

# Indian People To Lose Aboriginal Rights

By J.J. Simon

Indian people are polite. They dislike open disagreement, and prefer silence to open opposition. History has taught them a hard lesson in acceptance. Unfortunately, white observers often misinterpret this politeness as a sign of approval, and in their ignorance of the Indian's character, complacently continue to ignore the Indian's right to participate in the formulation of the policies which govern his life. But the Indian has had enough. He has finally rejected a Federal policy statement (last year) which was issued without consultation, rejected it completely.

**the Indian and his continually diminishing security**

The Federal government has proposed to transfer its responsibility for the Indians over to the Provincial Chapters. This could lead to the abolition of the Indian Act of 1951, and the end of official and legal recognition of the Indian's aboriginal rights established as long ago as the British North America Act of 1867. Repercussions of this decisive change will be felt in the form of taxation of Indian lands. (this is not to say that he is free from taxation, far from it, the Indian has to pay just as much money in taxes as any other citizen, but unlike any other citizen, he doesn't receive any benefits from the money he pays, either in education, or in other areas. The only thing he's exempt from is property tax), changes in Indian education, and in other previously protected and guaranteed parts of life: but more important, it is rousing Indian opposition which sees it as an attack on the continuously diminishing security of the native peoples of North America.

No doubt the policy statement was issued in good faith in the continuing trail of disasters which parade as the government attempts to solve the "Indian problem". There is something diabolical in this

sudden decision by Trudeau's government to dump all its responsibilities for the Indian peoples onto the provincial chapters without any written guarantees that if this results in a disaster, it will once again resume its responsibility.

The Federal government is not giving the Indian time enough to organize and prepare for the policy changes which are already being implemented upon him.

The Federal government, of course, neglected the possibility that the Indians would reject its policy statement. In the past it has always imposed the will of its current Indian 'experts', causing injustices, suffering and hardship quite beyond compare. And now that the Indian is discovering ways to help himself, just as other discriminated groups (negroes, women, etc.) are doing, the Federal government wants to auction off its responsibilities to an even more chaotic system, the provincial governments. We cannot tolerate this insult to our efforts to help ourselves. We must take a stand against Trudeau experts.

**the government imposes its will without consideration'**

These administrators who at the present are carrying through the Federal "phasing-out" policy are examples of the difficulties which Indians are experiencing. These administrators give no impression that they understand our situation. From OUR point of view, and many Indians feel, (no that's wrong), they don't feel they know that these administrators are incompetent, inane and unscrupulous. This is the state of open hostility which the Godlike attitude of the Federal politicians have generated. Too often Trudeau and others before him have given the impression of imposing their governments' will without consideration for the recipients of their policies.

What the Indians need at this time is more financial aid, more than the meagre amounts

set aside for Indian Purposes. This is a way for the government to show its confidence in the growing number of Indians going through universities, who

**Indians do not want their status eradicated.**

in turn will help their own leaders in the continuous struggle for survival. This is what is needed to encourage the education of Indian children to comprehend their situation, their culture and their history, and the society into which they have been forcibly introduced. And it is no answer for the Federal government to break its legal contract without guaranteeing some form of restitution.

The Union of New Brunswick Indians has taken a unanimous stand against the policy statement. The Union of Nova Scotia Indians has taken a similar stand. These Unions consist of Maliseets and Micmacs, and the following points have been made as recommendations:

1. The Indians do not want their status as Indians to be

eradicated. This is the legal status which determines Indian grants at this moment.

2. There should be no transfer of responsibility from the Federal to the provincial governments.

3. Future planning of any Indian policy must include consultation with Indians.

These are modest proposals, and should appeal to all sensitive, interested people who can see the reason why, for example, an anonymous Indian speaker makes the following judgement of the Federal Indian policy in the Hawthorne Report. (Verbatim Report of the National Conference on the Indian Act.):

"The Canadian Government Laws for Indians are for the birds. They have better laws

**Indians must be educated to the existing problem.**

to preserve the birds than they do for the rights of the Indian people."

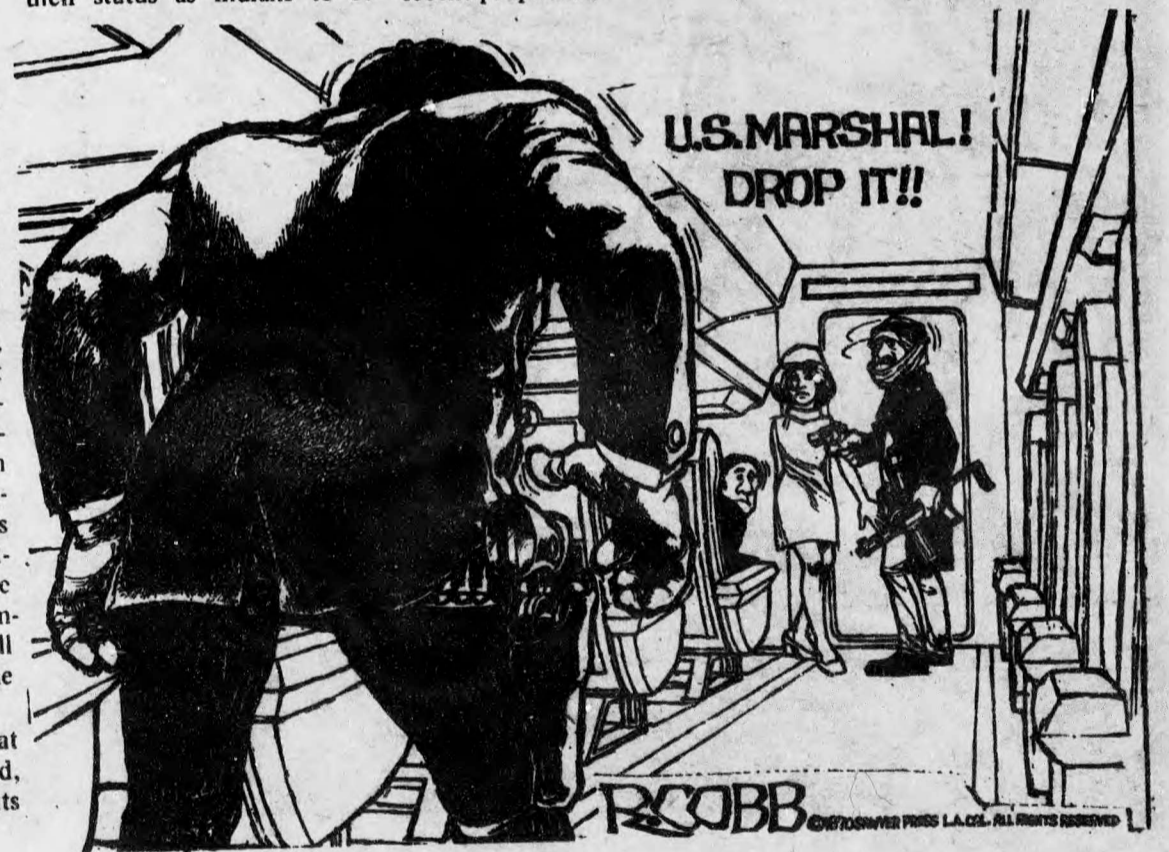
This sort of hostility and bitterness must be understood in the light of the government's recent proposals.

Obviously, what the Indians must do to help themselves is educate their communities to the problem of the clash between their inherited culture and the society in which they live. But even this self-help is being ignored by the Federal government. The last general meeting which I attended concerning education was held at Saint Thomas University at

**on Independent High School**

Fredericton last year. Indians from all walks of life, teachers, and observers met to discuss the effects of the Policy Statement on Indian education, to see how well we are ready to accept the forced independence being suggested by Ottawa. But the invited Director of Education could not or would not attend, and once again Ottawa lost the chance of seeing what the Indians are trying to do for themselves. The delegates suggested that an Independent High School should be one ambition, and that, in the mean-

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Student members (68 of 1,300) walked out and the strike vote was called.

Since that time, a rotating 'token occupation' of 50 students has occupied the lobby of the main arts and science building, Sid Smith.

At 7:30 am Tuesday, about twenty students occupied the hall in front of the A and S offices, and when office staff arrived, previously instructed not to cross a student picket line they went home.

Later a group of students sat in in front of the second floor office of Dean Allen. Allen and his staff left.

At 10 am, 400 students gathered in the liberated lobby of the student centre. Leaders urged them to join the strike

and organize separate college action and educational programs.

Hurd gathered support for his plan for continued disruption of the faculty council by calling frequent meetings through a 15-man petition.

Hurd insists that a partially supported boycott will only alienate most students and isolate the left. He favors new tactics.

Last week, about 100 faculty members signed a petition to support the proposed boycott. They met again at noon Tuesday and voted to convert their classes into parity discussion sessions and not to invoke academic penalties on any boycotters.

## Smith Refused Sub Seat

The Student Union Building Board of Directors rejected an attempt by two members of the Saint Thomas SRC. president, John Smith, and finance chairman, Alfred LeGresley, to appoint themselves as interim members of the Board.

Present at the meeting were the four UNB representatives on the Board, and one of the two UNB administration representatives. Absent were both the Teacher's College representatives. STU's two positions are vacant. Only the administration representative had previously notified the board that

he would be unable to attend.

STU Student Council President, John Smith, said that he and Mr. LeGresley had been "asked by the executive to represent student's interest on the board. The council has not yet ratified the appointment yet, but they will."

"STU and TC students don't give a damn how this building is run," continued Mr. Smith.

"That's fair. I think the use of this building by both these institutions is almost nil," said Bob Peters, UNB representative on the board.

The agenda for the meeting included discussion of salary

increases for the SUB day director, night director and night porters, and the election of a board executive committee.

Although the inclusion of the executive appointed STU reps would have made a quorum at the meeting, Bill Bancroft, chairman, suggested that the meeting be cancelled because the STU reps would be outnumbered by UNB reps 5 to two.

A meeting of the Student Union Building Board of Directors is called for Room 102, SUB, on Wednesday, February 10 at 7:30.