

*Agricultural Rehabilitation Act*

for example—and there are others—might easily become one of the major attractions for people from across the border and for many Canadians.

I commend this project for the consideration of the government. At the same time it would also provide a source of employment to the people of the reserve which would, in part, compensate for some of the neglect of the past. Some people claim that the isolation in which people on the reserves live is in part responsible for their feeling of neglect. Isolation perhaps can be blamed for part of this neglect, a neglect which in this day and age should not be allowed to continue any longer. Notwithstanding this neglect by the white man, the contributions of the Indians to our national growth and development have been considerable. Thousands of them served in all theatres of activities during the two world wars. Indians also did war work in factories, on railroads, and on farms during the hostilities. They also made magnificent contributions to the arts—in paintings, woodcarvings, and in the athletics field. Few realize that the Indian has contributed to the white man's world of food. We have had from them beans, squash, white and sweet potatoes and maple sugar, yet our governments have been slow to recognize our responsibilities towards our Indian population, let alone any appreciation of them.

Mr. Speaker, approval of this bill, which would ensure participation in benefits available to all other Canadians, would be a small measure of belated appreciation. I urge every hon. member to vote for the bill. A vote for it is a vote for justice. It is a vote which would encourage a great people to appreciate the blessings, sometimes held doubtful, which the white man brought to the North American continent some four centuries ago.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Gilles Gregoire (Lapointe):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier), who had to meet his constituents over the week end, asked me to speak on his behalf on the bill now under discussion.

Mr. Speaker, in taking part in the debate on Bill C-22 introduced by the hon. member for Port Arthur, it is surely not my intention to kill the bill. Quite the contrary, I heartily endorse this proposition. Such a measure, while enabling many Indian families to participate in their local agricultural economy, will also achieve a second purpose: it will do justice in a small way to the Indian reserve located in Roberval county.

Far be it from me to suggest that previous governments have done nothing for the Indian people. In proof of this, we have, in the field of education, the wonderful residential

school built only recently which accommodates over a hundred boarders coming from areas as far as the great lake Mistassini and the north shore. This educational institution, of which the Indian reserve is very proud, can compare with any of our own French or English institutions in North America.

However, what is painful in the Roberval county reserve, is to see such a splendid building, such a modern building, surrounded by what is called there "Indian family residence" and what I shall call here, with all respect due to the house, "dog houses".

Even if this bill would only result in getting those families out of such unhealthy houses, it would be a desirable one.

Have you ever heard, Mr. Speaker, that a family of 8, 9 or 10 could live in a shack of 18' by 18', made of two rough board panels on which a cheap paper was laid so-so as an exterior finish, with only two windows and a door, and without any partition?

Have you ever thought of a modern village where all buildings have been scattered without symmetry, without sewer, without streets and sidewalks, indeed, often without water, even without electricity in many homes?

A new so-called sanitary housing plan has been launched, which is financed by federal loans. But there again, it is the word "housing" I object to.

Mr. Speaker, according to the present Indian Act, the minister may, with the consent of the band council, authorize expenses on the band capital account, as is now the case in the so-called sanitary housing program for Indians. Therefore, why not extend the same authority to the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act?

We often hear that the Indian is lazy; the Indian does not want to live. I would rather say, as did the hon. member for Roberval, who studied him in his own home, that the Indian is a very disappointed man. He is disappointed in our fine civilization. Now, we, the white men should look straight at the facts, but also at the Indian, and do so with two human eyes and a Christian mind.

Belonging to a hunting people, the Indian has seen his realm shrink continually under the axe of the white man. Today, he can no more earn his life in the manner his ancestors did, because modern times have upset his whole way of life. He has even been