

Adjournment Debate

taged regions or which must live with different purchasing policies for each provincial government.

Since it is ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I shall continue at the next sitting.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

INDIAN AFFAIRS—FUNDING FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, on May 15 I put a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Faulkner) concerning post-secondary education funding, especially as it applies in the Sudbury district office of the Ontario region of his department. The Indian band councils in the Sudbury region were advised several weeks ago that there was a shortfall of some \$539,000 in that region for post-secondary education. This not only applies to students who will be going to university, but it also applies to those going to post-secondary institutions such as community colleges, and to a small training centre in the Wikwemikong Indian reserve called Wasse Abin College.

This particular training centre is making a great contribution to young people who have either dropped out of high school and not been able to complete their grade 13 or grade 12 courses so they can go to post-secondary institutions, or as well those who are not quite prepared to leave the Indian reserve and go to a university such as Laurentian in Sudbury or Cambrian College, where many of the students in Sudbury go.

● (2202)

I raised this matter several times with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and had one delegation come here to meet with the parliamentary secretary. It seems to me that this matter should be resolved in the very near future.

The minister in his statement on May 15 said:

Mr. Speaker, on the general commitment, I certainly maintain the commitment I have given before. On the two specific cases the hon. member has referred to, I would have to look into the actual amounts.

It would appear to me that that answer is very indefinite. We are not talking about an abstract subject here or of something away off in the wide blue yonder. We are talking about young people who are completing their grade 12 or grade 13 education and who want to apply to go to post-secondary institutions this fall. We are talking about a small training centre on the Wikwemikong Indian reserve, where

[Mr. Duclos.]

three or four weeks ago 18 fine young people graduated from that college and every one of them is going on to a post-secondary institution this fall. But no students will be going in September of this year unless this matter is resolved.

I understand that an application has been before Treasury Board for the additional funding, which has been approved but not broken down. What we need is a firm decision by the minister as to what amount of funding will be provided. Surely with over 900,000 people out of work in this country, this is not the time for cutbacks in post-secondary education. All through the years we have been encouraging young people from the 12 Indian bands of the Algoma riding and the Algoma-Manitoulin districts of northern Ontario to go on and take post-secondary education in order to open up opportunities for better employment and a fuller life for them. Now with high unemployment is not the time to be cutting back on post-secondary education. It is a time for decision by the government on this matter so that these young people can apply and go on to school this fall and be able to take advantage of post-secondary education.

I hope we can get a firm commitment from the minister right away so that this matter will not be left with the uncertainty as to whether the Wasse Abin College will resume its function this fall and whether the several hundred young people in northeastern Ontario who are served by the Sudbury district office will have funding for post-secondary education.

Mr. Ross Milne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the hon. member's statement. I would like to point out that I have discussed this issue a number of times with the hon. member in detail. I appreciated the fact that some local Indian representation came to Ottawa to further substantiate the hon. member's concern on this issue. I was impressed by the sincerity by which they put forward their case.

There is no question about the support of the minister or the ministry for education. In this particular instance we are talking about bridge education between the secondary schooling and post-secondary education. If this is valid in any area, it is certainly so in the native community where they face many disadvantages and need this kind of support to ensure that they go on to post-secondary education with every confidence and opportunity to succeed.

● (2207)

Having said that, I want to put on record that the department is labouring under some difficulty in that, under the restraint program, it is necessary to meet the statutory requirement first to accommodate the price and volume increases that go forward both in education and in other areas, then to look at the non-statutory items and, last, any new programs. As the hon. member said, additional money has been approved.

In conclusion, I cannot tonight give a very definite answer to the hon. member's representation other than to say the request will be met if at all possible, given the many demands and the