

It is a very daunting proposition because many people look at the failures in our society. They look at the failures of Indian bands to develop economic development projects and the failure to account for money. They have seen a lot of negatives in the past 20 years and tell the government that it has given away too much. They say that native people do not know how to spend money or handle responsibility. However there is only one direction to go if we are to save this next generation of aboriginal children. The only direction to go is in favour of self-government.

We must take a risk. We must show support for people who are desperately trying to find a way to rebuild confidence in their communities, confidence in each other, the capacity to manage, the capacity to learn and the capacity to create employment among themselves.

If we look at the successes, if we look at the opportunities provided by the Dakota—Ojibwa Tribal Council in its own school at Yellow Quill, and if we look at the opportunities provided at Norway House through economic development initiatives operated by the youth, the benchmark of success in one area of the country after another is in self-government.

The more that we in Parliament through passing motions like this show support to members who are dealing with these problems in their own constituencies, the more we can turn to the people of Canada and say: "We have looked at motions such as this and we are not afraid to lend our support. We are morally committed. We are legally committed. We want to see these proposals go through."

The aboriginal youth of this country can look at a motion like this one and see that it simply says the government should consider developing special initiatives. It does not say the government should spend a lot of money. It asks the government to consider helping the aboriginal youth of this country. We should tell the aboriginal youth of this country that we agree we should be taking some initiative and working with them. We should be saying: "We want to work with you. We agree with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. There is a role for us. There is a role for you. Let us work together".

I call upon this House to adopt this motion and to show support for our aboriginal children.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Willie Littlechild (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed very pleased to address this motion, a motion to consider special initiatives for aboriginal youth.

I am pleased because aboriginal youth and the development of positive programs have been a personal interest and involvement of mine for many years. This is a matter of tremendous importance, as other members have previously stated.

• (1710)

The needs regarding employment, education and health are all interrelated and should be considered together, although separately each deserves its own consideration.

Without education it is very difficult to obtain employment and without health it is very difficult to obtain an education or employment. With education and employment it is much easier to stay healthy. So the needs, if and when properly addressed, will result in aboriginal youth who are, among other positives, proud of who they are. Aboriginal youth will feel a part of this country once again, to the extent that they then can become positive contributors as nation builders in every aspect.

The problems we have come to know too well are immense but not insurmountable. I think aboriginal youth want to contribute. Given the same chance as everyone else they can become winners like everyone else. First they have to feel good. They have to feel good about who they are and where they are going, but collectively we must first deal with myths and stereotypes that have been proliferated over the years. The days of the no good, lazy, drunken Indian must come to an end. How does it happen? One of the ways is with education. Another is with employment.

When dealing with aboriginal youth I am often asked: "How is it that you have the highest suicide rates, the highest unemployment rates, the highest drop-out rates from high school, the highest inmate population rates in jails"? In yesterday's edition of *The Globe and Mail* these kinds of statistics continued to appear. Let me quote from the article:

The statistics compiled by the Canadian Institute of Child Health on suicide among people from the ages of 15 to 19 go beyond the basic question of why anyone to whom the full flavour of life should just be dawning would wish to end it. Why would young people in Canada's north be apparently so much readier than others to quit this life? Is it linked in some way to the relative hostility of their environment? The despair that feeds on unemployment and low incomes? Is this the lot of a culture torn between the old ways and new ways, seduced nightly by the dish-antenna visions of southern lifestyles and escape through the