

*Private Members' Business*

find in other parts of Canada. This is due in part to the desire of the Government of Canada in the past and in the present to continue to put a lot of emphasis on a community centre, not just an educational centre, but a place in which the community can have tremendous pride. This gives the people the feeling that they are not any longer, in terms of the educational field or community centre, second-class citizens of Canada.

These are the kinds of things that are ongoing. I am very grateful that they are.

I have about 13 reserves in my riding. One specific reserve has been very aggressive in terms of taking total control of its school. Many others have as well. It has put its priority on education. The people on that reserve have realized that that is their key out of the economic demise that they found themselves in at the cost of decisions made in the past by someone in the head office in Winnipeg, and prior to that in Ottawa. They are coming to me to discuss their future concerns with regard to the education that they want and desire under their kind of conditions, using their culture and possibly their language.

Twenty-five years ago this was an unheard of situation. I think we have made gigantic steps toward fulfilling what many Canadians take absolutely for granted when it comes to the education of our first Canadians.

This of course is not to say that more cannot be done. There is no doubt that more can and will be done. However, there has to be a consideration that it has to be done and the moneys have to be expended in a very sincere and careful manner. Obviously, the desire to expand all these facilities is far greater than the tax burden and the economy of Canada can really handle.

I had a meeting with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development just yesterday with regard to providing those communities with the proper ability to fight fires. Up until now a good number of reserves that are remote had no capability to fight fires.

We know that some of the houses are crowded. Some homes that have been there for some 20 or 30 years are not at all up to standard. Fire codes were never heard of when they were built. Today, we are trying to build homes that meet the same fire codes and standards that everybody else has. Why should they not have the right

to have that situation which will obviously assist them in securing safety for their families?

In the last short while three reserves in my constituency had the misfortune of losing five children in fires. None of the reserves had the capability of fighting fires with a volunteer fire department.

These are the changes that are occurring. They are very significantly different. Yes, they are at a great expense to the taxpayers, but I think willingly spent to assist people who are far less fortunate than we are.

In fact, moneys are now in the hands of native business people who have taken another new initiative. They have approached the Government of Canada to assist them in developing and funding their own businesses. I have some tremendous examples of that existing on some of the reserves in the Interlake in the Province of Manitoba.

I am sure that if some of my Alberta colleagues and members from British Columbia who spoke earlier were polled, we would find evidence today of tremendous amounts of funding that the Government of Canada has used to assist in developing native businesses with the help and assistance of tax dollars which gives these businesses a chance to establish the pride of ownership and to compete in what could be considered a very difficult market.

I heard one of the members here speak today about the fact that all too often the bad news is reported when a business attempt is made and funds have been expended. All too often the finger is pointed immediately indicating that we have wasted money. People say that we did not approach the problem the right way, or that the bureaucrats made a bad decision or should have known better. I recognize this does occur. I am no different from some of my colleagues when we see not so much the fact than an Indian has taken an initiative and lost, but that he may have been guided by a non-Indian. In fact, there may have been some individuals who have wanted to take advantage of the system to create personal gain. This does occur.

I agree with my colleague who spoke earlier. We should not always highlight the failed projects. Certainly, there are some very good and very effective projects that have worked for constituents and for Indians who desired to have their own business.

There is a tremendous amount of evidence of change that has occurred with regard to bringing about self-gov-