

**Table 10: Response to Parliamentary Committees and External Audits**

## **1 - Response to Parliamentary Committees**

### **Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, *Communities speak out: Hear our voice. The Vitality of Official Language Minority Communities***

The report, containing 39 recommendations, was tabled in the House of Commons on May 9, 2007.

The Committee initiated this study on the vitality of official-language minority communities in October 2006 and focused primarily on health and immigration issues. The Committee members travelled to Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Sudbury, Sherbrooke, Moncton, and St. John to hear from regional organizations. The study had three main objectives: to assess the results of the Action Plan for Official Languages, to speak to the Government on behalf of the communities concerning the next Plan, and to initiate a rapprochement of the communities for the success of new initiatives beginning in 2008. The recommendations concern health, immigration, and all of the issues that affect community development, including education, support for community organizations, infrastructure development, language clauses in agreements, justice, research, arts and culture, and economic development. Finally, the Committee recommended that the government create a high-level committee responsible for implementing the second phase of the Action Plan and that it adopt a comprehensive renewal approach.

The Government Response was signed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women, and Official Languages and tabled in the House of Commons on October 17, 2007.

<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10472&SourceId=214800&SwitchLanguage=1>

### **Eighteenth Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, *The Impacts of Funding and Program Changes at Status of Women Canada***

The report, containing five recommendations, was tabled in the House of Commons on May 2, 2007.

The Committee decided to study the impact of changes announced within Status of Women Canada in September 2006. From December 2006 to February 2007, the Committee members heard testimony and received a large number of submissions from individuals and organizations representing all regions of Canada, national and local groups, and some groups that receive the bulk of their funding from the Women's Program. The five report recommendations reflect the majority of the points of view expressed to the Committee. These involved asking Status of Women Canada to reconsider regional office closures, the abolition of the Research Fund, the promotion of equality in the wording of the revised mandate, and the terms and conditions of the Women's Program.

The Government Response was signed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women, and Official Languages, and tabled in the House of Commons on October 17, 2007.

<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10477&SourceId=215392&SwitchLanguage=1>

**Seventeenth Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, *The funding crisis of the Canadian Television Fund***

The report, containing six recommendations, was tabled in the House of Commons on March 21, 2007.

Further to the January 2007 decision of Shaw Communications Inc. and Québec Média to withdraw their financial support for the Canadian Television Fund (CTF), the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage launched a study of the issue. The Committee members heard testimony from the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and from representatives of the CTF, CBC/Radio-Canada, the CRTC, Shaw Communications, and Québec Média, as well as from numerous representatives from the film and television industry and related professional associations. The Committee's recommendations support the work of the CTF and condemns the actions of Shaw Communications and Québec Média. It recommended that the CRTC amend the Broadcasting Distribution Regulations to require payments to the CTF, that some provisions concerning the CTF be maintained, and that annual contributions to the CTF be established. It criticized the fact that the CRTC held its hearings into the future of the CTF in private.

The Government Response was signed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women, and Official Languages, and was tabled in the House of Commons on June 14, 2007.

<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10467&SourceId=212907&SwitchLanguage=1>

**Eighth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Relocation of Head Offices of Federal Institutions: Respect for Language Rights***

The report, containing ten recommendations, was tabled in the Senate on May 16, 2007.

Following the relocation of some federal institutions' head offices, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages decided to conduct a study on the impact of these decisions on the application of the *Official Languages Act*. During its study, the Committee met with the Canadian Tourism Commission, which moved its head office from Ottawa to Vancouver in 2005; with Farm Credit Canada, which moved its head office to Regina in 1992; and with Veterans Affairs Canada, which relocated its head office to Charlottetown in the early 1980s. The issues specifically involved communications with and services to the public, employees' language of work, the vitality of official language communities in a minority setting, and the promotion of linguistic duality. The Committee's recommendations identify the most effective and efficient means through which the government can ensure full respect of the rights provided in the *Official Languages Act* when relocating the head office of federal agencies from a bilingual region to a unilingual region.

The Government Response was signed jointly by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women, and Official Languages and the President of the Treasury Board, and was tabled in the Senate on October 28, 2007.

**Second (Interim) Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Understanding the Reality and Meeting the Challenges of Living in French in Nova Scotia—Fact-Finding Mission to the Acadian and Francophone Communities of Nova Scotia***

The report, containing ten recommendations, was tabled in the Senate on October 5, 2006.

This report came further to a fact-finding mission to the Acadian and Francophone communities of Nova Scotia from September 19 to 23, 2005. It describes the issues raised by the communities during these consultations and points out three specific factors that contributed to halting the development of these communities: a demographic and historic factor, a political factor, and a factor related to the public administrative process. The Committee's recommendations call for the federal government's compliance with the Action Plan and Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. It also encourages partnerships with the Nova Scotia minority communities, support for their development, the signing of a cooperation agreement as soon as possible, and a review of the Official Languages Regulations.

The Government Response was signed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women, and Official Languages, and the President of the Treasury Board, and was tabled in the Senate on June 20, 2007.

**Fifth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Reflecting Canada's Linguistic Duality at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games: A Golden Opportunity***

The report, containing ten recommendations, was tabled in the Senate on March 1, 2007.

This study began with the testimony of Lise Bissonnette, Grand Témoin for the 2006 Turin Olympic Games. Subsequently, the Committee heard from some 40 witnesses, including partners in the organization of the Games, British Columbia Francophone groups, and Canadian Heritage and Sport Canada. The report recommends clarifying the roles of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC), the Canadian Foundation for Cross-Cultural Dialogue, the *Fédération des francophones de Colombie-Britannique*, and the Government of Quebec. It also recommends the appointment of a representative from the Francophone communities to the VANOC Board of Directors and for the collaboration of the federal government and VANOC with the Bell Globemedia/Rogers Media consortium to find a solution that will guarantee equitable access (as in equal quality) to 2010 Olympic Games programming for all Canadians. The Committee agreed, early in its activities, to examine the progress made by the partners in the organization of the Games, and intends to continue doing so. It is firmly determined to reconvene the partners within three years to determine the status of their commitment and progress made in the promotion of linguistic duality.

The Government Response was signed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women, and Official Languages and the Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, and was tabled in the Senate on August 18, 2007.

[http://www.canada2010.gc.ca/legs-legacies\\_e.cfm](http://www.canada2010.gc.ca/legs-legacies_e.cfm)

## 2-Response to the Auditor General (including to the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development)

### Name of audit: Use of Public Funds by the Former Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec

This audit found that, of the more than \$1.7 million paid to the former Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec between April 1, 1997 and March 31, 2007, approximately \$1 million was spent on official duties. The audit was unable to determine whether the remainder, approximately \$700,000, was spent on official duties. The audit recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage initiate discussions with the former Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec to identify expenses that were ineligible for the grant and which should be reimbursed to the Department. It also recommended that the Department review the conditions for grant eligibility; establish, with the directors of the offices of Lieutenant-Governors, the policies that governing personal spending and expenses incurred as part of the duties of a Lieutenant-Governor; update the *Lieutenant-Governor Briefing Book*, adding a section on financial management and tax treatment of grants, and provide copies to Lieutenant-Governors; provide their staff with training on this topic; and ensure that Lieutenant-Governors publicly and promptly account for the use of the public funds.

The Auditor General tabled this audit on June 12, 2007.

Since the audit was tabled, the Department has worked closely with the offices of Lieutenant-Governors to address these recommendations. Clearer guidelines regarding eligible expenses that may be covered by the named grant were developed. These are now included in the Minister's letter approving the payment of the grant at the beginning of the fiscal year. They are also included in the newly revised *Lieutenant Governor Briefing Book*. In addition, the tax treatment of the grant has been clearly outlined in the Briefing Book in collaboration with the Canada Revenue Agency whose representatives have also made themselves available to the Department and to Lieutenant-Governors offices for ongoing consultation.

The Department continues to examine various ways to enhance the accountability of Lieutenant-Governors for the federal funding that they receive. In this sense, the Department has already taken steps such as a more rigorous application of the federal Policy on Transfer Payments and continued communication with the offices of Lieutenant-Governors.

Finally, the Department is awaiting for the results of the RCMP investigation to determine whether other measures may be required.

For more information on the department's response, please visit the link below.

<http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/200706Lieutenant-Governorqce.pdf>

**3-External Audits (Note: These refer to other external audits conducted by the Public Service Commission of Canada or the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages)**

**Name of audit: Audit of the Movement of Public Servants between the Public Service and Ministers' Offices by the Public Service Commission**

The Objective of this audit was to determine the extent of movement of public servants between the public service and ministers' offices; determine whether appointments of public servants returning from ministers' offices met the staffing requirements of the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), the Public Service Employment Regulations (PSER), PSC policies and other applicable legislation; and assess the risk to political impartiality.

The audit looked at 15 organizations, including the Department of Canadian Heritage, and covered the period from 1990 to 2006. It did not mention the Department specifically and included only one recommendation, which was directed to the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS). The recommendation proposes that TBS develop and recommend to the Treasury Board a policy governing the movement of public servants between the public service and Ministers' Offices to ensure that these moves are undertaken in a fair and transparent manner, upholding the principle of political impartiality, and are effectively monitored.

For more information, please visit the link below.

<http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/adt-vrf/rprt/2007/mbmo-mecm/index-eng.htm>