

One of the comments I made earlier and the hon. member referred to was legislation. For quite some time now we have had very significant legislation dealing with these issues and legislation seems to have failed us. He is making recommendations that perhaps we should bring in further legislation. I am of the opinion that maybe education is the way to go. I feel far more friendly, I do not know if that is the right word, to people with whom I have become associated because I have come to know them personally. No law of the land would make me like that person more, but the association with any person, whether it be a visible or invisible minority, is important.

Perhaps the member could comment on whether or not he feels this government is going in the correct direction in its educational programs.

**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):** The hon. member has raised some very valid points. Governments cannot do it by themselves, but at the same time government and members of legislatures, members who hold public office and are community leaders have an absolute responsibility to set the parameters of acceptable behaviour in our society and to reflect what Canadians believe to be acceptable behaviour.

This is the place to which we have been elected. I look to this place and to governments to ensure that the programs they put in place do not further contribute to the problem. Specifically, the member asked about education. I do not think the education system in our country, which is a provincial jurisdiction, has done its job. I simply think that if you look at the education system in any province where there are large or small numbers of visible minorities, for example, the history of the native community is not taught in the perspective as seen by natives. It is taught through a white perspective. The history of the black community in Nova Scotia, which is an important history and an important part of Canadian culture and heritage, is taught, when it is taught, through white eyes and in a period of time and by authors of 100 or 200 years ago who lived in a society where racial discrimination, bias and bigotry were acceptable.

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I wonder why a black or native student in Nova Scotia is less likely to graduate from high school with an academic diploma. Why is it that they are streamlined

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into general programs? Why is it when you talk to some of the people who are in charge of the system, and I am not talking about the educators in the schools, they state that "We are educating more blacks and more native people for things that they can do, like clerk in stores."

So the attitudes are still there and they must be tackled with the resources necessary to change the curricula in schools, the resources necessary to ensure that programs are responsive and give equality of opportunity to quality education to every student in Canada no matter what their race, what their colour, what their religious belief. That is something that governments have to do. They will set the example.

In my community, we had a very difficult situation last year at Cole Harbour High in which there was what the media said was a race riot but which in fact was a fight in the school yard between two groups, one primarily white and one black. I want to put on the record what the community did because it is something that everybody in Canada should know about that situation. The community did not divide when that happened. The community came together.

Two weeks ago I attended a dinner. It was on the first anniversary of the situation at Cole Harbour High. It was not a dinner for blacks, it was not a dinner for whites. It was a dinner for people from both communities involved who were concerned about what had happened at that school and who were concerned about the root problem that caused that confrontation.

After that situation happened, instead of taking the anger and using it in a divisive way, leaders from the black community and leaders from the white community, from the Cole Harbour area and from the Eastern Passage area, came together as a parent organization to try to understand each other, so that they could understand the problems that caused this fight between their children. As a result of that type of positive community action, we have come a long way.

I thank God that there are people in my community and in communities across Canada who do not just sit back and wallow in negativism and who just do not accept racism as something that is going to be among us, but who go out and put the effort necessary into understanding at the community level, at a personal level, to tear down those barriers of ignorance that have for all too