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2007 Report of Commissioner

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

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THE SENATE

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[*Translation*]

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2007 REPORT OF COMMISSIONER

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

Honourable senators, today I am speaking to encourage both this chamber, which defends minorities, and the government to think more about linguistic duality and official language minority communities, especially in light of the events of recent weeks.

On the same day, the work of the Official Languages committee of the House of Commons was suspended, and the Commissioner of Official Languages released his annual report.

In this report, Mr. Fraser expressed his concerns about the promotion and advancement of linguistic duality within federal institutions. He is worried about the impact certain government decisions, made without much consideration, will have on official language minority communities.

I find these events troubling. Given the situation and the reaction of community representatives and other political parties, I am not the only one. Even the National Assembly in Quebec City made its concerns known yesterday, when it unanimously adopted a motion urging the federal government to follow up on the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

The current government makes some grand statements in the media and in this chamber. But the concrete action it takes, for example in suspending the work of the Official Languages committee in the other place and cancelling certain programs, does not seem to correspond to these fine words.

Honourable senators, I would like us, as senators and defenders of minorities in this country, to think seriously about this apparent lack of consistency between what they are saying and what they are doing, in order to ensure the continued promotion and advancement of linguistic duality within Canadian society and our institutions.
