

Motions for Papers

tions, we must not prejudice or compromise the position of any part at this time.

I know the interest of the hon. member for Skeena in the Indian people. I am aware of the interest of every member in this House. I say this as kindly as I can, and with the greatest respect, that by asking at this point in the negotiations for these documents to be produced the hon. member is not acting in the best interests of the Indian people. This sort of process is necessary in order to reach the objective for which all Canadians hope, including the Indians of Canada.

Possibly I could draw an analogy for a moment, Mr. Speaker. These are the things we do every day in our professions, our dealings between federal and provincial governments, dealings between international governments and between private individuals who may have a cause of action one against the other in a civil law suit. These things which are negotiable must be done without prejudice to the rights of another party. Successful negotiations cannot be carried on when one party runs and tattles to the judge about what another party said or did. Negotiation must be conducted in an atmosphere of good faith and mutual confidence.

Although I do not think the hon. member for Skeena intended to do so, it may be inferred from his remarks that the Indian people are not being involved and are not a part of the negotiations. That, of course, is not the case. They are parties to the negotiations. There has been no agreement to change the services provided to them, their status, ownership or title to land, the rights or privileges that they have enjoyed over the years. These will not be changed.

Discussions are being carried on with the provinces and no changes will be made without the consent of the third party because this is a tri-party arrangement. All parties have to be in agreement before any changes can be made.

The hon. member for Skeena referred to a speech made by the minister in Regina. I think it is helpful. The parts my friend quoted were helpful, but they were more helpful to his case and the argument that he advanced. I wish to quote from the same speech. I want to underline what is said in the white paper, that there would be continuing negotiations and consultation with the Indian people before any change is made or any transfer of services is made from the federal department to a provincial govern-

[Mr. Honey.]

ment. It is important that we underline this and subsequent statements made by the minister.

I will not quote the same sections as the hon. member. I made a note of what he quoted. I think we both have copies of that speech. On page 4 of the minister's speech we find this:

What is needed now is a sensible and meaningful discussion about the steps to be taken and to separate the principal components of the problem so they can be dealt with appropriately.

How are we going to do this if, every time a suggestion is made by one party and a counter-suggestion made by another party, or a discussion is held with an Indian band or an Indian band makes a proposal to the federal department, one of the parties, on the basis of proposals which are tentative and subject to ratification and approval by the Indian people, makes them public?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Will the hon. member permit a question? I ask this question because the copy of the speech which I have does not coincide with what the hon. member just read. I believe he read:

What is needed now is a sensible and meaningful discussion about the steps to be taken and to separate the principal components of the problem so they can be dealt with sensibly.

● (5:30 p.m.)

The copy I have reads: "So that they can be dealt with one after another, or jointly where possible."

Mr. Honey: Well, Mr. Speaker, my copy is exactly the same as that of the hon. member, except for the last word, which is "appropriately".

Mr. Howard (Skeena): It says "one after another" here. More double talk.

Mr. Honey: Anyway, the point with which I want to close my remarks is this: we all have an interest in seeing there is meaningful discussion between the federal government, the provincial governments and the Indians. We all have an interest in making a sensible, new approach. It may well be that the agreements ultimately reached will vary from band to band, or from province to province. It may be these agreements will turn out to be different from the proposals made in the white paper. But we all have a stake in this and we must try to make it work. We must sit down with each other and work matters out, carry on conversations in confidence, respect each other and try as best we can to find a solution to old problems and improve on the old ways