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ALBERTA

FRANCOPHONE SERVICES

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

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[*Translation*]

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Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, on June 14, the Alberta government officially announced its first French policy.

French was the first European language spoken in Alberta and the most common European language in the territories until 1870, and it is still the most widely spoken language in my province after English. According to Statistics Canada, over 238,000 Albertans express themselves in French, and for 81,000 of them, it is their first language.

Also according to Statistics Canada, that number is expected to rise by 25 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035.

I wanted to share those numbers because it took over 100 years and plenty of perseverance on the part of the Franco-Albertan community, led by the Association canadienne française de l'Alberta, for the Province of Alberta to adopt this policy. I congratulate the Government of Alberta, especially Premier Rachel Notley and her minister responsible for the Francophone Secretariat, Ricardo Miranda.

Thanks to their leadership, Alberta now joins the majority of Canadian provinces that have a law or a policy about French services and the Francophonie. In other words, Franco-Albertans will now have a government that is more attentive to their needs in terms of service delivery to their community. The government also committed to improving the scope of its consultations with the Franco-Albertan community and its French-language communications to build a respectful, effective relationship with the community.

Alberta will also recognize the Franco-Albertan flag as a symbol of distinction under the Emblems of Alberta Act. As a proud member of the community, I join them in expressing my enthusiasm for this historic and transformative initiative.
