

*Indian Affairs*

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I would ask the co-operation of hon. members. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault) has the floor.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) has risen on a question of privilege.

Mr. Brewin: The hon. member has put on the record of the house the fact that there are five members of our party in the chamber at this time. I regret to say that his eyesight must be defective because there have been eight, nine or ten members at all times.

● (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Perrault: Mr. Speaker, we are perfectly capable of cunning. If they were skulking behind the curtain and are now present, then I must withdraw my original statement that only five members were listening.

We heard from the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) who, in a rare act of verbal contortionism, has completely reversed the position he adopted on June 25. His party has now incorporated into the list of 5BX exercises the "Skeena flipflop". That is the only way to describe it. Now, we have the hon. member for Skeena posing as the fierce defender of the view that the government has acted precipitately in the matter of revising its policy toward our first citizens, that there has been inadequate consultation, and that the policy is defective.

I think we must remind ourselves that according to *Hansard* of June 25, at page 10584, the following words were used by the hon. member for Skeena with regard to the announcement made by the minister:

The hon. member for Peace River and I had the opportunity in 1959, 1960 and 1961 of participating in the joint Senate and House of Commons Committee on Indian Affairs... the report of which committee contained the same ideas and concepts that the minister has now outlined. Even though it has taken some period of time to get a cabinet minister to agree with those concepts, it is still welcomed.

Those were the words which he used. Then, he went on to say that many of his comments must necessarily be vague. Certainly they must necessarily be vague—they had not been worked out. The hon. member said:

Many of his comments must necessarily be vague, as he is not dealing with this matter in a unilateral sense but in an area of conversation and discussions with the native people and with the provinces.

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Now, we hear that there have been inadequate discussions. On June 25, the hon. member said that of course there will be discussions, and there must be discussions. He acknowledged this fact, and he said that naturally the minister cannot have any predetermined position to outline to them. The words which he employs today are at total variance with the statement with which he greeted the announcement of the minister last June 25. At that time he said, as recorded at page 10585 of *Hansard*:

The policy statement is a step in the right direction,

He went on to say:

I think the success of this program depends on two factors: It depends upon the continued acceptance by the government of the views of the native Indian people themselves because they are of primary importance; it also depends upon the speed with which the government puts into effect those accepted views.

I suggest that this was a responsible statement, and I hope the hon. member will come out from behind the curtain before we are finished this afternoon.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): May I say, for the information of the hon. member, that I have been requested to answer the telephone.

Mr. Perrault: He said there had been inadequate consultation. He said that the minister had callously disregarded the views of the Indian people. This must mark the most dramatic conversion since St. Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. On June 25 this hon. member who was speaking for his party sought eagerly to attach himself to very concept advanced in the report on Indian policy, claiming paternity for the child. Today it is different; he rejects the infant and he would abandon it to its fate because he sees some sort of shoddy political advantage. Anybody who goes around the country making statements of the kind he made is irresponsible.

I will quote again from page 10951 of *Hansard* in which he predicts that there is going to be tribal warfare, turbulence and fury—these are the words he employed. It would be wrong to question the motives of any member in this house, but one can only wonder why the attitude of the hon. member of June 25 has deteriorated in the position he takes today. On July 10, he spoke about a matter of urgent public importance, referring to the almost universal rejection of the policy statement of the minister. He spoke of the manner in which the government has treated the Indians, and the refusal of the government so