

Private Members' Business

150,000 graduates, with 22,000 in post-secondary institutions this year and 23,000 who will be in post-secondary institutions next year.

They had the leadership and they were articulate. On this day that the hon. member is proposing we should think of that.

• (1750)

In the past 17 months, and to me it feels like 17 years, we have tried to implement the promises of our red book. We have negotiated with the Micmacs. We have said: "You've done so well in education, now it is time to take over jurisdiction". The Micmacs in Nova Scotia are doing just that.

At the meeting when we signed the agreement, one of the elders now, but once a chief said: "You know when I started this, Ron, there were only four Micmacs in the whole province of Nova Scotia in post-secondary. I came to this meeting tonight to sign with high hopes in my heart. I saw a car there. There were three kids in this car and they were out of gas so I stopped and helped them. All three were Micmacs, all three were university graduates". We should remember that.

On the Manitoba dismantling, a year ago people in the House of one party thought it was craziness. Within three or four months the public said maybe it is important. A month before the signing they said it is historic. Now they say at Harvard that it is the most significant aboriginal self-government agreement in the world. That is the spirit.

In British Columbia it is difficult because we are doing contemporary treaties, in spirit and intent. There are now over 120 First Nations negotiating at five tables with 50 people from our side bringing in contemporary and modern treaties.

We intend to dismantle in northern Ontario. The meetings will be held in the next two or three months. We intend to move jurisdiction in Treaty 3 in the Fort Frances area and that is going on now.

We are moving oil and gas. This is the way it works. There are 110 oil and gas chiefs, 50 are on significant oil and gas reserves. They do not own it and they do not manage it. We have to give them that because it belongs to them. It is on their reserves. That will be done.

In Quebec we are dealing with the Inuit, the Cree, the Montagnais, the Huron. We are dealing with them face to face with dignity and respect, and agreements are being reached there.

The same thing happened in the Yukon. You all went through that as members. I would like to recall to you the night we voted. I looked up at the Yukon delegation sitting in the gallery. They were all in their traditional garb. We applauded and they applauded. They started crying and our hardened members here started crying. Hardnosed Liberals were crying over this. That is

the kind of commitment we must have. The same thing will happen in the Northwest Territories.

I wish I could go on and on, but my time is limited. I want to talk about what can be done and what we should remember on that day. How can we? It seems so simple but it is difficult. It is a triangle. At the top of the triangle is dignity, respect and self-government. At the bottom of the triangle are adequate health facilities, adequate housing facilities and adequate economic development. If we do not do these things at the bottom, the triangle is going to collapse.

There will be opponents. They will say we are bleeding hearts. They will say we have our agenda. They will say the Indians have too much right now. I do not feel I am a bleeding heart. I do not feel I have an agenda. I have eyes to see. Erasmus is asking us to see.

What will it take? It will take courage to stand up to these arguments. It will take knowledge of what is out there. It will take compassion. We have to have compassion. It will take an attitude that we will talk face to face. One Metis leader said to me: "We've talked back to back and side to side too long. We must talk face to face". We can do it.

In the Northwest Territories, they have nine official languages, four more than the UN. They have translation in their legislature. The Russians have come here to see what we have done. That is the attitude we should have as Canadians, not just doing a good job but the best job in the world, where people will come to us.

• (1755)

Today the Irish, the Scots, the English and even the French are flying Canadian flags. If we are to have a flag in the aboriginal portfolio it should be the aboriginal people and other Canadians saying it is a flag of tolerance, a flag of dignity, of sharing and respect. It will work. That is why this day is important and that is why I will support it.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois also intends to support the motion moved by the hon. member for the NDP.

It is a subject with which I am familiar, and I have been trying to learn more about it for nearly a year and a half, since it is extremely complex. It is not easy to understand because after all we have 635 communities in Canada. When I say communities, these are often reserves spread out across Canada. And there are not only communities but also nations. Furthermore, there are nearly 50 different languages and dialects, which is rather surprising.

There is among aboriginal nations a definite desire to really go back to their own traditions and language, and they are to be respected for that.