

*Indian Affairs*

love and brotherhood. Then they will be ready to clean up their lives and their bodies. I venture to say that the people of the Indian race even today, neglected as they are, would pass physical tests equally as well as their white brethren. When we speak of health, of course, we mean economic health. We mean food and lodging; it is all of a piece. When we speak of integration what do we really mean? Do we really mean that we will try to make white men or Canadian citizens out of the Indians? I say to the minister and to parliament that if by integration we mean we will try to give these people the equality, fraternity and opportunity which every Canadian citizen demands and expects, and which every Canadian citizen should have, then I say let us integrate them. But if it is our intention to make poor white men out of the Indian people then I say let them alone; they are better off starving on their own Indian reserves than living with people who do not want to give them the equality, opportunity and fraternity which is the birthright of every Canadian.

The program which is involved here is a large one. If my figures are correct there are approximately a quarter of a million people of native blood in this country. They are increasing in numbers faster than any other group of people. Fifteen years from now there will probably be one million. I believe these people are willing to meet us more than half way. As I read this statement it would seem to represent positive action on the part of the government. If we can forget our petty differences here and work together to help the Indian, and above all teach him that we do in fact love him as a Canadian, it may well be that long before 100 years from now these people will be integrated, as I said before, as full fledged Canadian citizens. This parliament may well be proud that today, this week, this session, we have taken the first step which is long overdue.

**Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, this debate this afternoon arises from the position in which the minister is now in respect of his dealings with the Indian people and the provincial governments. I think we realize, however, that it also arises out of his statement made in this house not too long ago. In other words, the current situation flows from that statement and we cannot, I submit, have a meaningful discussion unless we base it on that statement. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perreault), who is so glib, made some comment on the statement made by the hon. member

for Skeena (Mr. Howard) following the minister's announcement. I should like to make one or two references to just what was said on that occasion by the hon. member for Skeena. His remarks are reported at page 10584 of *Hansard* for June 25.

Some of the ideas contained in the minister's statement are good. Some of them are not so good. A great many of them are rather vague. I do not say this in an unkind way, and I am sure the minister does not take it in an unkind way.

A little farther on, we find this:

I submit it is extremely important that in the negotiations, discussions, or whatever they may be that the minister will have with the provincial governments, the negotiations or discussions proceed only at a speed commensurate with the desires of the Indian people in the provinces concerned.

I think those remarks bear a very close resemblance to some of the remarks made a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand). I point this out in an effort to make clear to Your Honour and the members of this house that the hon. member for Skeena has tried to show, as he said in his remarks earlier today, that he does not seek to enter into this discussion in any sort of a partisan way. He feels he has some responsibility, as one of the members in this house who comes from an area where there are a great many of these people, to try to understand and voice in this house the real thoughts of the Indian people.

I understand that the minister's dilemma, as the motion moved by the hon. member suggests, arises not so much from what is in the statement but from what is not in it. It arises in part from some of the clarifications of the minister's statement that have been elicited as a result of subsequent questioning in the house and the statements that have been issued by the Indian people themselves. The hon. member for Skeena, quoting from the document issued by the Indian people here in Ottawa prior to the minister's statement, outlined what the principal omissions were. I think the minister confirmed that those are the omissions from his statement.

I am sure the minister will recall that on June 26 a number of questions were asked, initiated by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield). At one point I asked the minister the following question:

Does the statement which terms aboriginal claims to land as being unrealistic and not capable of being dealt with specifically represent a fixed government policy, or is this merely an idea which has been put forward for discussion and negotiation with the Indian people?