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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Second Language Training in Canadian Universities

Questions by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Thursday, October 29, 2009

THE SENATE

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

SECOND LANGUAGE TRAINING IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

The Commissioner of Official Languages identified some significant gaps in his report entitled *Two languages, a World of Opportunities: Second-Language Learning in Canada's Universities*. These gaps are keeping students from developing their second-language skills as they pursue higher education and prepare to enter the workforce.

He says the government must show leadership and recommends that it convene a meeting of 84 interested parties from universities, educational organizations, language experts and governments to discuss how to improve second-language learning opportunities in universities. Does the government plan to act on that recommendation and call such a meeting?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, it is the desire and the

goal of the government at all times to ask and to expect our institutions to support and enter into programs that recognize Canada's official languages. I will take note of the Honourable Senator Tardif's question and the specific reference that she makes to the report of the Official Languages Commissioner and ask for a response to that specific recommendation of the Commissioner for Official Languages. I will therefore take that question as written notice.

[Translation]

Senator Tardif: Honourable senators, I have supplementary question. What comprehensive strategy does the government plan to bring in to help students learn both official languages in our post-secondary institutions, and what kind of funding will it provide?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator is well aware of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality that the Minister of Canadian Heritage has embarked upon. A significant amount of money was put into that program, much more than ever before. I will ask the minister to provide the Senate with an update of the results since the announcement of that program.