



CANADA

Debates of the Senate

1st SESSION

• 39th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 143

• NUMBER 57

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

French Language Education

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

THE SENATE

Wednesday December 6, 2006

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

FRENCH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, several articles have appeared recently in our newspapers concerning the difficulties facing the field of second language education. Whether right here in Ottawa, or in Victoria or Nova Scotia, it seems that the challenges are much the same.

[English]

According to an article on November 22 in the *Chronicle Herald* in Halifax, the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board is considering consolidating its French immersion programs into fewer schools.

Right here in the nation's capital, according to an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* on November 21, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is studying the possibility of eliminating one or more of the three entry points into its French immersion programs.

[Translation]

Furthermore, according to a recent poll of 1300 teachers conducted by the Canadian Association of Second Language

Teachers, many teachers across the country do not have access to sufficient pedagogical resources, computer software or an adequate quantity and quality of library resources.

Honourable senators, if it is true that French and English are Canadian languages, that linguistic duality is a fundamental value of this country, and that we wish to train a highly skilled and competitive workforce, should we not continue to encourage our children to learn French? Do you not think that every Canadian student should have access to courses in their second language?

If we are to believe the recent report prepared by Canadian Parents for French, it seems that there has been a negligible increase in enrolment in immersion programs across Canada, although there are exceptions such as British Columbia and Alberta. Should we not also endeavour to create more jobs for our bilingual youth who complete immersion programs?

Honourable senators, I hope that you will encourage your local decision-makers and school boards to keep up the good work and to continue supporting French immersion and second language programs.
