in the province is certainly the most problematic. We lack services in the schools, as well as reception and integration services, especially in remote regions.

The lack of opportunities to take the Test d'évaluation de français in our province is very problematic. This situation forces our newcomers to go to the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon or to Halifax to take the test. This is particularly the case for temporary applicants who wish to make the transition to permanent residence through Express Entry, as well as for permanent residents wishing to obtain Canadian citizenship.

Mr. Chair, I would like to point out the irony of the situation. The consular authorities of the French government have resources available and are recognized in our own province to conduct their French tests, in particular in partnership with Memorial University, while our own Government of Canada does not. However, these services are in their own country. The lack of direct services for temporary residents has long been an administrative anachronism that has certain negative impacts.

In our province, as it certainly is in others, the vast majority of francophone newcomers come for a job, which they sometimes already have lined up, and have a temporary work permit. When they step foot in our province, we have added value to offer them. We want to make sure that they come to contribute to the dynamic nature of our communities and that they know that their children can attend our schools. We are still unable to serve them, despite years of demanding a change in the situation.

This deprives us of a whole new francophone population. Because they are not properly informed and served, they orient themselves toward the linguistic majority, and their children head right toward being assimilated and will not contribute to our communities.

We should also mention the lack of direct national services for temporary residents. How can we support the temporary workers who come through Mobilité francophone, an initiative we applaud, if we can't offer them services? How can we encourage them to settle permanently in Canada and in our communities? This also applies to the participants of the Canada working holiday program and to international students.

In 2012, we were adversely affected by a very negative measure when the government decided not to financially support community organizations such as ours to travel to the Destination Canada forum. It deprives us of an extremely important promotional forum that worked very well. Our organization has not been compensated by our provincial government and has therefore not attended almost any editions since 2012. Our provincial delegation is no longer promoting our communities and the services available in French. This does not help candidates turn to Newfoundland and Labrador in their choice of destination.

Newfoundland and Labrador has a distinctive feature when it comes to international recruitment. It is 25 kilometres from France. I

am referring, of course, to the archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon. Unfortunately, our current agreements do not allow us to promote our province because it is no longer Canadian territory. We are losing a great recruiting opportunity because they often have many friendly and family ties with our province. This is an important retention factor, not to mention that they are accustomed to the climate and are already big hockey fans. However, we can't go there, even though it costs three times less to get there than to Labrador City, in our own province. In addition, 25% of their young people go to Quebec for their studies. These are lost opportunities for us.

We hope that our future agreements with the IRCC will allow us to do this. We should note that other federal departments have already shown their willingness to adapt to our reality in other sectors.

Once is not customary, and I wish to end my speech with some positive notes. Therefore, we are pleased with the federal government's willingness to educate each province and territory on setting targets for francophone immigration. We are currently negotiating with our provincial government and hope to have a target set within a few months.

• (0935)

We have also very positively welcomed the recent IRCC measure to facilitate the retention and return of international students through Express Entry.

Mr. Chair, members of Parliament, on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador's French speakers, we thank you for your attention.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Poirier.

Since we don't have a lot of time, committee members will have four minutes each for this round of questions and answers.

We will start with Sylvie Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being with us this morning. Your presentations were very interesting.

As is the case for many groups we have met with, your situation is problematic. Every organization told us their story, but your case is quite specific. There is a lack of money. It will take time to free up the money. I think three years is terrible.

As for immigration in your community—Ms. Lapointe referred to it, and we have heard about it often—are you aware that, in some cases, the funding that francophone organizations were to receive was paid to an anglophone organization that had one bilingual person to provide services in French? Have you encountered this?

• (0940)

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** No, that hasn't happened to us.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Right. It hasn't happened.

So in your case, no one has—I was going to say “diverted”—taken the money from the francophone side and given it to the anglophone side?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** No.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** The government has set itself a target in light of this. Are you currently setting a target provincially for a certain level of immigration?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We're working on it. We have approached the provincial government about this and, I have to say, we were received fairly positively. The government is currently reviewing the demographic growth strategy, which includes immigration. We hope to receive some news in the next provincial budget about launching our strategy. The old strategic plan didn't contain a target.

Currently, the government wants to establish numbers everywhere, including for us. We called for a fairly high target of 5%. It was mentioned that we are currently at 0.6%, so it would be nice to reach 5%.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** That's a lot.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We think the target is realistic because we have already surpassed 3.7%. We were at that rate just before the previous government abolished the francophone significant benefit program. Immigration increased very quickly and decreased immediately after.

So we believe that positive measures like Mobilité francophone and other programs like it will help us to get there. And if we get help from the province, which officially sets these numbers, we can reach 5%.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** So you think it's realistic to reach a francophone immigration threshold of 5%. How much time are you giving yourself to reach the 5% rate? Do you have a timeline for that? It certainly can't happen in the first year. Have you set a deadline to reach the 5% rate?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** No, it hasn't been discussed.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** It hasn't been discussed.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** However, I'm sincerely optimistic. We are doing pretty well because of the benefits provided, and it will be all the better if we can work with Saint Pierre and Miquelon. We are a small community ourselves, and there aren't many immigrants across the province. There are 700 in the entire province.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You want to reach 5%, and you are optimistic about that. What about retaining francophones in your region right now?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** It's important to point out that the oil industry has, in part, collapsed in our province.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Right.

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** However, if I stick to the numbers about school enrolment, for example, especially in St. John's, the number hasn't decreased, quite the opposite. It has continued to increase, which means that there is still some stability in the francophone community in the province, especially in St. John's.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We don't have official numbers. We have just submitted funding applications after the IRCC's last call for research proposals. So we hope to get it soon.

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

Thank you, Mrs. Boucher.

Mr. Samson, you have the floor.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Chair, I think it's Mr. Arseneault's turn.

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you.

Good morning, Mrs. Poirier and Mr. Corbineau. Your remarks are very interesting.

You have seen an increase in francophone immigration in minority communities, but there have been cuts to immigration. What are your needs in this area and what should the funds be used for? How much money would you need?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** That's a very broad question.

**Mr. René Arseneault:** Indeed.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We need direct services, in particular, which is a challenge in the regions. In some places, like Labrador City, we recruit a lot of immigrants, but we don't have the resources in place to provide direct services to newcomers. We are joining our efforts with those of the local francophone association, but it is still difficult to find these people.

Of course, money is a major concern, but some simple measures wouldn't be expensive. For example, we would like to be able to help temporary residents. It's when these people arrive at the airport that we need to go to them, and not two years later when they want to become permanent residents and don't need us anymore. At that stage, they are settled, integrated into a social network and their children are attending the English-language school. We have lost them. We need to seek them out at the airport. Unfortunately, we don't have the means for that.

We have been prohibited from helping temporary residents. Most francophone immigrants have a job when they arrive in our region. They are temporary residents because the process is quicker for the employer, who doesn't want to wait six months. He needs someone in two weeks. The vast majority of these people arrive as temporary residents, but we aren't allowed to provide services to them. Most of them stay here. I myself am an example of this. I don't have the numbers on hand, but of everyone I've met, very few leave.

It's unfortunate that we can't offer them any services. It would be a beneficial investment for our communities. This doesn't necessarily mean more money. We would simply like to be able to provide services to these newcomers. After two years, once they are permanent residents, they don't need us anymore.

• (0945)

**Mr. René Arseneault:** What would you need to be able to find these people when they arrive?

Should a federal office be set up solely for this purpose or should a francophone non-profit organization in Newfoundland and Labrador take on this responsibility?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** We want to encourage these people to integrate into our community, so also in our organizations and our schools. An organization from the community sector would be more appropriate. I have a hard time seeing a federal agency telling a newcomer which school he should enrol his children in.

**Mr. René Arseneault:** I'm sorry for interrupting you, but I don't have much time left.

In a few words, what is the answer to this problem? What could the federal government do?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** It could provide us with ways of supporting these people from the start, in the form of direct services. That's very important.

**Mr. René Arseneault:** Who would these services be for?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** Newcomers when they arrive here and have temporary resident status. It would involve supporting them in the early days, as soon as they arrive.

**Mr. René Arseneault:** Who would offer this support service?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** The community sector. It would most certainly be more effective.

**Mr. René Arseneault:** Is the community sector easily identifiable?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** Where we are, the francophone immigration network is part of the federation.

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

Mr. Choquette, you have four minutes.

**Mr. François Choquette:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to make a slight detour before getting to today's topic, immigration.

You may know that Senator Chaput introduced a bill that had already been tabled four times. It was Bill S-209. One of the issues in this bill is to ensure that, under Part IV of the Official Languages Act, the services provided by the federal offices are consistent with the vitality of the communities.

Unfortunately, the percentage of francophones in absolute numbers is decreasing over time. For example, in 2006, 4.2% of the population outside Quebec was francophone, while it was 4% in 2011. I don't know what the percentage is now, but it is constantly decreasing. The percentage needs to reach 5% for these services to be offered.

To preserve the vitality of these communities, people need to be able to continue using their language every day. So it would be appropriate for the legislation to evolve. However, the percentage continues to decline. In other words, we need that immigration. The senator explained that, without immigration, we won't succeed.

You talked a bit about that, but could you describe the immigration status in Newfoundland and Labrador again? Is the percentage of francophones stagnant or declining?

**Mrs. Cyrilda Poirier:** I'll let Mr. Corbineau answer that question.

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** As I mentioned earlier, officially, between 2006 and 2011, the francophone community increased by 36% in almost all regions, which is very strong growth. Immigration

certainly contributed to that growth, but it wasn't the only factor. I won't come back to that.

To answer your question, I don't know the percentage of newcomers compared with the community as a whole. We have extremely different communities. For example, in St. John's, which is the provincial capital, the origin of francophones is really quite mixed. We have people from every region of Canada and from Europe, Africa and Saint Pierre and Miquelon. Many people in St. John's come from away.

• (0950)

**Mr. François Choquette:** As I understand it, when it comes to services in Newfoundland and Labrador, you have no difficulty with the “by” and “for” principle, meaning that the services are offered by and for the official language minority communities. We have seen problems with that in other provinces.

At the moment, with respect to your relationship with the federal institutions and federal departments, there are no problems with service delivery by and for the official language minority communities. Is that correct?

**Mr. Gaël Corbineau:** In St. John's in particular, even though we haven't met the 5% francophone target in recent years, all jurisdictions have made significant efforts in terms of language, which was not the case previously. One of the concerns we have with service delivery is sharing jurisdictions between the federal government and the provincial government.

I'm sorry, but I'm going to use the example of Service Canada again. With respect to the employment assistance agreement that was signed between the province and the federal government in 2010, if I remember correctly, language was completely dismissed, and we lost services in French in some regions. I'm thinking of Labrador in particular here.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Corbineau and Mrs. Poirier.

This brings our meeting with you to an end.

On behalf of all members of the committee, thank you very much for your presentations and for being here. Please rest assured that your comments will be taken into consideration.

We will suspend the session for a few minutes.

Members of the committee, please note that we have been advised that there will be bells in a few minutes for a vote at 10:30 a.m. So we will suspend for a moment, after which we'll hear from Mr. Nahimana from Nova Scotia. At that point, we will see how to adjust the time accordingly.

We'll take a short break and resume in a few minutes.

• (0950)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (0950)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we resume the meeting.

I would like to welcome Emmanuel Nahimana from Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse.

In light of the requirements I mentioned earlier, I will ask you to make a presentation that will cover two areas, one on immigration and one on the roadmap, Mr. Nahimana.

There will be no allocated time for each committee member to ask questions. Instead, I will allow a question here and there to proceed as quickly as possible.

Given that Mr. Nahimana has come from Nova Scotia, we will start right away. We're listening, Mr. Nahimana.

● (0955)

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana (Project Manager, Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse):** Mr. Chair and members of the committee, good morning.

Let me thank you for inviting the Réseau en Immigration Francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse, RIFNE, of which I am the manager, to appear before you to speak to two priority issues for francophone communities in a minority setting, the roadmap and immigration in francophone minority communities.

The RIFNE is one of 13 francophone immigration networks in Canada. The RIFNE was born under the roadmap and the strategic plan to foster immigration in francophone minority communities. That's how the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, FANE, the official organization representing the Acadian and francophone community of Nova Scotia, signed the contribution agreements in 2006, first, with the Government of Canada through its Department of Citizenship and Immigration and, second, with the provincial government, represented by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration. The RIFNE brings together key community organizations that meet four times a year to assess their action plan and strategic plan for francophone immigration.

In my first part, I will comment on the roadmap and then go on to the second part on immigration in francophone minority communities.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, I cannot begin my remarks without stressing your willingness to act and your commitment as leaders of official languages in Canada. Canadians expect a lot from you, especially our francophone minority communities, as we plan to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Although I'm far from being an expert in the field, I suspect that the main intent of the roadmap is to give Canadians from all backgrounds, without distinction, an equal opportunity to be served in their language by departments and other federal institutions, and to empower them to contribute positively to services in their own language.

Across the province, the Acadian community has made significant progress, particularly in the area of education. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dear member, Darrell Samson, who has led the community council for over 10 years.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** There has been significant progress in the areas of education, arts, culture, economy and immigration through funding programs primarily under this roadmap. We appreciate the financial commitment of the departments of Citizen-

ship and Immigration, Justice, Health, Canadian Heritage, and other federal agencies that have contributed and continue to contribute to the development of our community.

As an example for Nova Scotia, let me mention the management of French-language education from kindergarten to university, the creation of many organizations that work to develop our community and, as a result, the increase in French-language services.

However, in my humble opinion, there is still a lot of work to be done. In our communities, we often see disappointments and frustrations. For example, in terms of promoting French-language services, during the 2015 summer consultations, the majority of stakeholders pointed out that francophone minority communities were still not known as a destination for immigrants who prefer to use French in Canada. Nova Scotia is no exception. We find it deplorable that we no longer have the means to promote our beautiful region and our beautiful province, its wealth, and the history of our province's francophonie to those interested in immigrating to our country because of the abolition of the funding to community partners through Destination Canada.

We can see that a great deal of effort has been made in recent years to develop community vitality.

● (1000)

All the community organizations, which are largely responsible for this vitality, have been struggling with chronic underfunding for years. In Nova Scotia, we believe that, without additional funding support for operations, some 10 out of the 28 organizations may be forced to close in the near future. It would be a disaster.

Still along the lines of vitality, one of the strengths of our communities is collaboration. To survive the whole year with the little money they receive from the various departments and agencies, the organizations join forces, either to share facilities—

**The Chair:** Mr. Nahimana, allow me to interrupt. The bell we've just heard indicates the House has just been called to order.

You may continue.

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Thank you.

Organizations pool their efforts and share space, materials and activities. However, this approach is, to a certain extent, a hindrance to the development and growth of francophone communities.

As part of the roadmap, federal institutions, each in their respective area, should provide financial support to community organizations to enable them to fulfill their ambitions and thereby contribute to their development. In practical terms, some organizations do not even receive funding for their operations and are forced to survive from one project to another. Others are no longer able to meet in person with the members of their community councils. Still others cannot afford to provide training and essential tools, such as computers, for their office. Mr. Chair and members of the committee, our community needs support.

Another important aspect of francophone communities is early childhood. At this stage of their learning, young French-speaking children develop their sense of belonging to the community and build their identity. Unfortunately, French-language child care needs are critical in our francophone communities. Immigrant parents, such as those in their host communities, are forced to use English-language day cares. It's frustrating for parents.

In addition, this problem has significant negative consequences on the operations and recruitment in our French-language schools and universities. As you know, the day cares supply those schools. We can go as far as saying that the lack of French-language services causes a very serious problem for the transmission of language and culture.

In closing, the examples I have mentioned in this presentation are only a few aspects of the challenges faced by the francophone community in my province. Mr. Chair, let me take this opportunity to recommend to the federal government to use mechanisms that safeguard the full linguistic duality of our francophone communities and, to that end, to put in place strategies that support community programs in all sectors.

In a speech made on October 27, 2016, here in the House of Commons, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly, indicated that the new action plan would be a priority. We hope that this plan will materialize, keeping in mind our community's real needs, which were expressed during consultations like this one, to foster its full development.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you.

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

We will proceed a little differently.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** We could move on to Mr. Nahimana's presentation on immigration.

**The Chair:** You're right, Mr. Samson, we could continue with the second part of the testimony.

Mr. Nahimana, I will give you a few minutes to make your presentation on immigration.

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will try to be brief.

Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse has been providing free services to French-speaking newcomers for 10 years.

As an immigration service provider, Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse has three main objectives: to increase and retain the number of French-speaking newcomers in Nova Scotia, to foster the

integration of the newcomers into the province, more specifically within the Acadian and francophone community, and to increase the reception and integration capacity of Acadian and francophone communities in Nova Scotia.

Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse is expanding its services. We now have settlement, integration and community connection services, for programs both before and after newcomers' arrival. To better achieve our goals, we work with other community partners, be they francophone or anglophone, to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

Before I get to the heart of the matter, I would like to begin by thanking IRCC and the Nova Scotia Immigration Office for their contribution to our activities. However, Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse would like the federal government to correct the inequities that have been around for 10 years between immigrant service providers. Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse is the only provider of immigrant settlement services—

• (1005)

**The Chair:** Mr. Nahimana, allow me to interrupt you briefly. Given that the bells are ringing to indicate that there is a vote, I need the unanimous consent of the members to continue the meeting for a few more minutes and allow you to finish your presentation. We'll try to wrap up the meeting within 10 minutes. Do the members of the committee agree?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Please continue. We have about 10 minutes left before we have to go to the House to vote.

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Thank you.

Immigration francophone Nouvelle-Écosse is the province's only provider of settlement and integration services in French. Unfortunately, we are sad to see that the centre cannot meet all the needs of French-speaking immigrants because the services are extremely limited.

I have been an employee with the centre for over eight years. I never miss an opportunity to say and I will continue to say that French-speaking immigrants in Nova Scotia need to be served in their language. We would like to be able to provide our French-speaking clients with the following services: crisis intervention services—in cases of mental health, family violence and others—refugee reception and resettlement services, French as a second language courses, child care services while immigrant parents use the services offered by our organization.

As you can see—

**The Chair:** Mr. Nahimana, if I may, I am going to suggest that, instead of continuing your presentation, you submit your text to the clerk of the committee. She will include your presentation with all our deliberations. We want to have time for two or three questions, and we absolutely have to finish this meeting at 10:15 a.m. Each member of the committee will quickly ask you a question.

We'll start with Mrs. Boucher.

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Okay, Mr. Chair.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question won't be very long, Mr. Nahimana.

Thank you for coming to meet with us and I'm sorry for the inconvenience. We didn't know there would be votes this morning. I will repeat the same question I asked earlier.

Many francophone organizations, particularly in the area of immigration, have told us that funds had been taken away from them and given to anglophone organizations for the reception of immigrants in minority communities. Has that also happened in Nova Scotia?

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** I could not confirm that sad reality for Nova Scotia. If it is truly a reality, I would not be able to confirm that this has happened, but I want our mandate to be respected so that we can fulfill our mandate, and that French-speaking immigrants, whether they are economic immigrants or refugees, are truly served by the service provider—

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** In French.

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Yes. It has to be done in French, instead of the money going directly to our anglophone collaborators. That's the case with French-speaking refugees, for example. We really need that category in our community to ensure our vitality.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Samson, go ahead.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Nahimana, I will ask two questions very quickly. It's actually a two-part question.

First, tell me a little about Destination Canada. As an organization in the immigration sector, can you recruit there? Second, what are the eligibility criteria?

• (1010)

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** In the past, a few years ago, community partners used to receive funding from IRCC to promote our communities outside Canada. Today, that is no longer the case, Mr. Samson. That is really hurting the visibility of our services in French, our communities and our wealth outside Canada. We would really like future immigrants to be able to know about the services in our community and to take specific measures to come here and use French in our province.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Do you have any comments on the eligibility criteria?

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Yes.

There is a problem with the eligibility criteria. Once again, we cannot serve some people, such as international students and temporary workers, because our source of funding, the federal government through IRCC, does not allow us to provide services to these people. We would also like to provide services to those clients as well, Mr. Samson.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you.

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

Mr. Choquette, the floor is yours.

**Mr. François Choquette:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be quick.

We have heard a lot about the “by and for” principle, that is, services provided by and for official language communities. In your province, do you think there are departments that have been offering programs, but the anglophone organizations end up providing those services in both official languages?

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** That's what happened with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, which unfortunately gave anglophone organizations the opportunity to serve French-speaking refugees.

Our mandate is far from being fulfilled, because those French-speaking refugees are not served by francophone service providers. We would like those refugees to be served by us, the francophone service provider.

**Mr. François Choquette:** Thank you very much.

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

This brings your presentation to a close, but rest assured that the text you are going to submit to the clerk will also be circulated and will be an integral part of our deliberations. Thank you very much for coming from Nova Scotia to meet with us today.

As you can see, we have a small scheduling problem because of an unexpected vote in the House.

Thank you, everyone. We will adjourn until next Tuesday.

**Mr. Emmanuel Nahimana:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.







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