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NATIONAL DEFENCE

French Language Training Contracts

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

THE SENATE

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[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

FRENCH LANGUAGE TRAINING CONTRACTS

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I do not understand how we came to be in the absurd position of recruiting an American firm to teach Canadian military personnel French.

We recently learned that National Defence gave a \$285,000 contract to Colorado-based Globelink Foreign Language Center to teach French to Canadian military personnel. This is scandalous and unacceptable. Unfortunately, this government seems to tolerate and even encourage it.

[English]

Why, after 40 years of the Official Languages Act in Canada, can we not find anyone, not a single person, not a single company, to teach French to our military? Why are we paying Americans to teach one of Canada's official languages to Canadians?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, it was not this government that shut down the college at Lac Saint-Jean. However, I was made aware of this matter only this morning. I saw the article in the newspaper.

Obviously, the matter of official bilingualism is an important subject, one which the government takes seriously. I will take that question as notice. I am sure the Department of National Defence will be happy to provide a response as to why this particular group was contracted.
