

enhance the capabilities of young people to be able to relate to and deal with the challenges that face them in the future.

• (1730)

Without the support of the community leaders such as the mayor, Pat McMahon and the chairpeople Don Cooper and Don Sian this would not have been accomplished. These individuals give support to our young people and have made it possible for these young people to participate in an activity that challenges and gives them the opportunity to excel, not only physically but mentally and psychologically. It equips them and does something for their integrity to be able to excel.

I would like those from all over Canada to support our youth and to enhance and strengthen our commitment to the youth of this country. These are going to be the true environmentalists, the true conservationists. We do not have to change their minds. Their minds are made up that they want a clean environment and they want the proper education. They want to care for the older people and the youth in this country and they also have a commitment to peace. These are not things that have to be taught, these are things they know. These are things that have been demonstrated to them over the last 20 years. An activity such as this and the people who co-operated and helped to put forth this opportunity for our youth are to be congratulated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Allan Koury (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): I rise today in the House to deal with this motion concerning the education, employment and health needs of aboriginal youths in this country.

Considered individually or all together, these issues are of vital importance. They reflect the very essence of what we, as Canadians, could probably define as our basic right, namely, the possibility to learn and develop our intelligence, to work in an area of our choice and to have access to the essential health services which greatly contribute to our quality of life.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, when dealing with the living conditions of our aboriginal youths, these issues are of particular significance because several of the benefits which a great many Canadians enjoy in the area of

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education, employment and health services remain inaccessible to our aboriginal people, both young and old.

Over the years, a lot of effort was spent trying to rectify this imbalance. Our Governments have spent billions of dollars to help our aboriginal people with programs and services, more specifically in the key areas of education, employment and health services.

Nevertheless, our aboriginal people still face tremendous problems. It is especially true of our aboriginal youths whose plans for the future were repeatedly crushed because of poverty, inability to attend schools of higher learning and a lack of decent jobs.

Madam Speaker, past experience has shown beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is no point attempting to deal with these problems on the surface.

Yet, have we not learned from the errors of the past which direction we should follow?

This government has set definite objectives in its policy on aboriginal self-government; first of all, within the limits of the Canadian Constitution, to increase the powers and make sure that more decisions are made at the local level; then, demonstrate more flexibility while acknowledging the various needs, traditions and cultures of the aboriginal people; and finally, make local administrators more responsive to their respective communities.

As I said, Madam Speaker, those are definite objectives. History, however, has shown that to reach these goals, we must overcome a great many obstacles. The fact that the right of Aboriginal people to self-government was not included in the Constitutional Act either in 1985 or in 1987, makes the path to progress beset with obstacles. To achieve progress, we must resume this dialogue.

It is imperative that take we a totally new approach conducive to more productive understanding, trust and consultation. We are now concentrating our efforts on the development of this new climate of understanding, communication and progress.

This calls for leadership, and that is what this government has shown so far. When last on the hustings the Prime Minister restated the government position when he said that Canada cannot be complete unless we solve the problems related to native rights. Indeed, finding a solution to these problems and granting self-government