

The CHAIRMAN: He has been here, and he is here now.

Mr. MacNICOL: Who invited him here?

The CHAIRMAN: We did, the steering committee.

Mr. MacNICOL: And why?

The CHAIRMAN: Because the steering committee invited him here to discuss the matter with him.

Mr. MacNICOL: Was the steering committee qualified to select the most suitable counsel from all Canada?

The CHAIRMAN: Not at all; they have not engaged him.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am not finding any fault with it, but I never like a cut and dried business. I agree with my honourable friend from British Columbia that some care should be used in selecting the one most qualified. If we are going to select a counsel at all—I am not just sure that I am in favour of selecting a counsel at all. This committee was set up after debates in the House over many years—for at least ten years—in which we have been arguing that the whole program of our contact with the Indian tribes, and our service to them should be reviewed.

Frankly I am afraid if there is going to be some program, or any program which might in any way curtail the representations before us in reaching the objective of the committee, namely, the alleviation of the whole Indian administration from beginning to end; because, certainly, if any people in Canada have suffered that which they have not merited—if any portion of the population has not had what I call fair play—and I am not blaming anyone for it—it is our Indian population. I have been on at least twenty-five reservations in order to make my own investigations in remote areas, and I have been shocked, over what I have seen on those reservations. I am not going to blame anyone for it. I have not a word of comment for the department. They have had a big problem; but now is the time to revolutionize the whole business connected with Indian affairs. I am fearful of this program which is suggested now.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the steering committee, would you recommend a more systematic way, or a more orderly way of getting information properly before this committee than by engaging some person who would act as a liaison officer to weed out, to put in order, to put before this committee in a systematic way, the various representations that are to be made to us. Would you suggest that?

Mr. MacNICOL: If this counsel is going to have the privilege of weeding out what comes before this committee, that is just too bad.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not mean to say that anybody wants to—probably the word “weeding” would be incorrect there; if so, I trust you would accept my humble apologies; but you know what I mean?

Mr. MacNICOL: You mean systematize.

Mr. RAYMOND: Do I understand that this man is an Indian himself?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. RICHARD: I do not see any harm in our having a counsel here to see that we discuss things intelligently; otherwise we would be jumping from one point to another and nothing would be discussed properly. I think a counsel would be of great assistance to the committee.

Mr. MacNICOL: I would like to have further information on the selection of a counsel. Mr. Reid says that in British Columbia the Indians have a counsel there now; and I believe they have a counsel in Alberta. I have had communications from such a counsel in Alberta. There are far more Indians