

House of Commons Standing Committee  
on Official Languages

Study on linguistic duality during the 150th-anniversary celebrations  
of Canadian Confederation in 2017

National Film Board of Canada

November 22, 2012

Bonjour / Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Standing Committee.

My name is Claude Joli-Coeur and I am the Assistant Commissioner of the National Film Board of Canada. I am here this morning with Michèle Bélanger, who is the Francophonie Project Leader. I wish to thank you for giving us this opportunity to contribute to your study on linguistic duality during the 150th-anniversary celebrations of Canadian Confederation in 2017.

With your permission, I would like to take a few moments to call your attention to some of the NFB's latest achievements in the area of Canadian linguistic duality.

### **-The era of accessibility**

As we all know, the digital era now affords us increased communication potential that makes it possible to be present and accessible throughout the country and enhance our ties with francophone and anglophone communities across Canada. As a federal cultural agency, the National Film Board of Canada is committed to maintaining these ties with the communities and making its content available to all Canadians in both official languages.

On its 70th anniversary in January 2009, the National Film Board of Canada launched its online Screening Room in French and English, ONF.ca and NFB.ca, giving Canadians in all regions unlimited access, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to a unique audiovisual heritage that celebrates the richness of Canada's cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Screening Room's French and English content is equivalent but not identical, as it reflects the breadth and diversity of the communities. Nearly 2,500 works can currently be viewed free of charge. Moreover, we have begun to produce versions of titles that are only available in one official language.

To date, the Screening Room has resulted in over 36 million views of our works, including views via our app, which is available on various mobile platforms such as iPhone, iPad, Android and BlackBerry PlayBook as well as those on our partner sites, YouTube and Vimeo. There have been nearly 10 million views in Canada in French and English on ONF.ca and NFB.ca, and that number is constantly growing.

Canadian francophones and anglophones can also get involved and interact with us online about issues of concern to their communities, through a variety of virtual public spaces available to them. These include the blogue ONF and the NFB blog, and the Infolettre and Newsletter, overseen by community managers and separate francophone and anglophone editors. The NFB is also present on social networks – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo – in both official languages.

In the education sector, the NFB introduced CAMPUS in January 2012. This brand new online education platform, specifically designed for Canadian teachers, is an innovative

resource that provides easy access to 2,500 Canadian productions, including films, interactive works, study guides and workshops in both official languages.

The Departments of Education of five provinces are already licensed to use CAMPUS: Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Quebec (for English schools).

### **-The NFB in the communities**

Supporting linguistic duality and official language minority communities is a priority at the NFB. In 2006, the NFB became a partner of the *Rendez-vous de la francophonie*, an annual national event held in March that allows us to reach over fifty communities in 13 provinces and territories.

We are also active in the Canadian public library network, where we offer documentary and animated film programs in French and English twice a year. In 2011–2012, 70 screenings were held throughout this network.

We also organize the *Animez-vous/Get Animated* event, a cross-Canada animation celebration featuring screenings and workshops, available to official language minority communities.

In the fall of 2011, we put a selection of about twenty works geared to Canadian francophones online on ONF.ca. Entitled *Espace francophonie*, the selection is presented by Franco-Ontarian songwriter Damien Robitaille and focuses on francophone identity and culture. Titles from coast to coast, from Acadia to the West, comprise the selection. Some of the works can also be viewed by francophiles in the *Showcase Francophonie* section of NFB.ca.

### **-Opportunities to celebrate linguistic duality**

There will be many opportunities to highlight Canada's linguistic duality between now and 2017, and major anniversaries will occur during the period leading up to the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. Here are a few examples:

2014 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment. The creation of this regiment in 1914 played a decisive role in integrating French speakers into the Canadian Armed Forces. Production is currently underway of a documentary celebrating this anniversary, which has special significance for francophones. We are working on the film in close collaboration with the Canadian Armed Forces.

2014 will also mark the 75th anniversary of the Second World War and the 100th anniversary of the First World War. The NFB collection contains an impressive number of documents dealing with both these major conflicts. The documents could be grouped together, enhanced and made accessible to Canadians in DVD format or online in both official languages.

The NFB will also be celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2014. This will provide yet another opportunity to organize special activities in official language minority

communities across the country. The NFB is a privileged witness to Canadian history, and its unique audiovisual heritage is a source of pride for all Canadians.

The 50th anniversary of the Canadian flag in 2015 will be an occasion for us to showcase a unique film in our collection that recounts the flag's first raising in 1965. This archival film will honour the anniversary in a very special way.

Lastly, the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017 will provide us with an unparalleled opportunity for celebration. We therefore plan to develop a participatory and inclusive nationwide project intended for all Canadians of all generations – a project that will enable us to look to the future and imagine the Canada of tomorrow. This work could be launched during the official celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

As you can see, the commemorative events leading up to 2017 provide us with a wide array of opportunities to celebrate Canada's linguistic diversity and highlight its richness.

All these major projects pay tribute to significant events in Canadian history. We will work on them in partnership with institutions that come under the Department of Canadian Heritage as well as with our partners in official language minority communities and the organizations that represent them. The relations we have forged over the years and that we continue to maintain – particularly as a result of the national tour we undertook in the fall to consult the communities - will enable us to expand the scope of our initiatives and increase their outreach to Canadian communities.

These events will also allow us to provide Canadians with works from our collection that bear witness to our history, while at the same time seizing these opportunities to create new works – works of tomorrow that will bear witness to our present.

Merci! / Thank you!