

*Private Members' Business*

increase and improve any progress they have made while they were on the inside.

This is a program that is improperly and inadequately funded, has not been thought through, that is developed without consultation with the people who are taking the program. The tutoring and teaching is below standard. There is no follow-up, and the very foundation of the program undercuts its effectiveness. This is taking place in a section of our population where the pay-offs for an effective literacy program would be most significant.

What do we do about it, Mr. Speaker?

First, there is client involvement. Obviously there has to be some thorough discussion with inmates in developing the program.

Second, we have to end the mandatory requirement.

Third, there should be the provision of financial incentives to take the program.

Fourth, community and volunteer teaching needs to be written into the program so that there is seen within the institution to be some level of independence by the teachers. As well, it can form part of a program of increasing the ability to relate to those who are on the outside and in the general community.

Fifth, we have to improve the peer tutoring that has apparently shown some positive signs. It has also shown some negatives. Those negatives need to be addressed.

Sixth, there has to be an improved information network across Canada to know what is working and what is not working.

Seventh, and perhaps most important, there must be an integration of the literacy programs with other life skills programs in our prisons. It has to be part of a package that will assist those who need the benefits that a good literacy program can bring. It has been said that literacy has a certain political attractiveness. It is easy for a minister to institute such a program in that area.

We need to focus on genuine life skills and the literacy program needs to be seen as part of that. That may also

help to undercut some of the stereotypes within the prison that seem to be undercutting the program.

Eight, there must be some effective follow-up with some programs designed for that purpose.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to give positive consideration to this motion. I appreciate that under the practice of this House, it is not likely today to come to a vote, but I hope it will have the support of members. I hope the Correctional Service of Canada is listening and that the Solicitor General will give his undertaking to this House that there will be in this literacy year some very specific personal attention from him to this important program in Canada's prisons.

Let me conclude by putting this in the larger context, and if I may be permitted a mild partisan note, to put on record the position of the New Democratic Party at its most recent convention in Winnipeg on the issue of literacy. At that convention the New Democratic Party adopted the following resolution:

That the New Democratic Party supports the development and implementation of policies to ensure every adult full access to and participation in adult literacy programs which would be developed in co-operation with the provinces, the literacy community and the trade union movement. Such policies would:

1. include all the necessary types of funding mechanisms at levels adequate to allow adults to exercise their right to participate in free adult basic education;
2. assume the involvement of large numbers of literacy workers in recognition of the fact that the volunteer sector cannot meet all the needs of illiterate adults;
3. recognize the need for a range of programming options including community-based programs and on-the-job programs sponsored by trade unions which respond to the needs of individuals and groups;
4. assume the provision of adequate facilities, relevant learning materials and related services such as child care, transportation and counselling;
5. be part of a larger policy initiative to attack the economic and social conditions which contribute to the continued existence of adult illiteracy;
6. direct funding to Indian and Northern Affairs to improve basic education on reserves and ensure access to a grade 12 education on reserves; and
7. expand literacy programs in federal penitentiaries.

I commend this program and the resolution to the House and I ask for your support.