



CANADA

# Debates of the Senate

---

3rd SESSION

• 40th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 147

• NUMBER 45

---

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Interpretation Services at Press Conferences  
of the G8 and G20 Summits

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, June 29, 2010

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 29, 2010

[*Translation*]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

#### INTERPRETATION SERVICES AT PRESS CONFERENCES OF THE G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Leader, we have learned that no interpretation service was provided during the press conferences of foreign leaders at the G8 and G20 summits.

The promotion of dialogue between delegates and healthy and transparent communication are among the objectives of these summits. It is therefore utterly unimaginable and unjustifiable that no interpretation service was provided during the foreign leaders' press conferences. What good are the leaders' speeches if journalists and the general public cannot understand them? Some Canadian journalists were furious at not being able to understand what the G8 leaders were saying, especially in the case of President Sarkozy, who spoke in one of Canada's two official languages.

How can you justify the absence of interpreters at the foreign leaders' press conferences?

[*English*]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I had not heard of this incident. I was watching one of the leaders on CBC. This leader was speaking in French and there was no interpretation. I went to the CTV

network and indeed to CPAC, and they were both providing interpretation.

Honourable senators, I do not know what happened with the CBC, but I switched networks and was getting interpretation in English and French. I do not believe this is the case, though obviously CBC had a problem, because I witnessed it myself. If the honourable senator would provide me with more information on where this situation originated, I will be happy to make inquiries.

[*Translation*]

**Senator Tardif:** I thank the leader, however I was not referring to a television station but to the press conferences.

The government spent almost \$1 billion to provide security for the leaders and their delegations, which prevented the public from approaching them. However, for lack of interpretation services, the government failed to facilitate communication between the leaders and the press and, therefore, the public.

How does the government explain this lack of transparency and accountability during international summits?

[*English*]

**Senator LeBreton:** Honourable senators, this is the first I have heard of the situation. Obviously, the government always provides services in both of our official languages. I will make inquiries with the organizers and the appropriate people at Foreign Affairs to determine if there was a breakdown in equipment. I will take the question as notice.