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pened to aboriginal families is extremely bleak. It is probably the darkest blot on the Canadian record.

We pride ourselves on being a peaceful, compassionate and sharing kind of nation, that we play that kind of role in the international arena. Certainly many people have developed the critique that before we get on a high horse and take too much pride in who we are as a people, we need to look inward at the historical record of the interaction between the majority of society and the aboriginal people.

Certainly it is not a bright record, not if you look at the whole situation of residential schools. There was a concerted effort, a comprehensive policy of alienating Indian, Métis and Inuit children from their own family heritage, from their own culture. It was a deliberate policy to assimilate the aboriginal people into the mainstream of society, no matter what the cost or what the consequences. We see those consequences on a daily basis today.

How could it be otherwise? We had two generations of aboriginal people who were torn from their family life, away from their communities, placed in an alien setting and punished if they in any way exercised their traditional ways, their cultures. After a situation like that, should we wonder why today we have problems of family breakdown, of alcohol abuse and of child suicide in our aboriginal communities. There is very little that is left to the imagination when you look at the historical record.

This was expanded by many of the social programs, the social policies that governments, both provincial and federal, exercised toward aboriginal people. One need only look at adoption policies, where it was considered a hallmark of progress to remove aboriginal children from their families and communities and to place them in white families far from their people, far from their culture and sometimes even far from their country.

What kind of a message did that send to the aboriginal communities? What kind of message did that send to aboriginal families, when federal and provincial governments had, as a matter of policy, the notion that it was best on a blanket basis for aboriginal children to be removed from their families and from their culture? That is part of the Canadian legacy that we need to examine. Certainly there has been a growing recognition of the abomination which this whole line of policy

development represents in our history. We talk a good line about coming to terms with these problems. We talk a good line about providing new resources and coming to these problems with new insights. But what is really happening?

Let me run through a very few specific examples. One is the Brighter Futures Program which the government has proclaimed with a great deal of fanfare. However that is all it is, a great deal of fanfare. Certainly we have all seen the press releases. The aboriginal communities have seen the press releases. As a result of that, the aboriginal communities developed proposals, very good ideas, on how to come to terms with the family violence issues, with suicide issues and with the abuse issues in their communities.

• (1910)

They develop proposals, think these things through, and set in motion a healing process in their own communities expecting that the government is going to make good on its word. Where is the Brighter Futures funding?

There is no such thing. There is no process by which people can access this money. There are no guidelines by which this money is distributed. This is a situation in which there seems to be a recognition of what the problem is but no way to access the resources.

In my own province of Saskatchewan in this very year, and in fact in the weeks leading up to the end of the year, \$8.2 million will revert to the Crown, to the Treasury. This is money that was earmarked for family and social services for Indian people in that province. Those funds will be going unspent.

On the one hand, we have a situation in which there is a desperate need. It is a situation in which we have all kinds of ideas and proposals to perpetuate the healing process and to get it under way. On the other hand, because of jurisdictional arguments and the government having to prove a point, we have a case where if aboriginal people do not knuckle under to provincial jurisdiction they are not going to get access to the \$8.2 million which they need.

The government is going to withdraw it at the same time as its members speak in the House to outline its commitment to dealing with these problems.