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## VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Vimy Ridge Celebrations—French Translation on Commemorative Plaques

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

**THE SENATE**

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

**VETERANS AFFAIRS****VIMY RIDGE CELEBRATIONS—FRENCH  
TRANSLATION ON COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES***[Translation]*

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, linguistic duality is a Canadian value and an integral part of this country's image. At home and abroad, we must ensure that our linguistic duality and equality are reflected in everything from diplomatic missions to commemorative monuments.

It has come to our attention that there were serious language errors in the French-language historic plaques at the Vimy monument, that the plaques were removed, and that, as a result, there was no recognition in French of Canadian soldiers' achievements at Vimy.

This came to pass because volunteers, not qualified translators, provided the French translation. It is deplorable that the translation of a text relating the history of Canada's

participation in a decisive First World War battle should have been entrusted to volunteers, particularly since the text was for a ceremony as important as the one held on April 9, 2007.

Can the Leader of the Government explain why the Department of Veterans Affairs insulted francophone veterans, all Canadians and the French language in France itself?

*[English]*

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Secretary of State (Seniors)):** The incident to which the honourable senator has referred was very unfortunate and regrettable. The Minister of Veterans Affairs immediately ordered the removal of the offending plaques. I understand, although I stand to be corrected, that it was something done in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Legion; however, everything the honourable senator says is absolutely true. This should not have happened. The Minister of Veterans Affairs was appalled and apologetic, ordered the plaques removed and is now ensuring that the contributions of our soldiers, whether they were French, English or of another background, will be properly noted in the two official languages.

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