

Parliamentary Newsletter of the Honourable Claudette Tardif,

Senator for Alberta

A word from your Senator

Dear friends,

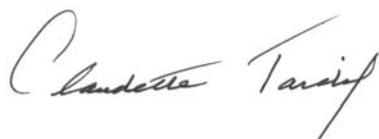
I am pleased to send you the Fall 2008 issue of my parliamentary newsletter. You will find articles on a broad range of issues, including some on my activities over the past few months.

A number of events took place this year. In June, the federal government made an official apology to former students of Indian residential schools in Canada. This was an important step toward repairing the vital relationship between Canada and its Aboriginal people. The Senate of Canada also adopted a historic motion for the Aboriginal leaders to respond to the apology in the Senate, which was created under the Constitution to protect the interests of minority groups in Canada.

The 40th Parliament was ushered in with the federal election on October 14. In this time of economic crisis, new challenges lie ahead for the Senate when Parliament resumes. I am honoured to once again serve as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, alongside the Opposition's new Leader, Senator Cowan, and new Whip, Senator Munson.

I look forward to the challenges ahead and to beginning a new session with the help of my new team. I am happy to announce that Laure Prévost has joined my team as a special assistant. Laure replaces my former special assistant, Anne-Sophie Belzile, who now works for Liberal MP Martha Hall Findlay.

I encourage you to visit my website, which has been revamped and is more user-friendly. I have added new tools and resources to help explain the work of the Senate and senators.



The Honourable Claudette Tardif
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Senator for Alberta



Senator Claudette Tardif addresses the Senate in Committee of the Whole before First Nations leaders. At left, Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations; with back toward camera, Mary Simon, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; and at right, Patrick Brazeau, the National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

The government's **official apology** to former students of Indian residential schools on June 1, 2008, caused a flurry of press . . . and a flood of tears. The day after the apology in the House of Commons by Prime Minister Harper and the Opposition leaders, the senators met in Committee of the Whole in the Senate and reiterated their support to Aboriginal peoples and listened to their moving words. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, I rose to officially address them. (*See page 9 for an excerpt of this speech*).

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The website has a
new look!

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claudettetardif.ca!

Send your comments (*free*) :

379-S, Centre Block Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4
613-943-3589 *Toll free* : 1-800-267-7362

More for postsecondary education!

In May 2008, I had the opportunity to rise in the Senate to speak about a subject dear to my heart, postsecondary education. Positive findings, such as the increase in literacy rates and the number of graduates in Canada, speak to our growing understanding of the value of postsecondary education. Yet the 2006 Census also contains sobering data. For example, Canada ranks sixth in the OECD in terms of the proportion of the population with a university degree.

The presidents of three of Canada's most prestigious universities have all publicly proclaimed the need for greater public and private investment in postsecondary education. Moreover, *Nature* magazine recently criticized Canada's current government for its "dismal" track record and "manifest disregard for science."

The social and economic well-being of our nation depends on our ability to transform ideas into technologies and innovations. To neglect the institutions that foster and incubate those ideas—universities and colleges—is to invite disaster.

The solutions are not out of reach. It is not the lack of solutions that is preventing rapid progress in this area but rather the lack of political will.

A national agreement on postsecondary education is much hoped for. The time has come for legislators across the country to invest in our future and in the welfare of our society by making postsecondary education a national priority and by making Canada an international centre for knowledge.

Did you know . . . ?

Although the number of Aboriginals obtaining a university degree has grown, the figure has not kept pace with the growth in the general population. The university participation gap between Aboriginal students and the general population is now at 15% compared with 14% in 2001. Thirty-four per cent of Aboriginals between the ages of 25 and 64 have failed to complete high school (2006 Census).

According to the 2006 Census . . .

*60% of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 64 completed some form of postsecondary education, up from 24% since 2001.

*Over half of those immigrants who came to Canada between 2001 and 2006 had a university degree.

*8% of Aboriginals between the ages of 25 and 64 have a university degree, compared with 6% in 2001.

*33% of women between the ages of 25 and 34 have a university degree. Only 25% of men between those ages have a university degree.

*11% of all Canadians between the ages of 25 and 34 still have less than a high school diploma.



CASLT President John Erskine, Senator Claudette Tardif and Treasurer Hilàire Lemoine.

Award from the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers

Learning and teaching the French language has always played a key role in my life. I started my career 40 years ago as a teacher of French-as-a-second-language in an Edmonton school. This marked the beginning of my great enthusiasm for teaching and research. I was deeply honoured to receive the CASLT Lifetime Member Award on September 25, 2008. I would like to thank the Association for this tribute and applaud its efforts to initiate and advance projects that encourage second-language research, learning and instruction.



The University of Alberta's centenary!

This year the University of Alberta celebrates its 100th anniversary. Many festivities and get-togethers are being held for former students, professors and employers to look back fondly on the University, celebrate its success and join together to build an even brighter future.

Left to right: University of Alberta past president Rod Fraser and his wife, Judith, Senator Claudette Tardif and her husband, Denis, at the University of Alberta's Centenary Gala on September 20, 2008.

Unveiling of historical plaques for the Résidence Saint-Jean



On September 20, 2008, as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of the *Campus Saint-Jean*, I unveiled 100 commemorative plaques featuring historical highlights of the *Campus Saint-Jean*. Students; the first dean of the *Faculté Saint Jean*, Frank McMahon; the Assistant Dean of student affairs and public relations, Denis Fontaine; the current Dean, Marc Arnal; and Professor Emeritus France Levasseur-Ouimet were present for the occasion.



Denis Tardif, Senator Claudette Tardif, Marie Stelmach and Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach on October 25, 2008, at the 25th Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society Gala in Edmonton.

NABIS's efforts reflect Canadian values of support, compassion and charity

I had the honour of congratulating the Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society (NABIS) on its 25th anniversary.

For over 25 years, NABIS has eased the suffering of thousands of Albertans with brain injuries, while providing support to their friends and family. Medical and technological progress has helped improve the treatment and quality of life of a growing number of people, who need support reintegrating into their workplace, their home and their community. The importance and role of NABIS is growing, and individuals, organizations and governments must do their share so that NABIS has the resources it needs to do its work.

A critique of the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality*

I made a statement in the Upper Chamber in June 2008 about the Conservative government's *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality*. An excerpt follows:

"Some new elements have been added, such as support for francophone immigration, arts and culture programs and the university scholarships program in translation. Those are all good initiatives. However, I have serious reservations.

The Roadmap is very short-sighted. It is silent on the subject of the public service, and the budget for support for official-language minority communities is remarkably small. \$22.5 million is not nearly enough to meet needs, and communities may be unable to reach their full potential as a result. The amount allocated to economic development also seems rather arbitrary, because it does not appear to be shared equally among the provinces.

Furthermore, the new program to support linguistic rights, which partly replaces the **former Court Challenges Program**, will not provide assistance for all official-language grievances. Complaints related to rights under the Official Languages Act or provincial or territorial legislation will not be eligible, which narrows the program's scope significantly.

It is unfortunate that the Roadmap does not contain a new and innovative vision to promote and defend language rights and the development of official-language communities."



Pierre Bergeron, Jean Poulin, Denis Tardif and Senator Claudette Tardif award prizes to Anne-Mary Boileau and to Léon and Hélène Lavoie at a breakfast hosted by the *Fondation Franco-albertaine* on October 18, 2008, in Calgary.



Senator Claudette Tardif addresses members of the *Fondation franco-albertaine* on October 18th, at the 2008 annual conference of the *Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta*.

The *Fondation franco-albertaine* is on the road to success!

You can tell that the Foundation is on the road to success, by the energy of those present, the great results in the annual report, the concrete initiatives that have been carried out in recent years, the generosity of donors, the commitment of partners and especially the enthusiasm and hard work of the members of the Board.

The francophone community in Alberta gets a phenomenal boost from the Foundation. It is well-placed to implement its plans and play a leadership role in the francophone community, not only in Calgary and Edmonton, but throughout Alberta.

I am proud to be able to say wherever I go that we have a strong and dynamic francophone community in Alberta that shows great leadership. By supporting the *Fondation franco-albertaine*, we ensure our community's vitality.

"Engaged Citizens, Concerted Action!"

... was the theme of the 2008 annual conference of the *Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta* (ACFA), held on October 16-18 in Calgary.

Congratulations to Jocelyne Bélanger, Mariette Rainville, Laurent Bolduc, France Levasseur-Ouimet, *Campus Saint-Jean* and the Faculty of Nursing, Daniel Cournoyer, Evelyne St-Amand Hubert and Dr. Carl Amrhein on receiving the ACFA's Award of Excellence in recognition of their ongoing efforts in developing and supporting the "francophonie" in Alberta.

Bilingualism of Supreme Court Judges

Pierre Donais: Why do you think Supreme Court judges should be bilingual?

Sen. Tardif: Bilingualism and the right of people to be served in one of Canada's official languages is a fundamental right in our country. It is part of our identity and our Canadian values. [...] It is inconceivable that our country's prime minister would be unilingual. It is equally inconceivable that a Supreme Court justice would be unilingual.

Pierre Donais: It's been said that appointing a unilingual judge isn't so bad, because they can always learn French in the following months. We have already heard this excuse. What do you think?

Sen. Tardif: I think it's an excuse. Bilingualism should be one of the core qualifications to be a judge. People who want to be a judge should take the opportunity to learn French along the way.

Pierre Donais: Do you think there would be an outcry from the English-speaking community if a unilingual French-speaking judge was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Sen. Tardif: Without question. [...] According to the Canadian Constitution, we are a bilingual and bijural country. Moreover, section 16 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that citizens have the right to be heard in one of the country's official languages. Canada is based on the concept of linguistic duality. It is important not only symbolically but also practically that a person be able to be heard in both official languages. It's a matter of rights. It's a matter of equality, if you will, from coast to coast to coast.

*** On September 5, 2008, Prime Minister Harper and Justice Minister Rob Nicholson selected Justice Thomas A. Cromwell as the candidate to replace the Hon. Michel Bastarache, but have yet to *appoint* him. Mr. Harper said that the nomination will not be made until Mr. Cromwell's candidacy is vetted by a special House of Commons multiparty committee when Parliament resumes.

Excerpts of Pierre Donais' interview with Senator Claudette Tardif on the show, Revue Politique, broadcast by CPAC on June 3, 2008. To see the interview in full, visit CPAC's website at www.cpac.ca.



Presentations on the role of the Senate

I like to combine my words with action. To educate and promote leadership among youth, I visit secondary schools in Alberta as often as I can to make presentations on the Senate of Canada. I was pleased to meet with the students of the *Academy Vimy Ridge* in Edmonton in August to describe my role as a senator.

While in Calgary for the annual general meeting of the *Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta*, I agreed to speak to a group of students at the Calgary French and International School. I was impressed with their curiosity and their knowledge of politics and I wish them much success in their future studies.



Mrs. Krieber; Tony Luppino, Director of the Art Gallery of Alberta; and Senator Claudette Tardif.

The Art Gallery of Alberta

I had the pleasure of accompanying Jeanine Krieber to the Art Gallery of Alberta in July during her trip to Edmonton. We were given a tour by Tony Luppino, the Gallery's Director, who proudly showed us the most recent exhibits. The Gallery's works reflect Canada's artistic creativity and are true Albertan treasures. A visit to the construction site of the new museum, a building that will greatly contribute to the success of fine arts in Alberta for years to come, capped off our cultural tour. We hope to return for the official opening of the museum and show our support for our Canadian



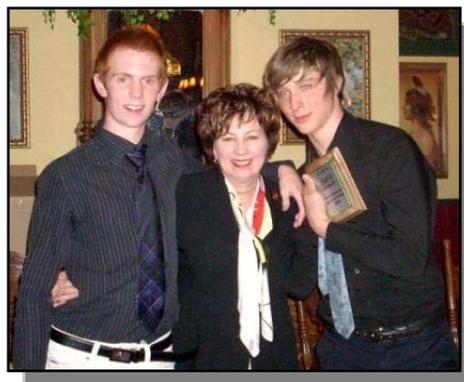
The new Art Gallery of Alberta will highlight the excellence of art in the West. With 30,000 sq. ft, the new building will have more space to showcase the museum's permanent collection of over 6,000 works. As well, an expanded educational centre will attract and sensitize more people to the visual arts.

The Hon. Claudette Tardif Debate Summit

Students from Ashbury College and *Lycée Claudel* in Ottawa, the Old Scona High School in Edmonton, the Toronto French School and William Aberhart School in Calgary took part on April 26, 2008, in the Claudette Tardif Debate Summit in Edmonton.

Since 2006, the Claudette Tardif Debate Summit has brought together students from grades 10 to 12 from across the country each year for a series of French-language debates at the University of Alberta's *Campus Saint-Jean* in Edmonton. Students are given an opportunity to demonstrate the quality of their reasoning and delivery, to work in teams, to perfect the style of Canadian parliamentary debate and to refine their speaking skills.

I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to the champions, Ian Pelletier and Josh Cawthorpe from William Aberhart, and to Raphaël Guévin Nicoloff from the *Lycée Claudel*, Diana Holloway from the Toronto French School and Gabriella Fanous from the *Lycée Claudel* for placing first, second and third respectively in the debating category. I want to thank all the participants for the lively debates. I look forward to seeing you at the 2009 Debate Summit!



Sen. Claudette Tardif congratulates Ian Pelletier and Josh Cawthorpe, the champions of the Hon. Claudette Tardif Debate Summit.

Take part in the 2009 Claudette Tardif Debate Summit!

Are you young and looking for a challenge? Do you want to develop your skills as a speaker and win a scholarship? Find out how by contacting your school or writing to tardic@sen.parl.gc.ca!

Better health care in French!

While education was the primary issue for French-language minority communities in the 1980s and 1990s, health has become the number one issue in the 2000s. With close to 70,000 people in Alberta whose first language is French, and over 200,000 people who understand French, resources and infrastructure must be directed to improving the health and well-being of the province's francophones and francophiles.

Centre de Santé Saint-Thomas

This year, the health and vitality of the Franco-Albertan community got a boost with the opening of the ***Centre de santé St-Thomas*** in May 2008. This facility is the first fully bilingual health care centre in Alberta, offering a wide range of quality services in French to the public as well as housing for seniors and people with decreasing independence. The opening of the centre is a dream come true for the Franco-Albertan community, which has found ways to develop strong partnerships with the Government of Alberta, the federal government, Health Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing, Capital Health Authority, *Réseau-santé en Alberta* and the *Société Santé en français*.

The unwavering support of the francophone community and the many donors certainly contributed to the project's success. Without the community's involvement, the *Centre de santé Saint-Thomas* never would have seen the light of day. Accomplishing such an innovative project contributes to the vitality and development of Alberta's francophone community. The community should be very proud of this achievement, which is an inspiration to francophone communities across the country.

Bilingual Bachelor's Degree of Science in Nursing

Much remains to be done to offer quality services in French to francophones across the country. The acute shortage of health care professionals affects the entire national health care system, and demographic changes only emphasize health care needs. However, there is hope. The first group of students from the University of Alberta's *Campus Saint-Jean* and Faculty of Nursing's Bilingual Degree of Science in Nursing graduated this year. Many other students will earn their degree in the coming years and start to alleviate the shortage of French-speaking health care professionals.



Senator Claudette Tardif with Dean Marc Arnal, MP Rahim Jaffer and the first graduates of the bilingual degree in nursing sciences on February 8, 2008, at the *Campus Saint-Jean* in Edmonton. The strength, support and commitment of the community, including the *Association Canadienne française de l'Alberta*, the *Réseau de santé albertain*, *Santé en Français* and the *Consortium national de formation en santé* helped convince university authorities and governments of the need for this program.

Bilingualism and linguistic duality go hand-in-hand

A round table on linguistic duality was held during the annual general meeting of the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne* (FCFA) in Quebec City in June 2008. At that time, I had the opportunity to say a few words about linguistic duality and bilingualism. An excerpt from my speech follows:

[translation]

« I believe that bilingualism is the individual capacity to learn and communicate in another language. Linguistic duality, on the other hand, identifies more closely with one's community roots and to the historical and political significance of those linguistic communities.

Canada's cultural, political and demographic context has changed since the latest framing of the historical concept of linguistic duality. The new dialogue on linguistic duality must take these changes into account and continue to build the Canadian identity, and to reflect the multiculturalism of our country. »

“Bilingualism is the application of the principle of linguistic duality.”



Senator Claudette Tardif takes part on June 14, 2008, in the FCFA round table in Quebec City along with Official Languages Commissioner Graham Fraser and *Le Devoir* political columnist Manon Cornellier. The Senator stated that “Bilingualism is the application of the principle of linguistic duality.”

“Empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans”



Above: A delegation of Canadian senators with their French counterparts in Paris in March 2008.

I had the honour of taking part in a symposium held by the Senates of France and Canada entitled *Empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans*, organized by Senator Serge Joyal as part of the 400th anniversary celebrations of the founding of Quebec City by Samuel de Champlain in 1608. Over three days, senators from both countries renewed ties between Canada and France by discussing the history of colonization, the establishment of the French in Quebec, and the French language.

On the other Atlantic Coast...

A delegation of French parliamentarians were in Quebec City from September 8-15 for the 35th annual meeting of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association. The Canadian and French delegates discussed a variety of issues of common interest, including the economy, the state of the parliamentary opposition, agriculture and immigration. The 400th anniversary celebrations of the founding of Quebec City highlight the friendship between the two countries.

A delegation of French parliamentarians was welcomed in Ottawa on November 14-15, 2008, for the second and last part of the symposium which concluded with the launch of the book “France-Canada-Québec : 400 ans de relations d’exception”, edited by Senator Serge Joyal and Paul-André Linteau.

An historic event: a long-awaited and needed apology

The government's official apology to former students of Indian residential schools on June 1, 2008, caused a flurry of press . . . and a flood of tears. The day after the apology in the House of Commons by Prime Minister Harper and the opposition leaders, the senators met in Committee of the Whole in the Senate and reiterated their support to Aboriginal peoples and listened to their moving words. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, I rose to officially address them. An excerpt of the speech follows.

"Honourable senators, leaders of our First Nations, on behalf of the Liberal opposition in the Senate of Canada, it is with great pride and solemnity that I welcome leaders of our First Nations here in the upper chamber.

I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say how deeply honoured we are that you have agreed to be here to formally reply to the statement of apology the Prime Minister made in the other place yesterday.

By its very design, vocation and history, the Senate of Canada has always been the chamber of Parliament that gives a voice to minorities. Today, your presence before our Committee of the Whole is an historic event and clearly in keeping with the mission of this upper chamber.

Furthermore, we have the privilege of accepting, hearing and recording for posterity your response to the apology

presented yesterday by the Prime Minister and the leaders of the other parties.

We know that the road you have travelled to reach this historic moment has been long, fraught with difficulties and punctuated by delays, obstacles and reversals.

By attempting to crush the pride of the First Nations and eradicate their Aboriginal identity, the Indian residential schools policy destroyed your social fabric and family traditions and tarnished the memory of our collective history.

For you, it is a deep and painful wound that is slow to heal. For us, it is the shame of having wrongfully thrust you into the destructive shadows cast by this episode. We admire your courage in the face of the unjust, disgraceful and deplorable treatment you received. Together with our colleagues in the other chamber, we extend our most sincere regrets.

Yesterday the government, on behalf of all of us, provided a long-awaited and needed apology. We all hope that concrete actions will now follow to prove our sincerity and good faith by helping to heal the wounds.



L-R: Fred Kelly, an Ojibway elder; Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations; Senator Marjory LeBreton, Leader of the Government in the Senate; Senator Claudette Tardif, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate; Mary Simon, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Patrick Brazeau, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples; and Clem Chartier, President of the Metis National Council.



Senator Claudette Tardif with Senator Aurélien Gill, on his retirement from the Senate in June 2008. The Hon. Aurélien Gill defended the rights of Aboriginals, including access to education, throughout his career and his 10 years in the Senate.



Senator Claudette Tardif with the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and Senator Nancy Ruth on May 17, 2008, at a dinner in honour of Senator Fitzpatrick.

Congratulations!

I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to Senator Fitzpatrick and Senator Gill on their retirement! Both of them were appointed by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien in 1998. They are leaving the Senate after 10 years of hard work and loyal service.

Congratulations to Martin Poirier!

I wish to congratulate Martin Poirier on being awarded the *Prix Claudette Tardif 2008 du Conseil français* of the Alberta Teachers Association, honouring his professionalism and his success as a social studies teacher and Head of Department at the William Aberhart High School in Calgary.

His commitment to the promotion of the French language through public speaking contests and French debates has contributed to its visibility at a provincial and inter-provincial level.

I greatly appreciate his support and his efforts in motivating students to participate in the *Claudette Tardif Debate Summit* since its launch. Once again, congratulations!



The **Famous Five** monument attracts many tourists to Parliament Hill in Ottawa. It is a replica of the Famous Five monument in Calgary.

The monument was created by Barbara Paterson, an Albertan! **Emily Murphy, Henriette Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby and Nellie McClung** are famous because of the **Persons case**, which recognized women as persons in 1930. These five women were also from Alberta.

Visit us at www.claudettetardif.ca and share your comments and questions!

Liberal Senate Forum

The Liberal Senate now has a website! Follow Senate activities online and share your comments at www.liberalsenateforum.ca.