

*The Address—Mr. Barnett*

delivered to the Saskatchewan Liberal Women's Federation in Regina, Saskatchewan, on October 2. The editor's comment states:

The Times reprints it because of the local interest in the matter of the new federal Indian policy.

The minister's words do get around the country. Even when he is speaking to such an august body as the Saskatchewan Liberal Women's Association in Regina we learn of it on Vancouver Island. When I read this speech I recalled some of the observations and questions in the House earlier this year when the minister announced his new Indian policy. My colleagues and I indicated at the time that we felt the minister was very sincere in his desire to move forward in this area of his responsibilities. It was obvious to me from the somewhat defensive attitude which the minister exhibited during this particular speech that he felt some of his proposals had met with unfair criticism. He kept on saying the statement did not mean this, it did not mean that, and so on. I do not have time in which to read the entire speech into the record; the minister can do that himself, if he so wishes when he makes his contribution to the debate.

● (5:00 p.m.)

No doubt it is true that the minister's proposals have indeed met with unfair criticism from some quarters, or what is perhaps even worse, that they have not been properly understood. I have myself been critical of some of the proposals but in the main, my criticism has been concerned with what was left out of the policy rather than to what was embodied in it. In fact, I believe the minister will find that my hon. friend from Skeena (Mr. Howard) and myself agree that many of the propositions advanced in the policy statement are propositions which many of the Indians in our area endorse. I refer to equal treatment of Indians in the field of education, welfare and so on.

What has disturbed me most deeply is the omission from this policy statement of any recognition of the basic rights of Indians arising from aboriginal claims. If I understood the minister's answers to me last session correctly, he maintains that because these claims are not substantiated by written documents they are unrealistic and non-negotiable. In my view, if the minister continues to act on this assumption he will defeat his own basic ends and we shall never solve the Indian problem, at least as far as the Indians of British Columbia are concerned. The Parliament of Canada thought it had put an end to the

[Mr. Barnett.]

British Columbia land question in 1927. It may have thought so. Parliament may have thought the issue was dead, but it will not lie down.

Having referred to the speech the minister made in Regina, a speech in which he quite properly defended his position, I should like to draw attention to an article which was published in the Vancouver *Sun* of Wednesday, September 3. This sets out what is being done in another situation, one in which the background is in many ways similar. It is an article about the situation in the State of Alaska where, as in British Columbia, treaties with regard to land were not made with the Indian people.

Apparently the United States and the State of Alaska do not intend to sweep the whole thing under the rug and say that because no agreement exists the claims of the Indians are unrealistic. This article states:

Congress has before it four proposed solutions—three put forward by the parties involved in the dispute: the state, the federal government and the natives, as represented by the Alaska Federation of Natives. The form of the settlement has been more or less agreed upon by everyone concerned.

I shall not read all the details but here are the main points. It says, first, that there should be a land grant. Discussion is going on about how many million acres should go to the Indian people of Alaska. Second, all parties concerned agree there should be a federal monetary settlement for lands taken in the past and for the final wiping out of all claims. The administration, the state and the natives have all settled on the figure of \$500 million although they disagree about how rapidly it should be paid. Third, it has been agreed that the money should go into development corporations in which all natives would hold shares. The article goes on to say that the exact nature of these proposed corporations has not been worked out. The major disagreement yet to be resolved concerns something else: the natives want a 2 per cent royalty on revenues from state and federal lands.

I think this is something which the government should consider. I should like to see this whole question examined thoroughly by the government or by a committee. What, in the opinion of the government, is the difference between the land question in British Columbia and the land question in Alaska? In both cases no treaties were made. In both cases people of European descent encroached on land which the native people had occupied. Apparently in the United States there is recognition that the native claims