

*Indian Affairs*

be made available to the native Indian people. But when it finally was prepared it was kept as a secret government document.

The government does not always act in this way. I have in mind another internal report which was prepared within this branch that the government saw fit to make available to a member of parliament from the Liberal party so that he could make a speech in the house based upon that so-called confidential report. So we have a sort of two-faced approach here in that the government is prepared to make available for political reasons so-called confidential reports which deal with some aspect of Indian affairs and yet in other cases, such as in respect of a document like this, it is determined to keep them as secret as it possibly can.

This document has the heading "Local Government on Indian Reserves". I am arguing that it should be made available to the Indian people because it reflects the attitude of the government and of the whole structure of the Indian Affairs Branch with regard to wanting to control the activities and destinies of the native Indian people and the councils they elect. This is all the more reason that it should be made public. The attitude of the government and the department is a reflection of their approach to the municipal structure.

When in respect of the Garden River reserve a disagreement rose about whether or not the council was properly elected, the involvement of the Indian Affairs Branch added to the confusion. A Mr. Eric Boyd, who I believe is the head of a section in the branch and who incidentally I do not think is competent to fill the position he holds although he may be competent as a public relations man, told us in the midst of the discussion concerning the election of the Garden River reserve council that the reserve was just like any other municipality. That reflects the attitude of the department in wanting to foist on the native Indian people an authoritarian structure similar to that of municipalities without asking them what they want to do.

In this regard I should like to touch upon an aspect of the situation in British Columbia which is fraught with tremendous danger for the native people of that province. I do not know whether the minister is familiar with it, but I certainly ask him to look into it and accept the responsibility with which he is charged in his position of protecting the rights of the native Indian people not only in

the province of British Columbia but in every province.

• (5:10 p.m.)

The British Columbia legislature recently passed, at the request of the government, an amendment to the municipal act which permits the people on Indian reserves to become incorporated as municipalities. If any band of Indian people in the province of British Columbia becomes incorporated as a municipality under the provisions of this act, unless the minister and the federal government take some protective measures they will lose every single, solitary square inch of reserve land and every last penny in their capital account funds which they may have as a result of the sale of any land. They will lose every penny that may be held in trust for them by the department.

There is an order in council in existence in the province of British Columbia which dates back some time before the war. It was passed as a result of the McKenna-McBride royal commission into Indian affairs in British Columbia. When the province transferred to the federal government certain lands as a result of that royal commission inquiry which were to be Indian reserves, it passed an order in council which said that if any band becomes extinct the reserve lands and the capital account moneys from the sale of any reserve lands would revert to the grantor, that is, the provincial government. It was the opinion of the legal advisers of the Indian Affairs Branch in the early days, when the Indian people of a community were thinking about becoming a municipality, that if an Indian band in the province of British Columbia became organized as a municipality it would become extinct as an Indian band and would lose every inch of reserve land. It is incumbent on the minister, and I know how sincere and dedicated he is in respect of the cause of Indian people, to take steps to deal with this situation if this has not been done or it has not been brought to his attention.

The document we are trying to have made public contains page after page suggesting that Indian reservations will eventually become municipalities. I submit the government cannot keep going in two directions at the same time. The government cannot continue to advance the idea that Indian communities should become municipalities without taking protective measures to make sure that they know what they are doing, know