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FIRST WORLD WAR

Joint Parliamentary Symposia
in Canada and France

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

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[*Translation*]

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JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SYMPOSIA IN CANADA AND FRANCE

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, on November 11 and 12, the first session of the commemorative symposia “Canada and France in the Great War,” organized as part of the centenary of the declaration of the First World War, was held in this chamber. I would like to congratulate our colleague, Senator Serge Joyal, who was the main organizer of this initiative, the only one of its kind among all the parliaments of the allied countries that took part in the First World War.

Canada is the only country to organize, along with the parliamentarians from France, a symposium on this theme. I want to thank our colleague for his willingness to further our knowledge of the history of this era by bringing us together to listen to renowned experts in the field. The purpose of the symposia was to recall a moment in the history between France and Canada that indelibly marked a time and forged unbreakable bonds between our two countries.

This symposium was organized with the support of the Canada-France Parliamentary Association.

The Honourable Noël Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate, and His Excellency Philippe Zeller, Ambassador of France to Canada, were the patrons of honour of this important seminar and delivered the welcoming addresses.

I want to sincerely thank the Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable Noël Kinsella for welcoming us in this chamber. For

the enjoyment of all participants, the Honourable the Speaker drew everyone’s attention to the magnificent paintings in this chamber, which depict key events of the Great War and remind us of the heroic bravery and enormous sacrifices of our veterans.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Minister of Veterans Affairs, who officially recognized this symposium and who generously supported the event. As chair of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association, I want to recognize the considerable support of the vice-chair of the association, the Honourable Michel Rivard.

The first part was a tremendous success. We heard from eight prominent historians from Canada and France who shared their latest research on the First World War. We also heard from our colleague, the Honourable Serge Joyal, who gave a lecture on parliamentarianism in Canada during the war of 1914-18. The presentations sparked very interesting reactions among the researchers and considerable interest from invited guests, who had opportunities to speak during time for questions. We were treated to deeply enriching analyses and discussions led by people who are passionate about the history of the Great War.

The second part of the symposia will be organized with our French colleagues and will take place at the National Assembly in Paris in the spring of 2015.

Dear Senator Joyal, you took on a huge challenge in organizing this prestigious symposium, which you invited us to attend. Thanks to you, this successful event helped advance and deepen our understanding and interpretations of the history of the Great War. We truly appreciate your generous contribution to the advancement of the Canada-France aspect, which is part of the impressive history of the Great War. Thank you.