

Today the opposition tried to ask the House to pass a motion relating to a committee report. The members of the committee, as I said on television, were entitled to expand a bit on the concept involved and to ask a few questions. There is a lot of sense in the proposition put forward by the president of the National Indian Brotherhood, and some questions have to be put by members of the committee. Of course, some questions are not answered by the report, and some implications relating to this matter were not clear in the minds of members of the committee.

However, I think the members of the committee were entitled to ask a few questions and to listen to other groups of Indians in Canada expressing their views. They were entitled to ask other people what they thought about this question and to see what could be done in some provinces about the situation. Everyone knows that not all provinces of Canada entered into confederation at the same time, and different legal situations exist in British Columbia, on the Prairies, in Quebec, in Ontario and in the Maritimes. Certainly there are many implications in this question. It is easy to be in favour of motherhood, and just as easy to say that the recognition of aboriginal rights is a simple matter.

We have already recognized in this land the rights of Indians and we have acted as never before. As recently as last week we established a committee to negotiate the rights of the Indians in the Yukon. Never before was this done. Between 1957 and 1962 the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) was in this House. How did he vote on this question? When his party was in power it completely ignored the situation.

**Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Never before was there a discussion with Yukoners about native rights. Only since last Friday was the committee established to negotiate the rights of natives in the Yukon. For years and years nobody could find a way around some of the difficulties. This government for the first time has found a way to sit down with the Indians in the Yukon, try to correct the problems there and come to an acceptable agreement. We are not only talking, like members of the opposition. When they see that we have made a good move, they come to this House and try to catch up with what is going on. We are not taking our time in talking. We are taking action which will solve the problems of the Indians in Canada.

**Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Oh, come now.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Just a moment. It hurts to hear the truth, does it not? We are also talking about the B.C. land question. Perhaps the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) can help me in asking that provincial government to recognize the rights of the Indians in the Nishga area. The Indians who obtained a decision from the Supreme Court came to me a few weeks ago and asked me to speak to the B.C. government and claim some of that land for them. I have done so already. I was in B.C. as recently as ten days ago and discussed this matter with the provincial government. I hope the hon. member for

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Skeena will talk to them too. It is easy for him always to say that he is possessed of all wisdom. I remember only too well that when I was in the House in 1969 to explain the new policy on Indian affairs, the hon. member for Skeena rose and said that the policy was all right; the only thing wrong with it was that it was 25 years too late. Many hon. members heard that. However, when he saw there was disagreement with the Indians, he changed his mind once more.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chrétien:** It hurts does it not?

**Mr. Howard:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do not think you should let the minister make false statements in the House.

**An hon. Member:** You are not challenging the statement, are you?

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how the hon. member for Skeena, who likes to attack in debate, cannot accept facts. A few weeks after the announcement, when he learned that the Indians were not happy about some aspects of the policy, he did a complete somersault and said everything was wrong.

**Mr. Howard:** That is not true, Jean.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Yes it is true. Just read *Hansard* and you will find out.

**Mr. Howard:** I have.

**Mr. Chrétien:** I can send you your statement. The same thing happened with the Tory party. The House leader of the Tories criticized the policy.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I criticized it myself.

**Mr. Chrétien:** He said it was too late and that we should have done this a long time ago.

**Mr. Stanfield:** We said it was wrong, too.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Never was that said.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I said it myself.

**Mr. Chrétien:** No, Sir. I can look back at *Hansard* to verify that.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Well, look back.

**Mr. Chrétien:** There speaks another guy who cannot stand being criticized. I do not know what he will do if he is elected. He cannot stand complaints.

**Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley):** Just try us.

**Mr. Chrétien:** I do not know who will vote for the hon. member; his party has just lost six points in popularity, according to the Gallup poll.

We are going to talk to the B.C. government and try to establish a policy because we recognize that in B.C. the land has not been covered by treaty and that in some parts of the province the Indians are claiming more land.