



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Funding for On-reserve Education

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Thursday, December 6, 2012

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### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

#### FUNDING FOR ON-RESERVE EDUCATION

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** In Alberta, approximately 9,000 students attend on-reserve schools. The on-reserve per student funding is \$4,000. Provincial student funding is \$7,000. There is, therefore, a \$3,000 funding gap. If all the monies spent on advertisements for Canada's Economic Action Plan, for example, were to be used to close this funding gap, every single on-reserve student in Alberta would receive funding equal to non-reserve students. How can this government justify this double standard, and when will this Conservative government correct this inequity? All Canadian students should receive high-quality education.

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** I also said yesterday — I suppose no one was listening; otherwise you would not be asking me again today — that there has been a 25 per cent increase in transfers to the provinces for education programs.

I would not think anyone would suggest that the government should not communicate with its citizens on programs and initiatives that are important to Canadians, such as what we had to do a few years ago with regard to the H1N1 crisis, such as programs that are available to make Canadians aware of the serious issue of elder abuse, and such as programs with regard to job training and retraining in our apprenticeship programs. These are all important initiatives, and the government uses its advertising dollars to inform Canadians about them.

• (1420)

Again, honourable senators, each department — certainly with regard to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Health, Department of National Defence and Department of Canadian Heritage — is allocated sums of money in the budget to implement its programs. To compare one department's expenditures which have been approved in the budget and say, "Well, if you did not spend there, we could have spent here," is an argument that could go on forever.

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