

**Newfoundland and Labrador**

*La Journée provinciale de la francophonie*

**Hon. Maria Chaput:** Honourable senators, since 1992, francophones in Newfoundland and Labrador have celebrated their day, la *Journée provinciale de la francophonie*, on May 30.

Why May 30? In 1987, in the community of Mainland, the flag of Franco-Newfoundlanders and Labradorians was raised for the first time at the groundbreaking ceremony for the *Centre scolaire et communautaire Sainte-Anne*.

In 1992, the community decided to make May 30 their day in a big way and held a ceremony at Confederation Building, seat of the Legislative Assembly in the capital city of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The provincial government finally decreed in 1999 that May 30 of each year would be the day of the Francophonie in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Honourable senators, the French presence in Newfoundland and Labrador goes back over 500 years, and it is an important part of the province's culture. I want to congratulate this community, which works tirelessly to defend and promote its rights and interests.

I had the privilege, as a francophone senator, to meet with members and take part in the 2011 flag-raising event. I was even able to say a few words. I met with members of the community. I heard from young people, who are proud to be learning French, the language of their grandparents.

I could feel how proud they were of their heritage and their culture. Since then, my thoughts have always been with them on May 30.

I would like to thank the *Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador* and its members, various francophone community organizations, for their tireless efforts and hard work. Together, they are helping the French language thrive in their community and are promoting that community within their province and within Canada. Thank you.