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Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

THE SENATE

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[*Translation*]

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, the Honourable Stéphane Dion.

[*English*]

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend all of the candidates who took part in the leadership race. I am confident that we will all continue to work together and contribute in a positive way to help our new leader.

[*Translation*]

In 1996, when I was dean of the Faculté Saint-Jean in Edmonton, I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Dion shortly after he became Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Dion was touring the West in order to better recognize and understand the challenges that official language minority communities were experiencing.

He was surprised to see the vitality of the francophone community of Alberta and the challenge it faced.

What struck me then was his sincere interest and what struck me later was the intensity with which he promoted linguistic duality across the country. Over the years, I have also noticed that Mr. Dion is a man of action and principle in everything he does.

As you know, Mr. Dion is the “father” of the Action Plan for Official Languages, which, starting in 2003 over a period of five years, has injected \$750 million for linguistic duality and official language programs.

Francophone minority communities have always had a strong ally in Mr. Dion. Furthermore, in a press release, the Fédération des communautés francophones and acadienne warmly welcomed Mr. Dion as the new leader of the Liberal Party.

Honourable senators, I am certain that Mr. Dion, as a francophone, a Quebecer and a Canadian, will bring the same passion, intelligence and intensity he has always had to his new post as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.
