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Canada Periodical Fund

Question by

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Thursday, April 26, 2012

THE SENATE

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[*Translation*]

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CANADA PERIODICAL FUND

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is related to that of my colleague, Senator Chaput. The only newspaper serving the Franco-Albertan community, *Le Franco*, is affected by the change in the funding formula for the aid to publishers component of the Canada Periodical Fund. Under the new formula, subsidies are based on circulation. Thus, larger amounts will go to the larger players, while funding for publications serving francophone minority communities, such as *Le Franco*, will be decreased or eliminated because the readership of these publications is so specific and is scattered across the province.

In the case of *Le Franco*, because of the size of the decrease in the subsidy, the newspaper is considering reducing its staff, number of pages and circulation.

Madam Leader, does Canadian Heritage not have a certain duty to review its funding formula in order to take into account the particular reality facing small newspapers, especially those that serve the official language minority communities?

[*English*]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I believe that Senator Chaput also mentioned the newspaper in Alberta. I will certainly

make inquiries about the Canada Periodical Fund as it relates to Alberta and Manitoba and provide a written response.

[*Translation*]

Senator Tardif: I thank the minister for her reply. Honourable senators, I would simply like to quote an excerpt from a letter sent by the director of *Le Franco* to Minister Moore:

Franco-Albertans are scattered over a vast geographical area. *Le Franco* newspaper is a key player and irrefutable linchpin in the development of its community and the many organizations that count on the newspaper to inform the population of their issues. If *Le Franco* is forced to reduce its services, there is no other newspaper to take its place, and the development and enrichment of the Franco-Albertan community will suffer the consequences.

As you know, honourable senators, this is an extremely important issue and I believe that, under Part VII of the Official Languages Act, which refers to positive measures, it is crucial that Canadian Heritage bring in measures to enable these communities to thrive.

[*English*]

Senator LeBreton: I thank the honourable senator for the additional information. I will refer it to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.
