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# Standing Committee on Official Languages

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Chair: Mr. René Arseneault





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• (1635)

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC)):** Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome to the 75th meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

As you can see, our committee chair is not here. Consequently, as the committee's first vice-chair, I will have the pleasure of chairing the meeting, and I therefore beg your indulgence.

As you are committee regulars here, I will spare you the instructions, unless you want to hear them. I would like to remind you, however, of one important point. Although this room is equipped with a good sound system, sound feedback may occur, which can be extremely harmful to interpreters and cause serious injury.

The most common cause of audio feedback is an earpiece being placed too close to a microphone. So we ask all participants to exercise great caution when handling their earpiece, especially when their microphone or that of the person sitting next to them is on.

In order to prevent incidents and to protect the hearing health of our esteemed interpreters, I ask participants to make sure that they speak into the microphone assigned to them and that they avoid holding their earpiece in their hands when it is not in use. The earpiece should be placed on the table, away from the microphone. Thank you for your attention to this instruction.

I would now like to welcome Mr. Stéphane Lauzon... Actually, he's not here at the moment.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Audrée Dallaire):** He's here, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Lauzon has just joined us, but I can't see him.

Mr. Lauzon, welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. I know you aren't a regular member of this committee, but we are pleased to have you with us today. I am informed that Mr. Lauzon will do his connection test a little later. If there is a problem with sound quality, I will suspend so we can do a sound test.

Today it is our pleasure to welcome Mr. Quell. I unfortunately can't see his title.

**The Clerk:** You'll see it on the second page of your notes, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you for your indulgence.

I would like to welcome the Hon. Anita Anand, President of the Treasury Board, and Carsten Quell, Executive Director, Official Languages Centre of Excellence, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Ms. Anand, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before starting, I want to recognize that we are meeting today on the unceded land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

I am joined today by Carsten Quell, Executive Director of the Official Languages Centre of Excellence. I am delighted to be appearing for the first time before the committee as President of the Treasury Board. I want to acknowledge the important work that the committee is doing in defence of our official languages. I also want to thank you for your thorough review of Bill C-13.

Bilingualism has always been one of my priorities since I was a child. I was born in Kentfield, Nova Scotia, to parents who had immigrated from India. My parents did not speak French, but they made sure that I learned both official languages. They did not do the same for my sisters, but I don't know why. I attended French immersion classes and learned the language at school.

It isn't just a good thing for a federal minister to be able to speak both official languages; it's also a responsibility that we take very seriously. My senior officials, like Mr. Quell, who is here with me, know that they can always choose to send me documents in English or in French and can also conduct briefing sessions in French. That's one of the reasons why I always tell my francophone staff, officials and colleagues that we can communicate in French if they so wish.

One of the most important aspects of my mandate is guaranteeing a fundamental right of all Canadians, the right to receive services from federal institutions in the official language of their choice.

As we all know, the modernized act expands the Treasury Board's role to include monitoring of the support provided for the vitality of the anglophone and francophone minority communities, the promotion of both official languages in Canadian society and the protection and promotion of the French language. It also confers on me, as President of the Treasury Board, a more prominent leadership role in implementing and administering the policy on official languages.

The modernized act also reinforces bilingual leadership in the public service. The deputy ministers and associate deputy ministers of the federal departments will now have to take mandatory language training, unless they are already bilingual, so that they can speak and understand both official languages.

Lastly, I would like to note that my department is also developing regulations that will provide us with a framework for ensuring that we comply with all sections of the act. I will be working on this file with Mr. Boissonnault and all concerned stakeholders. This is a priority, and since these important regulations will require extensive consultation, we will therefore take the time we need to do this work properly.

There has been no doubt in my mind, since I was a child, that it is extremely important to speak French, and that thought motivates me in the work I do every day.

My team and I will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you very much.

• (1640)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

I want to congratulate you on the quality of your French and to thank your parents for the efforts they have made.

Ms. Anand, since I am in the chair, I request the committee's unanimous consent to stay in my seat and use the six minutes allotted to me as a member of the Conservative Party of Canada to ask questions.

No one seems to be opposed to that.

Thank you, everyone.

Ms. Anand, I'm going to act as both judge and party here, but please be assured that I will remain impartial.

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** I'll judge your impartiality.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** The clock starts now for six minutes.

Minister, the Parliamentary Budget Officer claims there isn't enough money for you to implement Bill C-13, which became the new Official Languages Act this past June.

Will you be hiring a consulting firm, as the Treasury Board has previously done, so you can come up with the money by determining how we can eliminate a lot of consulting firms from the machinery of government?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** There are two elements here.

First, there's the expenditure review regarding the \$15 billion. However, that's not the same as the official languages support programs.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** As I understand it, you're going to find the necessary money and you won't need to draw on external resources to come up with the money you need to implement the act.

Is that it?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** We definitely have the money we need for official languages.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer didn't say the same thing, but we'll take your word for it.

Do you think the demographic weight of francophones in Canada is declining?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I'm responsible for implementing both parts of the act, for both anglophones and francophones. That's the role—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Pardon me for interrupting, Ms. Anand. As you know, my time is limited.

My question is simple: do you think, yes or no, that the demographic weight of francophones in Canada is declining?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I'm talking about my responsibilities, and in my case—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You don't want to venture an opinion.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** My role is to support both official languages—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** But we aren't discussing that, madam.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** —regardless of their situation. That's critical.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** All right. That's your answer, and I respect it.

My second question is as follows.

Is the demographic weight of Quebec francophones declining?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** As I said—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Is it the same answer?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** —I'm responsible for both official languages, in Quebec and across the country. That's the job I have to do as President of the Treasury Board.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You were appointed this past July. Have you met with representatives of the official language minority communities?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I will continue to work with everyone.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I'm asking you a different question, Ms. Anand.

Have you, yes or no, met with the organizations of the official language minority communities since you were appointed President of the Treasury Board this past July?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I've obviously met with the Commissioner of Official Languages, and I've spoken with officials across the country.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Yes, but so you haven't—

**Hon. Anita Anand:** They are stakeholders too.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You've met with the organizations personally.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I've spoken with anglophone and franco-phone officials in order to understand their needs.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

My question was simple, and I believe we can infer your answer.

Ms. Anand, is there any urgent need to halt the decline of French across Canada, including in Quebec?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I am responsible for ensuring that we have bilingual services in place for all Canadians and in the public service—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Pardon me, Ms. Anand, but I have to interrupt.

I am going to ask you my question once again, and then I'll move on to the next one if you don't answer it.

Is there any urgent need to halt the decline of French across Canada, including in Quebec? It's a simple question.

• (1645)

**Hon. Anita Anand:** We have Bill C-13, and, yes, I think we must—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** It isn't a bill any more; it's an act.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** —implement the act as soon as possible.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Yes, Mr. Iacono. Go ahead.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand that you want answers to your questions, but we have to give the witness a chance to answer the question, even if you don't like the first part of her answer.

You've asked one question after another for the past five minutes because you didn't like the way the minister was answering.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Mr. Iacono, pardon me—

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Pardon me, Mr. Chair. I'm not finished.

You are here in the role of committee chair today, and I think you really have to understand that, out of courtesy for the minister, you should give her a chance to answer your questions. Furthermore, when she answers a question, you need to accept the answer she gives. You can't comment on the way she answers or the reason for her answer.

I think you're overstepping your right to ask questions and the way you can do that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

You've made comments and interpreted my questions and remarks, and you're free to do so. I'm going to continue.

I'm restarting the clock for my speaking time.

Minister, this is your last chance to answer this question: is there any urgent need to address the decline of French in Canada and Quebec?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Yes, of course.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you.

What powers does the Minister of Official Languages have under the present act?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** The power to advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canada. I think the minister must also cooperate in developing and maintaining an all-of-government strategy for official languages.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

I've come to my final question.

Your government committed to amending the Official Languages Act in 2019. In 2021, it tabled a white paper stating in black and white that there should be a central agency. Again in 2021, it introduced Bill C-32. In 2022, it introduced a second bill, Bill C-13, and shut down clause-by-clause consideration in committee so it could move forward as fast as possible.

How can you claim to be listening to the communities when you say that Bill C-13 won't come into force for two or three years, as you told a Senate committee?

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Mr. Chair, the interpreters are having trouble doing their work given the speed at which you ask your questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Did you understand my question, Ms. Anand?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** We're working toward implementing the new act following from Bill C-13, of course.

The regulations and framework are part of the new act. So that means we'll be implementing them at the same time as Bill C-13.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Who's going to submit to the Treasury Board—

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

You've exceeded your six minutes of speaking time.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Serré, the clerk's clock isn't telling me I've exceeded my six minutes.

Thank you. I'll continue.

Ms. Anand, the government has to adopt and implement three orders for the act to be applicable. There are the powers of the commissioner, immigration powers and powers regarding official languages. The minister told us he didn't know when that would be done. Who will make the decision to table those orders?

**Mr. Marc Serré:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

You're well beyond your six minutes.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Serré, I am chairing the meeting, and I have a clock.

The six minutes haven't elapsed because I was interrupted during my remarks.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

You had 20 seconds left moments ago, and you took more time to ask your question.

I'm sorry, but we gave you our unanimous consent to ask questions for six minutes, and you've done that.

I'd like us to move on to the second speaker, please.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Go ahead, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** I'd like to check the chair's speaking time, considering that he was interrupted by points of order.

Madam Clerk, would you please tell us where the chair's speaking time stands?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Go ahead, Madam Clerk.

**The Clerk:** My clock says 5 minutes and 57 seconds.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** His six minutes hadn't elapsed.

Mr. Chair, you have three seconds left.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Minister, I'm going to reword the last part of my question because I was interrupted.

When will the government table the orders and vote on them so that the act can be implemented in its entirety?

• (1650)

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Most of the provisions of the modernized Official Languages Act came into force when it received royal assent. We're continuing to implement it, along with part VII of the act.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Minister, I must interrupt you because my speaking time is up. You will have a chance to complete your answer during another intervention should you wish to do so.

Mr. Samson, you have the floor for six minutes.

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

Thank you very much, Minister. I'm very pleased that you're here and that you come from the cradle of Acadie, in Nova Scotia, as I do.

I have to say I very much enjoyed your opening remarks. You said that people could communicate with you in the language of their choice. I've always spoken to you in French and you have al-

ways answered me in French since you were elected. I really thank you for that.

You said something earlier, and I'd like to know whether I heard right. Did you ask your deputy ministers to learn French? Were those requirements already established before you arrived?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** It's in the act, of course. I'll explain the situation and the provisions of the act to you.

First, every deputy minister has a responsibility to ensure compliance with Treasury Board directives. I also understand that everyone has to comply with those directives. Every department must comply with the act, and every deputy minister must ensure that's the case. So there's a leadership role to play with regard to official languages, and for French, of course. Ninety-six per cent of positions are now bilingual.

[*English*]

That is to say, 96% of bilingual positions are staffed by people who have met the requirements for bilingualism.

[*Translation*]

The work is ongoing. We have to continue supporting both official languages in our public service and among officials, and we now know we have an act with which to do it.

I also understand that this committee has studied and supported Bill C-13.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** That's very good, Minister.

As you know, I love the fact that the Treasury Board is responsible for monitoring the act. The Treasury Board has the expertise to monitor legislation and so on.

One part of that monitoring function is evaluating various departments.

In your role as President of the Treasury Board, how will you now be able to determine whether all departments are following and complying with the Official Languages Act?

I asked the same question about six or seven years ago.

The example I'm going to cite is related to a report that the departments prepare every year and that is submitted to you every three years. In the past, members have been very disappointed because it's a kind of self-evaluation of each of the departments.

How can we ensure that the work actually gets done and isn't just reported as such in the departments' self-evaluations?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** First of all, we prepare an annual report in which we may outline progress made and what has to be done to continue improving the situation and increasing the offer of services in both official languages.

Second, there's an infrastructure framework that's the responsibility of the office of Mr. Quell, who is here, at the Treasury Board Secretariat. It's the Official Languages Centre of Excellence Initiative.

And then there's a Commissioner of Official Languages, who monitors the situation and continues to support official languages. The commissioner may take measures if the Official Languages Act is not being complied with.

I met with the commissioner, and he told me that he takes the new Official Languages Act very seriously. We will be working together to ensure that we have a workplace where all employees can work in the official language of their choice.

• (1655)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have 15 seconds left.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Very well.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ask Mr. Serré; he should know.

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

RCMP representatives appeared before our committee last week. As you are probably aware, some designated bilingual positions weren't staffed with bilingual personnel.

I suggested to one of the representatives that they apply an official languages strategy, and he told me he intended to do so.

The RCMP representative said that there were two aspects that had to be reconciled: bilingualism and public safety.

If, for security reasons, a position must be staffed with a person who isn't bilingual, shouldn't that position be a term position until that person has taken courses and can manage in French or until a person who meets the bilingualism requirements can be found?

I'd like to know what you think about that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Samson, your time is up.

However, I will let Ms. Anand answer briefly.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Under the act, as President of the Treasury Board, I may take measures to ensure that officials comply with the act by means, for example, of informal monitoring, requests for information and external audits.

So there are measures to deal with that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

I now turn the floor over to the second vice-chair of this committee, Mr. Beaulieu, for six minutes.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to both witnesses for being here.

Ms. Anand, I'd like to go back to what Mr. Godin said.

Do you acknowledge that French is in decline in Quebec? What indicators do you use to determine that?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I'm responsible for implementing Bill C-13. I'm also responsible for supporting both official languages across our country, not just in Quebec.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You still aren't answering the question. Is it because you don't know?

For example, I can tell you that the percentage of Quebec residents who mainly speak French at home fell from 79% in 2016 to 77.5% in 2021. Those figures come from Statistics Canada.

Do you agree with those figures? Do you admit that there has been a decline?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** The President of the Treasury Board is responsible for supporting both official languages across the country, not just in the province of Quebec. That obviously includes emergencies, but it also means we have to continue working with everyone in the country—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You aren't ready to acknowledge that French is declining, but you admit that the federal government has a responsibility to protect French in Quebec. Is that correct?

Do you understand how that's a bit troubling? Since 2020, the Liberals, the former minister of Official Languages and others have repeated that their government is the first one to acknowledge the decline of French. Bill C-13 was amended to include the fact that French must also be protected in Quebec, but it seems that many Liberals don't acknowledge the decline of French.

The former minister of Official Languages acknowledges that French has declined as a mother tongue, while the Minister of Official Languages seems to recognize the decline across all indicators.

Whether it's the first official language spoken or the language of work, all the indicators show that French has declined, not just in Quebec and Canada, but in France as well. It's a bit troubling if you don't acknowledge that.

As President of the Treasury Board, you are responsible for providing follow-up and giving instructions. The Treasury Board plays an important role in part VII of the Official Languages Act.

What measures will be taken to protect French in Quebec?

• (1700)

**Hon. Anita Anand:** First, I want to say that we support the Government of Quebec. Second, we have invested in Quebec to support its immigration program. It is clear—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I am talking about the official languages programs. That is the purpose of the committee.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Allow me to continue.

In 2021, the federal government achieved its target of 4.4% francophone immigration outside Quebec for the first time—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I will not allow you to continue if you do not answer my question.

In your opinion, what measures in the 2023-28 Action Plan for the Official Languages are intended to protect French in Quebec?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** For example, we have federal offices located near a school. That is one way of making it known that official language minority communities will now always be bilingual. It also means that even if the size of the official language minority community is declining in proportion to the linguistic majority in its province or territory, federal offices will continue to be bilingual. There are proposals in the act to make sure there are supports. If there is a situation—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** For example, in the Action Plan for the Official Languages, it being part of your mandate to coordinate the implementation of that act and make recommendations in that regard, funding of new projects valued up to \$137.5 million was announced.

What proportion of that funding do you think will be used to support French?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** This is an area handled by my colleague Randy Boissonnault, the minister, and I believe he has already appeared before this committee to answer these questions.

For myself, I am President of the Treasury Board and I am responsible for public services, the public service and infrastructure throughout Canada.

I can answer questions on that subject.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** In your meetings with members of the Senate or the media, you have said that you will work on preparing regulations for part VII of the Official Languages Act, but only in 2025-26.

For 53 years, official languages funding in Quebec has essentially been used to support English, and that is one of the major causes of the decline in Quebec.

Will there be changes in this regard?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I would like to clarify something concerning the timetable you referred to. There are two items to take into account: the framework and the regulations.

The framework will be delivered within the next six to nine months. The regulations will be delivered in two or three years. So—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ms. Anand, I am unfortunately obliged to interrupt you because Mr. Beaulieu's turn has already lasted more than six minutes.

For fairness' sake, I have to be the time watchdog.

Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

Ms. Anand, you will be able to finish what you were saying if someone else asks you questions on the same subject.

I will now turn the floor over to the member from Manitoba, Ms. Ashton.

Ms. Ashton, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Thank you.

I would also like to welcome the minister.

First, we know that Treasury Board now has new official languages obligations. In that regard, have you had an opportunity yet to meet with representatives of official language minority communities?

More specifically, have you met with representatives of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, or FCFA, and the Quebec Community Groups Network, or QCGN?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** My team and I speak with many people across the country and I am going to meet with other leaders and other organizations in Canada.

I take my responsibilities in relation to Bill C-13 very seriously.

I have a great affinity for French and the two official languages, especially in the province where I was born, so I will definitely also be meeting with Acadians.

• (1705)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** To be more specific, the FCFA is the main organization that represents francophones outside Quebec. It did a lot of work on the modernization of the Official Languages Act and it is in the best position to guide you in the work you will have to do in connection with Bill C-13.

When do you plan to meet with the FCFA and the QCGN?

**Mr. Carsten Quell (Executive Director, Official Languages Centre of Excellence, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat):** Thank you for your question.

We are in regular contact with representatives of the official language minority communities. For example, two weeks ago, we met with the FCFA to—

Pardon me?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** My question was actually about when you plan to have an official meeting with the leaders of the FCFA.

Have you made a plan to meet with them as soon as possible?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Yes, it will be as soon as possible. I know my office is in contact with that organization. We are trying to organize a meeting as soon as possible.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you.

I think it is a bit disappointing that you have not met with those organizations officially, since they are the ones that will be able to guide you on the ground for the next steps.

In addition, the francophone community organizations want the time for making regulations under the new Official Languages Act to be 18 months or less.

When will the regulations provided for in Bill C-13 be created? I am thinking, in particular, of the ones associated with part VII of the Official Languages Act that deal with positive measures for supporting the development of the French and English linguistic minority communities.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I would like to explain, if I may, because I have not had an opportunity to complete my thoughts.



We have to follow a process for creating regulations. First, we have to hold consultations with the stakeholders; second, there is a process to follow in the Senate and the House of Commons. Making sure that we can move bills through the Senate and Parliament as soon as possible is not an easy matter.

We have to follow this process and we have to take the time to be sure we are going to have the necessary regulations to support the new Official Languages Act. That is what I and my team are going to do.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Are you aware that some organizations are concerned about the timetable for implementing the act?

At the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, you talked about a timetable of three years and maybe more. That is not acceptable for the official language minority communities. They want the work to be done within 18 months or in less than 18 months.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I did not say that it will be in three years or more. I said it would take two to three years, and it will be necessary to meet with the stakeholders and organizations you named. We will then have to follow the process in the Senate and House of Commons.

I would like to point out that there have to be the necessary consultations. We have to hear the opinions of the groups, the organizations you named.

That step is crucial before drafting and finalizing the regulations.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** I think we are all in agreement on that.

I named only two main organizations, but I want to point out, Minister, that Bill C-13, the modernization of the Official Languages Act, is signature legislation. It is an historic bill, promised by your government.

However, your two- to three-year timetable is considered by those organizations to be unacceptable. That is why we are asking that the deadline be brought forward.

• (1710)

**Mr. Joël Godin:** You have 15 seconds left.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Can the minister confirm that the responsibilities she is given in the new Official Languages Act relate to the entire act, and particularly part VII?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Please give a brief answer, Ms. Anand or Mr. Quell.

**Mr. Carsten Quell:** We have a responsibility for coordination under part VII.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Quell.

We will now give the floor to Ms. Goodridge for five minutes.

[English]

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Thank you.

Thank you, Minister Anand, for being here today at our committee.

After eight long years of absolutely wasteful spending and, in fact, the doubling of spending on outside consultants, what we have been seeing is the government continuing to spend more and more money on this. In fact, someone in the government thought it was a good idea to spend \$669,000 and change on a contract to give advice on how to save money on consultants.

Do you think that's a wise use of taxpayer dollars?

[Translation]

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I was not the minister at that time. I am here to discuss the issue of the two official languages and my responsibilities in that regard.

If you have a question on that subject, I will answer it.

[English]

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** I ask this because it's clearly pertinent. One thing that we have been seeing—and that has been brought up by a number of different stakeholders on Bill C-13—was the fact that there wasn't one central person in charge. They asked to have Treasury Board be the one central person, but, effectively, accountability has been spread so that every single minister has been responsible minister. Minister Boissonnault answered that pretty clearly in our meeting last week. We just continue to see this government pushing forward and doubling down on spreading accountability so that, effectively, no one is responsible.

Who is responsible, at the end of the day, for official languages here in Canada?

[Translation]

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I share responsibilities with Mr. Boissonnault.

As I said before, I am responsible for the public service and public servants: for 250,000 public servants from one end of Canada to the other, and for bilingual services. That is part of parts IV, V and VII of the Official Languages Act and concerns support for official language minority communities.

As Mr. Boissonnault said when he appeared before your committee, I believe, he must continue to support organizations in official language minority communities everywhere in Canada. We therefore have—

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** —responsibilities—

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** —and we are going to work together.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** You have decided not to heed the opinion of francophone communities outside Quebec, who have very clearly stated their desire for a central agency to be created for official languages, rather than responsibility being divided between the Minister of Official Languages and yourself.

When Canadians have official languages-related problems, they do not know whom to contact. So this is still a problem and I think you need to explain why you decided not to heed what the franco-phone community was asking for.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I will tell you that this committee studied and supported Bill C-13 and all members of the House voted in favour of this bill.

I was appointed as minister at the end of July of this year. I am here to support the two official languages and I will do so every day with the team in my department.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** If you had been the minister at that time, would you have suggested changes in the responsibilities?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** We need to continue to support and implement Bill C-13. We have to work together.

If you think it is important, we will have to work together every day.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** There are 30 seconds left.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** I asked a very simple, very clear question. I'm going to ask it again in English.

If you had been the minister, would you have made it clear that there was only one person responsible for official languages in this country?

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Like this committee, I think the Canadian public is very happy with this bill and I am going to continue implementing it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have 10 seconds left.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Since the minister refuses to give me an answer, I will give my speaking time to someone else.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Goodridge.

We are now going to go over to the Liberals.

Mr. Iacono has the floor for five minutes.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister.

I hope that everything is going well for you so far and it is not too difficult.

You said earlier that you learned French when you were young. Can you talk a bit about the importance of that experience and how we could improve bilingualism in Canada?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** We live in a country where there are a lot of immigrants. My parents, who came from India, were also immigrants. They are dead now and I miss them.

I do not know why, but when I was young, my father told me that I had to learn French. He did not say the same about his own language.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** I have a point of order.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** He told me it was crucial to speak French.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** I have a point of order.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** We are listening, Mrs. Goodridge.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Thank you.

The Minister refused to answer my questions about her mandate at Treasury Board, because that was not related to the study underway; now she is talking about her childhood.

How is that relevant?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ms. Kayabaga, you have the floor.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I think we have to respect the Minister, who is appearing today to answer our questions. Our colleague Mr. Iacono asked her some questions, and the member, who is participating remotely, interrupted him to say I don't know what, exactly. He is entitled to ask questions and the Minister is entitled to answer them.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Ms. Kayabaga, I have to interrupt you...

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have a point of order.

Let's get back to Mr. Iacono's questions and continue the meeting.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ms. Kayabaga, I remind you that Mr. Iacono did exactly the same thing earlier.

You cannot accuse one person of something and then do the same thing as they did.

We are listening, Ms. Kayabaga.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Mr. Chair, you have a duty to let me speak when I raise a point of order as a member of the committee.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ms. Kayabaga, I am going to let you finish, but if I find that what you are saying is becoming debate, I will interrupt you.

You have the floor.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Mr. Chair, I will go back to what I was saying, to say that we are entitled to speak, as members of the committee. You, as chair, have a duty to let me speak. Unfortunately, you are cutting me off and I have to repeat myself once again.

I would like us to get back to the fact that our colleague is asking the Minister questions and that he is waiting for answers from her. I would therefore like us to let him finish, because right now we are taking up his time.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I want to make sure you have finished on your point of order, Ms. Kayabaga.

If that is the case, I will give the floor back to Mr. Iacono.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Mr. Chair, give me a minute, because right now I am a bit confused. I do not know whether the Minister had finished her answer and I am not prepared to continue, since I do not know where we are. I hope you stopped my timer.

I am going to ask the Minister whether she has finished her answer. After that, I will continue. You cannot restart my timer if I do not know where we are.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ask your question, please.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Minister, had you finished answering the first question when we interrupted you?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I would like to continue, because that question relates to my work. It is somewhat rare for an anglophone minister whose parents were immigrants to be able to speak French as I do. That is why my comments are relevant. It is also important, also because there is a lot of diversity in our country. We must therefore create an environment in which everyone is able to speak both official languages, and support both languages.

Thank you for your question.

● (1720)

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Regarding the investments in your plan, do you have enough money to implement Bill C-13?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Yes, that is the case right now. If we need additional financial assistance, I will request it.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** How much money is the government investing in language training for public servants?

**Mr. Carsten Quell:** I cannot give you exact numbers, but each department is responsible for training its employees.

At Treasury Board, led by Ms. Anand, we plan to publish a new language training framework that will provide measures to help members of equity groups learn a second official language.

The federal government has developed a cross-sectional plan to ensure consistency and make sure that all new employees have an opportunity to receive the language training that will enable them to rise through the ranks and hold posts that involve new responsibilities.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** What measures have contributed to increasing the number of bilingual positions in Canada?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** As I said, 96% of the positions are now bilingual. That means that the people who hold those positions already meet bilingualism requirements. We must therefore continue this work, which is the day-to-day work done by Carsten Quell and his team.

Mr. Carsten, you have the floor.

**Mr. Carsten Quell:** Thank you.

At present, 42% of public service positions are designated bilingual. The government has ensured a balance that will offer unilingual francophones in Quebec and anglophones elsewhere the opportunity to make a career in the public service. When necessary, positions are designated bilingual, of course.

As the Minister has said, 96% of the people who hold bilingual positions meet the language requirements of their position.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

We will continue with a period of two-and-a-half-minute questions.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Anand, Treasury Board plays a key role in the federal government when it comes to implementing the Official Languages Act. There is a section in the new Act that states that one purpose of the Act is to "advance the existence of a majority-French society in a Quebec where the future of French is assured."

In relation to that section, have you thought of ways to comply with and implement the Act?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** I am going to answer your question first and I will give my colleague the floor after.

We have to continue supporting the francophones of Quebec and the province of Quebec. The support needed for immigration is important. I know that my colleague Mr. Miller is working on that. As well, he has produced an immigration plan and he is working with Quebec.

As well, we know that there are areas in which the people in minority communities in Quebec have to get the support they need. We are continuing to provide that support.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Have there been discussions about adopting measures that will support French in Quebec?

You mentioned official language minority communities, but Quebec also comprises a minority within Canada and is part of a linguistic minority in North America.

Have there been discussions about this? Do you intend to analyze the situation to make sure that there really are measures to protect French?

● (1725)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have 15 seconds left, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Mr. Quell, you may also answer my question.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** In Quebec, all services are offered in French. At present, there are services in French in...

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Ms. Anand, I have to interrupt you.

Thank you.

Ms. Ashton, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to make a comment.

I am aware of the Minister's personal history. I, too, am the daughter of immigrants who did not speak French when they arrived in Canada. My parents insisted that my brother and I learn French, in immersion, since French is one of the two official languages of Canada.

Acknowledging that French is declining highlights the importance of implementing Bill C-13 and Treasury Board's responsibilities as soon as possible.

Given this situation, I hope Treasury Board is going to move matters along faster; at a meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, there was talk of two or three years.

We know that all federal institutions are required to comply with the Official Languages Act, including Part VII of the Act, which deals with the positive measures needed to ensure the development of the official language minority communities.

Do you intend to clarify the concept of positive measures in the regulations under Part VII?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** The purpose of the regulations is to continue to ensure that the Act is more specific.

Of course, we are going to do that. However, my responsibility is to guide federal institutions and provide them with policies and advice so that they comply with all provisions of the Act. As Minister, I am going to continue to stress the importance of doing this.

If it is possible to implement the Act and the process faster, I will do it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Ashton.

We will now begin a quick round of questions by the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. We will start with Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Dalton, you now have the floor for two minutes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Congratulations, Minister, on your appointment. I know you were put there to help put an end to some of the waste that's going on in government. I would say maybe that's the appearance of something happening, because the budget has increased by \$10 billion in the past year, and one of your roles is to cut down \$3 billion a year.

Do you not see it as ironic that KPMG was consulted with \$670,000 of taxpayers' money to figure out how to reduce consultants?

Just give a simple yes or no.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** That's not relevant.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** It's relevant.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Anita Anand:** That contract had nothing to do with me as President of the Treasury Board, in connection with the spending review. The Minister of Natural Resources decided to award that contract in 2022.

[*English*]

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Excuse me, Minister, because my time is so short.

The government has, in the past year alone, spent—

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have the floor, Mr. Lauzon.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair...

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Lauzon, unfortunately, you have not done the sound tests. To comply with procedure, could you ask someone else to state your point of order?

We cannot accept a communication when the sound tests have not been done.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** I will do it, if I may.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I am sorry, Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Samson, you have the floor.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** With respect, Mr. Dalton, the questions you ask today have to relate to official languages.

I would like the Conservatives not to waste their time asking questions about government investments to which they will not get an answer, rather than talking about official languages, which is such an important subject.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Dalton, you may continue.

[*English*]

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** It's \$16.7 billion that has been spent on consultants in the last year alone. How much money has been spent on consultants for official languages? The reason I ask this is that the action plan has \$30.5 million to be spent on economic development for the official languages. Groups have been telling us that they have seen no funding. What they do see, however, is the government's year-to-year spending expanding by billions of dollars.

How much is being spent on consulting on official languages?

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Dalton, your speaking time is up.

Thank you.

Ms. Anand, you may provide an answer when you are answering other questions. Ms. Kayabaga will have two minutes to ask questions.

Ms. Kayabaga, I chair the committee and I simply told Ms. Anand that she could answer Mr. Dalton's question if she wished. That said, you may ask your questions.

You have the floor.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have only two minutes' speaking time; I will not waste them on that.

Thank you for being with us, Minister.

A lot has been said about the francophonie outside Quebec and the importance of immigration for the francophonie outside Quebec.

What do you think about francophone immigration to Canada outside Quebec? Can you reiterate the importance of making sure we achieve our francophone immigration levels every year? This is important to us.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** That's a good question.

It's very important, of course.

I went to Alberta last month, and some francophone officials there told me about their experience. They want to work in a public service environment where they can speak French.

We want to support immigration by people who speak French all across the country.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you for your answer.

We know that 65% of the francophone pool in the entire world is in Africa.

What do you think of the idea of supporting the immigration of francophone Africans, especially African students?

**Hon. Anita Anand:** That's a question for Mr. Miller.

I support the immigration levels that he presented last week. I will continue to support the French language and francophone immigration.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Do you have any further information to pass on to the committee on your role in the francophonie in Canada and outside Quebec?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Anand.

Unfortunately, Ms. Kayabaga's two and a half minutes of speaking time are up. You may forward the information in writing to my colleague.

Witnesses, thank you for participating in this first part of our committee meeting today.

We will suspend in order to do a test with Mr. Lauzon and to prepare for the next witness panel to arrive.

Ms. Anand and Mr. Quell, thank you for being here today.

**Hon. Anita Anand:** Thank you, everyone.

● (1730) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

● (1735)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** We will resume and start the second part of the 75th meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

I would like to welcome the witnesses.

With us is Catherine Tait, President and Chief Executive Officer of CBC/Radio-Canada.

Thank you for being with us today.

We also have Marco Dubé, Chief Transformation Officer and Executive Vice-President, People and Culture.

Welcome, Mr. Dubé.

Ms. Tait, you will have five minutes for your opening statement.

Then we will go to a period of questions.

Go ahead, Ms. Tait.

**Ms. Catherine Tait (President and Chief Executive Officer, CBC/Radio-Canada):** Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to this meeting.

As you can see, I am joined here by Marco Dubé, Chief Transformation Officer and Executive Vice-President, People and Culture. He is the official languages champion at CBC/Radio-Canada.

I want to be clear, CBC/Radio-Canada is proud of the phenomenal work it does to serve Canadians in English and French in every corner of this country.

We know how much people depend on us, particularly in minority language communities where we are one of the few media broadcasting in the French language. We take our commitment seriously, particularly our ability to support the health and vitality of the French language every day across the country. We are also an organization where employees are encouraged to express themselves in either English or French. Where our documents are shared in both languages, and where staff are encouraged to learn the other Official Language. I would not want one unfortunate incident to take away from those facts.

This Committee has invited me here to discuss media reporting about one of our English-language podcasts that was adapted into French and Spanish. I understand how that reporting caused this Committee concern. I want to assure you that what has been reported does not accurately reflect who we are as an organization, our commitment to supporting Official Languages, or our day-to-day practice when it comes to adapting content into other languages.

CBC and Radio-Canada each offer Canadians hundreds of podcasts. CBC and Radio-Canada have worked together on the adaptation of three very popular CBC podcasts into French. They were adapted either by studios in Quebec using actors who are members of the UDA or by Radio-Canada itself.

In the case of the podcast *Alone: A Love Story*, CBC was approached by Studio Ochenta, which proposed adapting *Alone* into French and Spanish. They did not seek out the expertise that already exists in Canada. That was a mistake. And, an unfortunate and hurtful comment was made in a media interview regarding the Quebec accent. This was wrong, and it is not a position that we hold. We admit it unequivocally and have offered our sincere apologies.

We are fortunate to have, here in Canada, an unparalleled dubbing industry that works with very talented actors. We use their services often, for podcasts and for TV programs, and that is what we should have done in this case. We are clarifying our practices to prevent this from happening again. We have withdrawn the French version and we will redo the episodes with a Quebec adaptation company. Radio-Canada will be in charge of the adaptation.

When I learned of the incident, I immediately called and wrote to Tania Kontoyanni, the president of l'Union des artistes, and offered my unequivocal apology. Ms. Kontoyanni kindly accepted my apology.

I am aware that this Committee had invited two of my employees to take questions from Members on this matter. As President and CEO, I am responsible to Parliament for the activities of the public broadcaster.

• (1740)

[English]

When mistakes are made, we correct them, but all of our employees must be confident that their work is shielded from external interference.

[Translation]

All of us have a responsibility to protect the independence of Canada's public broadcaster. And I welcome the Committee's support in this effort. I want you to know that CBC/Radio-Canada's commitment to the health and vitality of the French language remains steadfast.

It is vital to our mandate to serve all Canadians. That commitment will not change.

And with that, I welcome your questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Tait.

Before we begin the round of questions, I would like to say the following.

A moment ago, you mentioned the correspondence that you had with the committee.

The fact that we are hearing you today will not preclude us from potentially summoning other witnesses. While our objective is not to interfere in content, programming, creativity or innovation, we may nevertheless revisit the rest of the motion in future.

Then, without further ado, we will begin the round of questions, starting with Bernard Généreux, of the Conservative Party of Canada.

Mr. Généreux, you have six minutes.

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

Ms. Tait and Mr. Dubé, welcome and thank you for being here today.

You've no doubt taken note of the motion that I submitted to the committee. I hope my accent isn't a problem for you. Is that all right?

• (1745)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** In an organization as important as CBC/Radio-Canada, which is mostly funded by public money, how was it possible for something so disrespectful toward the Quebec francophone and francophile population of Canada to occur? Can you explain that to me?

And that question logically leads to the following one, which is this: are there any safeguards for preventing this kind of situation?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I think it's important to know that the CBC/Radio-Canada teams produce hundreds of programs every month, thousands of hours of programming in both official languages and eight Indigenous languages. In this case, one mistake was made among the thousands of hours of programming.

So as I said earlier, I hope that an unfortunate and regrettable incident such as this won't cast doubt on our work as a whole. It should be borne in mind that we have two teams, one anglophone, the other francophone, and more than 3,000 people on each side who work together every day to produce an enormous number of programs.

I would dare say that we are one of the most bilingual businesses in the federal family.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Ms. Tait, you said that you do in-house translations at Radio-Canada, but that you also contract out. You mentioned the Union des artistes earlier.

How many podcasts, videos and other programs may have been translated, or actually have been translated, by French teams rather than Quebec ones?

If that happened, were any calls for tenders issued that might explain how a team in France, for example, or in Quebec was selected?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** First of all, many podcasts on the English side have been adapted in French by either in-house Radio-Canada teams or Quebec studios. We have never done business with agencies or businesses in France.

In this instance, an employee of ours received a proposal for translation into French and Spanish from a company that specializes in podcasts in several languages. So it was a response to a proposal.

We don't have any other similar examples.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** In spite of that, Ms. Tait, what could have caused that person to make that decision? That's why we want to hear from the other two witnesses we requested. The Chair explained it clearly: we aren't interested in the general aspects of their everyday work.

What was the basis of the decision made by that person within your organization. If it was a reflexive response, could it potentially occur again?

I'm asking a basic question. In addition, remarks were then made about avoiding the Quebec accent. You referred to that earlier. I'm going to restrain myself because otherwise I might make some unpleasant comments, but, sincerely, between you and me, those remarks were insulting not only to both the Standing Committee on Official Languages and the Quebec and Canadian French language, but also to the entire population of Quebec and particularly Quebec artists.

I hope this kind of incident never occurs again because it's a downright insult to the Quebec nation.

• (1750)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I accept responsibility for that mistake, and that's why I immediately called the president of the Union des artistes in Quebec to apologize.

I entirely agree with you about those remarks.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I'll repeat my question—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have 30 seconds left.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Basically, are there any internal safeguards to prevent this kind of incident from occurring in future?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Mr. Dubé, would you like to add a comment?

**Mr. Marco Dubé (Chief Transformation Officer and Executive Vice-President, People and Culture, CBC/Radio-Canada):** I'm going to answer the question.

Yes, it was absolutely a mistake, an isolated incident. We have rectified the situation, and we're here to acknowledge and accept our responsibility for it.

We have reviewed the team's processes to ensure that the situation won't reoccur.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** If the processes are—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Généreux, your question is probably relevant, but your time is up.

We will now turn the floor over to Mr. Serré, of the Liberal Party of Canada.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Tait and Mr. Dubé, thank you for being here in committee.

I also want to thank you for clarifying the situation. You reacted directly to the motion; you spoke to the union in Quebec; you apologized; and you said that it was entirely unacceptable. We all agree on that. You said you had taken measures to prevent any reoccurrence of the situation. You clearly responded to the motion that was introduced here in committee.

In a Radio-Canada article published yesterday, concerns were raised about the quality of journalism in Canada. The media around the world are coming under significant pressures.

What could the federal government do to enhance the quality of journalism in our official language minority communities?

I come from northern Ontario, and I'm very proud of the quality that we see at CBC/Radio-Canada. However, what more can we do to improve the quality of journalism here in Canada?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I could talk to you about that for hours.

I'll begin with our journalistic standards and practices, which are central to everything we do for journalism to ensure a level of quality rarely seen globally. That's the essence of what we do. Ultimately, it's the journalists who do the work. It isn't us, Mr. Dubé and I, who do it; it's the journalists.

If you want to know what you can do to improve and even promote journalism, especially for the official language minority communities in the regions outside Quebec, then provide better funding for your public broadcaster.

We know that, once there's a presence, once we're on the ground, we have an impact. What's important is how close the public broadcaster is to the public. That's how we earn people's trust. It's our presence in the regions that improves matters.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Ms. Tait, for mentioning funding.

As a Franco-Ontarian, I get very concerned when I see the leader of the Conservative Party roaming the country and saying outright that he wants to terminate the CBC's funding. We're also very concerned about Radio-Canada cross the country.

Can you explain to me what the impact will be on Radio-Canada if the Conservative Party comes to power and simply terminates the CBC's funding? Will it be able to offer the same services as those it currently provides in northern Ontario and across the country?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** That's exactly the topic I explored yesterday when I had the pleasure of addressing the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal at the World Without Radio-Canada conference.

Without Radio-Canada and without the CBC, there will be a loss of talent, a loss of culture and a loss of democracy, as well as a decline in the links among communities across the country.

We are a bulwark against disinformation and the polarization of our society. We must protect our public broadcaster, which is invaluable to the Canadian public, both anglophone and francophone.

• (1755)

**Mr. Marc Serré:** How many jobs will be lost and what impact will that have on the network if the CBC's funding is completely cut off? How will Radio-Canada be able to provide services?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** There you're putting your finger on the problem. People think that Radio-Canada is—

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Pardon me for interrupting, Ms. Tait.

Go ahead, Mr. Généreux.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Chair, earlier our Liberal colleagues chided a Conservative member because her questions were unrelated to the matter before us today.

I don't know why Mr. Serré is referring to our leader and talking about potential cuts. We aren't here today to discuss cuts. We're talking about adapting a podcast. That has nothing to do with cuts.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

Are there any further comments?

I see that there aren't.

Mr. Serré, I would request that you ask questions that are related to the topic we're discussing today. Thank you for that.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

There's an obvious direct link. We've discussed resources and podcasts from across the country. If the CBC's funding is cut, how will it be able to continue providing services in French, through Radio-Canada, in northern Ontario and across the country? How will it manage if there's no more CBC infrastructure?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The services of the CBC and Radio-Canada are interrelated. Radio-Canada and the CBC share technology and operations. They are housed on the same premises, in the same stations. We work together. We share equipment and sometimes even content, especially in the case of the war in Ukraine and the war in Israel and Gaza.

You're absolutely right: when a cut is made to one side, the other side gets hit hard.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Will Radio-Canada stop operating if CBC funding is terminated?

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mrs. Goodridge, I understand what you probably want to say.

Go ahead, Mrs. Goodridge.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our motion and the subject of today's study concern CBC and Radio-Canada podcasts, not francophones' access to journalism.

I therefore ask that the questions asked by the Liberal Party in particular be on point.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge.

I think Mrs. Goodridge raised a good point.

We discussed it earlier, in the first hour, and the committee complied. So I'm asking Mr. Serré to comply too. Otherwise I'll be forced to limit his speaking time.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If the CBC's funding is cut, how many podcasts could be made in French?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I can't say.

Our services will decline, of course. We know perfectly well that unprofitable services, for example, if we're in rural markets or in markets where the—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Tait. Mr. Serré's time is up.

Thank you, Mr. Serré.

Mr. Beaulieu, you now have six minutes.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You apologized for contracting out the translation of a podcast to a French firm in order to avoid the Quebec accent.

Do you know who made that decision? What measures have been taken?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes, absolutely.

They're aware and and have understood their mistake. They understand that it's important to stick to our processes and practices.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** When we watch the CBC, we often get the impression that you're only presenting the point of view of anglophone pressure groups regarding Bill 21 or Bill 96, for example.

Do you think you should also present the point of view of groups and organizations that defend French? Do you sense that you should present objective information?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I said earlier, we abide by journalistic standards and practices, and the fundamental principles of those standards and practices are impartiality, accuracy—

• (1800)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I apologize for interrupting, Ms. Tait. I would ask those present in the room to be silent.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Pardon me?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I asked people to be silent when you had the floor.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Sorry; pardon me.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** I found it hard to follow you.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

It seems to me that the question is based on an interpretation of something that wasn't said and isn't really—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I can cite some examples—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Samson has the floor, Mr. Beaulieu.



**Mr. Darrell Samson:** I think Mr. Beaulieu is interpreting and incorporating that in his question, which doesn't really concern the topic of discussion.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I would ask Mr. Beaulieu to ensure that his question relates to the topic.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** We're talking about an example in which disrespect was shown for the Quebec accent. These groups quite frequently convey anti-Quebec messages. I can cite, for example, the attack on Pauline Marois, which occurred a long time ago. There was a lot of comment on that.

Here's a specific example. In the context of the death of George Floyd in the United States, columnist Robyn Urback stated that there was less racism against Blacks in Canada but that it should nevertheless be opposed. She said that was enshrined in Quebec's Bill 21, which was essentially an anti-Muslim statute. She then added that there was a long history of racism against Blacks in Quebec, particularly in Montreal, and that xenophobia was deeply rooted in the history of Quebec.

I'm not saying there's no racism in Quebec, but I don't think there's any more than elsewhere. I think it's really biased when journalists report information like this.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'd like to respond by saying that, if a member of this committee or a member of the public has a problem or wants to comment on that bias or on our journalistic content, our ombudsman can respond to that.

I absolutely want the members of this committee to understand that neither CBC/Radio-Canada management nor the government handles journalism-related questions. It's especially not politicians. We have an independent system for protecting the impartiality, accuracy, balance, fairness and integrity of CBC/Radio-Canada's journalism.

The ombudsman, Pierre Champoux is there to answer questions.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You answered my question. You recommended that I contact the ombudsman. That's great; there are mechanisms in place.

I think there was an obvious bias in the example I cited. If you can't see that—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Mr. Chair, journalism always has a context.

You have to consider the context of a whole series of articles in order to understand the issue. You have to refer a case like the one Mr. Beaulieu cited to our ombudsman.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** For example, take the last leaders' debate, which people have talked a lot about.

The moderator bluntly asked Yves-François Blanchet how he could defend Bill 21. She referred to racist measures and Bill 96. Those questions had been approved by all members of the media establishment, including the CBC—

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Lauzon, we will begin with Mr. Serré.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** I just want to say two things.

First, how much time does Mr. Beaulieu have left? Did you stop the clock?

**Mr. Joël Godin:** He has one minute left.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Second, I think we've gone a bit far, Mr. Beaulieu. I think that—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I think that—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Serré had the point of order. Then it will be Mr. Lauzon.

Have you finished, Mr. Serré?

• (1805)

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Lauzon, the floor is yours for a point of order.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You'll allow me the Quebec expression, "What's good for Minou is good for Pitou." Mr. Chair, you asked twice to revisit the subject of the motion introduced by the Conservatives. We're discussing the leaders' debate and Quebec's Bill 96, the Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec. So we've gone way off point.

Is it possible to apply what you said earlier to certain members of the committee? We respected that and now we're back on track.

Now let's do the same thing with Mr. Beaulieu.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Let's go to Mr. Iacono's point of order.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** I'd like to add that we've discussed racism several times. However, the motion doesn't concern details such as racism. I also believe that the witness very clearly explained that the public may appeal to the Radio-Canada ombudsman if they aren't happy about what they've heard.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

I'm actually going to invite Mr. Beaulieu to ask questions that are related to the motion before us.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I think it's very easy to make the connection. The episode that is the subject of this motion reflects a form of disrespect of Quebec and the Quebec accent.

All the examples that I cited reflect the same thing. I don't think that a public radio or television broadcaster should broadcast such content.

During the leadership debate, for example—

**Mr. Joël Godin:** You have 20 seconds left.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** —do you admit that a mistake was made?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Was that a question?

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Yes.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm sorry. I missed the question.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Earlier, before my friends distracted us, I was talking about the fact that, during the leaders' debate, Shachi Kurl attacked Quebec, the Charter of the French Language and so on.

Then she refused to apologize, even though—

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Mr. Beaulieu—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Do you think she made a mistake?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Your time is up, Mr. Beaulieu.

If you wish to respond, Ms. Tait—

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Mr. Chair—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Allow me to finish with Ms. Tait; then you can raise your point of order.

Ms. Tait, do you have anything to add in response to the question?

You are signalling that you don't.

We will go to someone else.

Go ahead, Mr. Iacono.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** I don't have any comment.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** That's exactly what I was thinking.

We will now give the floor to Ms. Ashton for six minutes.

Go ahead, Ms. Ashton.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair

Welcome, Ms. Tait.

First of all, why was the decision made to go with a Paris studio without considering Quebec's expertise?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I explained earlier, it was in response to the proposal that was made by a European company that specializes in podcasts in some 20 languages. In that specific case, the Radio-Canada employee responded to the proposal. That was the mistake. The thing to do was actually to consider entering into an agreement with a Quebec business.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** How do you intend to ensure that these kinds of decisions aren't made again and that Quebec expertise is fully appreciated.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** First, we spoke with all the employees concerned on our podcast teams. We withdrew the podcast that had been done by the European firm. We are also redoing that podcast, and Radio-Canada is responsible for its production and adaptation.

All the members of the podcast team understood the mistake, and that's why I'm absolutely satisfied that this kind of situation will not reoccur.

[*English*]

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** As the member of Parliament for northern Manitoba.... As you know, we have been without a sustained local CBC presence for a number of years. There have been only some

brief stints. Despite CBC's contractual obligation to maintain local involvement here, we haven't seen that.

Should we be concerned, given this latest development of the podcast that was being punted to Paris, that CBC/Radio-Canada is not taking regional programming and respecting our regions, whether it's the entirety of Quebec or regions like northern Manitoba, when it comes to its regional programming?

• (1810)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Mr. Chair, I can say that, with respect to regional programming, never before has proximity....

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I mentioned proximity, relevance and inclusion. These are the three themes of our next strategy.

[*English*]

We know that in a world of polarization and disinformation, our regional presence is absolutely critical.

I need to correct the record, though, on the contractual nature of our obligation. We do what we can with the resources that we have. There are 33 communities in English Canada with a population of more than 50,000 that do not have a CBC presence. On the French side, there are five communities with population of over 50,000 that do not have a Radio-Canada presence. We know that presence builds confidence, builds trust and builds a more civic and civil society. That is why I argue each and every day to have a greater presence in our regions, to go deeper and to be absolutely more involved in all of our communities.

This is our commitment, our absolute mandate and our desire.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** We certainly hope to see that come to fruition here in northern Manitoba and, obviously, in other communities.

[*Translation*]

Going back to francophone content production capacity at Radio-Canada, how many senior management members at CBC/Radio-Canada are francophones and take an active part in decision-making regarding French content, and the Quebec accent in particular?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Mr. Dubé, do you want to answer that question?

**Mr. Marco Dubé:** Yes, of course.

Mr. Chair, eight members of the senior management team are francophones, including the president. That represents the majority of members. The senior management team works in English and in French at all of its meetings and makes business management decisions exercising considerable concern for balance between English and French. Half of our workforce in the organization as a whole is francophone and the other half anglophone. The distribution is thus very equitable.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have 30 seconds left, Ms. Ashton.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** We would like to have some figures that are a little more specific. You may send them to us in a written response.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** More specifically, does your question concern senior management or management in general?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** My question concerns the members of senior management who participate in decision-making regarding French-language content, including matters pertaining to the Quebec accent.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Ashton. Your time is up.

Yes, Ms. Tait, if you have any information to give us, you may send it to the clerk. Thank you.

Let's move on to the second round of questions. First, we would like to welcome Mr. Berthold, of the Conservative Party of Canada, who is not a regular member of the committee, but who is with us today.

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** I move around from committee to committee.

Ms. Tait, last time, we had a chance to confirm that you had no problem with my accent. So that matter is resolved.

In your letter of apology to the Union des artistes for having the *Alone: A Love Story* podcast translated in France, you wrote, "... CBC wanted to see if it would strike a chord with international audiences and asked a Paris company to do the dubbing..."

It appears that the Quebec accent, as we learned later, disturbed certain CBC employees, particularly Cecil Fernandes. Why didn't you let Cecil Fernandes and Émilie Brazeau-Béliveau come here to the committee and explain that poor decision?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I accept responsibility for all CBC/Radio-Canada employees. If any harm was done, or if a mistake was made, I accept responsibility for it as CEO.

• (1815)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Pardon me, but it isn't up to you to decide whom the Parliamentary committees hear. It's not up to you to decide whether parliamentarians aren't entitled to hear the person who made that poor decision.

In your last appearance, you claimed in your opening remarks that you were concerned about the fact that the parliamentary power of a committee could be used to compel the appearance of employees who make journalistic decisions every day.

How was the decision to have a podcast translated in France rather than in Quebec journalistic?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** The Broadcasting Act very clearly states that we have independence with respect to journalistic content as well as programming decisions. That's why, in this case, the interest—

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** What are you afraid of? Why are you afraid to let Cecil Fernandes, executive producer of CBC Podcasts, and Émilie Brazeau-Béliveau, first head of advertising, marketing and radio and audio public relations, appear before the committee?

What are you so afraid they'll come and tell us? Do you think the CBC is above legislators and the law?

Parliament has a right to summon any person to testify before it. That power extends beyond the Broadcasting Act, which you just mentioned.

Why then are you, as president of CBC/Radio-Canada, preventing the Canadian public from knowing why those individuals made bad decisions using Canadian taxpayers' money?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** We clearly said that it was a mistake, and it is my role as CEO to apologize. We've done that.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** I'm not talking about apologies. I want to understand why such a decision was made.

Where does this disrespect that Mr. Fernandes has for the Quebec accent come from? He alone can explain why he thought it was a good idea to pay a company established in France to translate a podcast into French because the Quebec accent didn't pass muster. You can't answer that question.

Ms. Tait, your refusal to let those two individuals testify before the committee constitutes a lack of respect for this committee and for Parliament.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm sorry, but that's not at all the case. I have enormous respect for the process.

I understood that it was my responsibility to appear before the committee. When you refer to the independence of CBC/Radio-Canada, there is—

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Ms. Tait, I understand that. You've already done—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** —something. My colleague has always been asked—

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** No, I don't want...

Thank you, Ms. Tait. I have finished asking my questions. You don't want those people to testify before the committee.

Mr. Chair, if I may, I am going to yield the rest of my time to Mrs. Goodridge.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

Mrs. Goodridge now has the floor for one minute.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After eight years of Liberal government, the carbon tax is undermining both the heart of rural life and the precious francophone culture—

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Samson has the floor for a point of order.

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

Unless I'm mistaken, Mrs. Goodridge's question on the carbon tax has absolutely nothing to do with the motion for which we've invited the witnesses today.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Samson.

Mrs. Goodridge, if you wish to make a comment and return to today's subject, or if you wish to table a notice of motion, you may do so. You have the floor.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** I wish to give notice of the following motion, and I am entitled to do so.

Small francophone communities are absolutely essential to the tradition of our country. However, the rising cost of living and necessities such as heating, food and transportation caused by thoughtless government policy is pushing those communities to the brink of survival.

Here is my motion:

That the committee undertake a five meetings study to examine the impact of the carbon tax on rural official language communities across Canada.

• (1820)

I have the notice of motion in both languages and will distribute it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mrs. Goodridge, Madam Clerk has received your notice of motion, and it will be distributed shortly to all members of the committee.

Have all members received the notice of motion that Mrs. Goodridge has just tabled?

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

There's something I'd like to understand.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Pardon me, Mr. Serré. I was speaking with the clerk.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to have a clear idea of where we stand. Question time is over. A notice of motion has been distributed.

Are we moving on to the next witness to ask questions?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Actually, Mr. Serré, there are 30 seconds left. That's what I was checking with Madam Clerk.

Mrs. Goodridge, you have 30 seconds in which to conclude.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think it's essential that this committee really take the time to consider the impact of the carbon tax on rural official language minority communities in Canada. It's essential because of the culture of the communities; it's [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Allow me a comment, Mr. Iacono.

Mrs. Goodridge's five-minute intervention is over. You must understand that the time that was used for her notice of motion was subtracted from her speaking time. Consequent, she has simply used all the time that was at her disposal.

You may raise your point of order, Mr. Iacono.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** I would really like to understand how the carbon tax has an impact on language.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Actually, Mr. Iacono, we have received that notice of motion. We may debate it at a future meeting.

That's what I think, but I'm open to other suggestions. It could be debated, but, as you can understand, all of us are now ready to question the president of CBC/Radio-Canada.

We will move on to the next speaker.

Mr. Lauzon, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank Ms. Tait and Mr. Dubé for being here today. I would also like to thank them for admitting that a mistake was made in the first place. That's very important. I also want to thank them for reacting promptly. They were not slow to act, nor was their team.

Ms. Tait, thanks as well for coming to represent CBC/Radio-Canada before the committee to answer all our questions.

I would like to know a little more about the corrective measures that were put in place to prevent this kind of situation.

What kind of process have you put in place so that the committee can now be sure this situation will not reoccur?

I don't want to go into the details, since you make your decisions and manage your organization independently. We just want to know what changes you have made to prevent a reoccurrence.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Thank you for your question.

I'm going to ask my colleague to answer you.

**Mr. Marco Dubé:** Mr. Chair, first, we met with the teams to make them aware of the problem. They are keenly aware of the mistake that was made and of the impact it has had on all of us.

We have introduced measures to ensure that, when CBC teams are required to interpret or translate a podcast into French, they obviously call upon Quebec firms.

We have also enhanced exchanges between the CBC and Radio-Canada teams on critical issues such as this one. We are satisfied that what we have put in place will prevent this kind of situation from reoccurring. That being said, it was an isolated incident.

• (1825)

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** You say it was an isolated incident. Do you know of any similar situation that has previously occurred? If so, when did it happen?

Was it really an isolated situation?

**Mr. Marco Dubé:** It was an isolated incident, yes.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** All right.

Ms. Tait, how did the Union des artistes react? How were the communications that you had with it and your apology received?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I said, when I learned of the incident, I immediately called Ms. Kontoyanni, the president of the UDA.

I apologized without attempting to justify or explain the matter. I simply told her that it was a mistake and that we would correct the situation, and she responded in a very generous manner. She told me that she was pleased that I had called, and I then sent her a letter so that she could distribute it to her members.

Mr. Dubé called Radio-Canada's unions.

I was very pleased that Ms. Kontoyanni even spoke to the press to emphasize the fact that she had accepted our apology.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** You have 30 seconds left, Mr. Lauzon.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Yes, I wanted to talk about the unions.

Were you able to speak to the unions and explain the situation to them, or was that done through the president of the UDA?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I spoke to the UDA myself, and Mr. Dubé spoke to the Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec.

**Mr. Marco Dubé:** Yes, I spoke to the ARRQ. You have to understand that the UDA and the CBC/Radio-Canada's employee unions are two separate things.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Dubé.

Thank you, Mr. Lauzon. You went a bit longer than your five minutes, but that was due to my negligence. You took advantage of that, and rightly so.

We will now go to the final round of questions.

We will begin with Mr. Beaulieu, of the Bloc Québécois.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Tait, on October 13, you admitted that you had made a mistake. You say it was an isolated incident that in no way represented your organizational culture, in which there are no problems.

I suppose that the various examples that I have mentioned to you are all isolated incidents as well.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** You're referring to journalism. The incident we're discussing doesn't fall into that category.

If any journalistic mistakes are made at CBC/Radio-Canada, there is a process that guarantees a response from the ombudsmen. The case we are discussing is something else.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** What requirements are your journalists required to meet? Do you require that they refrain from conveying prejudices?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I said earlier, our journalistic standards and practices are very clear on this subject. Balance and impartiality are central to that. Of course, prejudices and all that—

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** So you think your reporting reflects all points of view regarding Quebec.

• (1830)

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I know that Liberals don't like that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Go ahead, Mr. Lauzon.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Once again, I'm going to use that expression, "What's good for Minou is good for Pitou."

We have a very clear and simple motion on the table. However, now we're debating Quebec's entity.

Mr. Chair, we would like you to follow procedure so we can get back to relevant questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

For your information, Ms. Tait's testimony is partly on the theme of the motion but not completely on that.

I yield the floor to Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Go ahead, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** It's very clear that we can't be prevented from speaking as long as there's a connection, even a tenuous one, with the subject. Since I believe the connection has been clearly demonstrated, I think these points of order are invalid.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Beaulieu, I will simply ask you to demonstrate the connection with the subject, as you said. I'm going to restart the clock.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Generally speaking, do you also employ people who have a Quebec or Acadian accent in your French versions?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Yes.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** That's good.

You're assuring us that, generally speaking, nothing of the kind occurs, and you are directing us to the ombudsman if, in other cases, we feel that editorialists or columnists are conveying prejudices—

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I'm going to repeat myself. We have journalistic standards and practices.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** You have 30 seconds left.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You don't think there was any disrespect in the capsule that we're specifically discussing today. People simply didn't want to hear the Quebec accent.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** As I said, it was a mistake, a lack of judgment on the person's part. That's all.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** All right.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu and Ms. Tait.

Ms. Ashton, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** You said you had intended to produce the podcast in Quebec French.

Exactly when do you intend to produce it?

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** It's already under way. We've spoken with Radio-Canada's OHdio team, which is responsible for it. It will take a few more months because we have to hire actors and so on.

The new version should theoretically go online in early summer.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you. We can't wait to see it and promote it.

[*English*]

We're also here talking about CBC's role in contracting out, which is a concerning trend on various fronts.

We are aware, as well—and the CBC confirmed it—that it hired Hive, an advertising agency, for its 2024 Olympic campaign in partnership with the Canadian Olympic Committee. Hive is a member that locked out its own employees when they refused to sign ACTRA's national commercial agreement.

I'm curious about why the CBC is so keen on contracting out and, in this instance, hiring a company that supports anti-union practices.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** Mr. Chair, I should say I have a hearing disability, so it's extremely hard for me to focus on a question being addressed to me when people are talking at the same time. If you wouldn't mind.... It would make it much easier.

I think the question was regarding Hive, which is an advertising agency hired by—

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I'm going to stop you, Ms. Tait. Your comment is actually quite apt and concerns all the members.

I offered a reminder on the subject earlier. This is why I wear my earpiece at all times, even when people are speaking in French. It enables me to understand more clearly. So I definitely understand your situation.

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** I should've done that. It didn't occur to me. Pardon me.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** That's not your fault. We should have spoken to each other earlier.

You may continue, Ms. Tait.

[*English*]

**Ms. Catherine Tait:** With respect to the member, we were not the company that hired Hive. The Canadian Olympic Committee made the hire. We are working with the COC this time. This is a first, by the way, us working with them. To be clear, Hive is one of many companies that responded to the RFP, all of which had the same issue ACTRA has raised.

My understanding is that there was no other choice among those that presented themselves. This is a generalized issue among the advertising businesses right now.

To be clear, CBC has not contracted with this company. This is with the COC.

● (1835)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Ms. Tait and Ms. Ashton.

That completes our rounds of questions.

I want to thank our witnesses, Ms. Tait and Mr. Dubé, representing CBC/Radio-Canada, for taking part in our meeting. As I said at the outset, our committee will be following up on the motion that has been introduced.

Thanks to all committee members for their indulgence. I would also inform you that, at the next meeting, we are going to continue work on the draft report on our study on increased francophone immigration to Canada.

Do the members wish to adjourn the meeting?

The meeting is adjourned.









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