



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Promoting Linguistic Duality

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

## THE SENATE

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[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

#### PROMOTING LINGUISTIC DUALITY

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I have a supplementary question. I will not address the minister's comments just yet because I believe this merits a supplementary question.

It is hard to accomplish anything when people keep denying, year after year, that there are serious problems in the application of the Official Languages Act within federal departments and agencies. This government maintains there is no problem with the way it is addressing the challenges the communities are facing.

Unfortunately, it is this attitude that will prevent any improvement in the application of the Official Languages Act within our departments and agencies and among our official language minority communities.

Will the government commit to developing an implementation policy for the Official Languages Act that will provide the necessary coherence between all these departments and all these agencies?

[English]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, the government has never said that this is a perfect situation and that there is no problem. We are making progress, as I have already said. The Official Languages

Commissioner did indicate that progress is being made, and the number of institutions that report on their official languages obligation has increased from 30 to 200. As I have acknowledged before to Senator Chaput when she has asked these questions, there is still room for improvement. The government will certainly continue to seek these improvements.

• (1500)

I also notice that the Commissioner of Official Languages, after being questioned by a senator on this side about the Prime Minister's own personal commitment to official languages, used the word "exemplary" to describe that commitment.

**Senator Mockler:** Absolutely.

**Senator LeBreton:** Having said that, I will repeat again, the government will not change: We strongly support linguistic duality in this country. We have delivered and are providing unprecedented support in the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality*. We are in year three of a five-year commitment to the roadmap.

Today, over 71 per cent of the commitments our government has made in the roadmap have been confirmed and funded. Our support includes new translation programs for book publishing, community radio and funding community groups that need support to operate.

We certainly do not say that our work is complete; it is not. However, we do say that we have made great strides — more, I dare say, than any other government in the past.