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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF IMMERSION TEACHERS

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Monday, November 4, 2013

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[Translation]

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Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable colleagues, on October 25, the national conference of the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT) was held for the first time in Calgary under the inspirational theme *L'immersion, plein d'esprit*.

I would like to congratulate Philippe Le Dorze, president of the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers; Chantal Bourbonnais, executive director; and Lesley Doell, conference chair, and her team for successfully bringing together over 700 participants — most of whom were French immersion teachers — for the conference.

CAIT is an organization with a unique mandate, which is to improve the quality of the education and training of its members.

In addition, this association plays a very important role, not only for the educators involved in the teaching of French, but also for our entire society. Through their dedication and commitment, these professionals make it possible for Canada to continue

pursuing its ideal, which is to be an officially bilingual country, and enable our young people to enrich their lives by learning a second language.

Honourable colleagues, it is an inspiring challenge to emphasize the importance of learning a new language, because we all know that this has many valuable impacts on our country.

Second-language education strengthens the foundation of linguistic duality and helps maintain it as a Canadian value. Canada's linguistic duality and diversity are two elements that make Canadian society unique and have helped create a society that recognizes and respects differences.

Immersion teachers can be proud of their contribution to this great social vision. Today, there are about 350,000 young Canadians registered in French immersion programs.

I would like to commend all the teachers, administrators, academic advisers and researchers who work with such dedication to promote bilingualism in our country. Because of their determination and expertise, we have high-quality French immersion programs that have an excellent reputation both in Canada and abroad.
