

*Private Members' Business*

I recall the debate a while ago when member after member rose in this House to speak from their heart about the atrocities that occurred in China after the university incident. I ask those same members to recall that night and, in the same spirit of human compassion and kindness, to forget about the political affiliation and support this motion.

**Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley):** Mr. Speaker, indeed it is an honour to rise in support of the motion presented by the member from Nunatsiaq which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider developing special initiatives, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to respond to the serious employment, education and health needs of Aboriginal youth.

I am sure you would agree, Mr. Speaker, with other members who have spoken today that if there is a motion before this House that should be passed or dealt with more than ever, it is a motion like this one. I think the concerns are being expressed by members who represent many of the people to whom this motion is directly related. We have a long way to go.

Others have made reference to the most recent annual report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission where the commissioner cites last year's annual report and states: "We described the situation of Canada's aboriginal peoples as a national tragedy". It is still a national tragedy.

The Carrier Sekanie people live in my riding. I have had meetings on the reserves and most recently with the chiefs who had gathered in Prince George. Some days it seems to them that the challenge is almost insurmountable.

I know of the problems that we have faced in working with the people at the band level to help get even the simple things that we take for granted in this Chamber and on this Hill. We have to fight and work to get adequate sewer and water in many of the reserves in northern British Columbia and other parts of the country.

• (1720 )

I do not know how much more emotional a member can be when we meet with representatives of our bands in our areas and they tell us the litany of the problems they have faced not only over many years but even in

recent years, with the work that has to be done to help with the education, health and housing of many of these people.

It was stated earlier that a major accomplishment would be to recognize self-government. Certainly in my province the biggest road block we have is the government in Victoria currently not recognizing the existence of land claims, self-government.

The federal government negotiates. We have some concerns with that process but at least in most cases they are talking. In my home province, the government in Victoria, British Columbia does not even recognize that. One of its ministers said they deal with Indian Affairs issues on a day to day basis. That is their commitment.

We in this Chamber have to show that our commitment goes deeper than that. The Prime Minister has made some major statements about the direction in which he wants to see his government go. He has talked about education. We are debating major tax policy and trade policy. I would ask the Prime Minister to take it upon himself to deal with many of the questions we are dealing with in our ridings when it comes to Indian people and to work and push his ministers and the new minister to see that these problems are dealt with.

The Secretary of State is in the Chamber today listening. I am pleased about that, because he knows we have had discussions and correspondence about the issues that we are facing in our area and the requests that we have had from the Carrier Sekanie people to develop and preserve their language. One of the first official duties I had as a new member was to go out to Vanderhoof to attend a scholarship ceremony for the Ingenika Dene language institute, where they are teaching aboriginal people to go out and teach the importance of language. We call on this government to provide some assistance.

We are working on building a new university in the north. I understand that the premier will be in my home town, Prince George, tomorrow, to make an announcement about an interim board of governors. I trust that he has consulted, and I trust that he will be appointing someone who can reflect on, comment on and help develop an aboriginal languages institute as part of that university. It is critical and essential to our area.