INTRODUCTION

The Committee's Mandate

The Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development had, over the years, received substantial evidence from Indian people about the numerous difficulties they were experiencing in their financial, institutional and legislative relationships with the federal government. Consequently, in its Fifth Report to the House of Commons on June 1, 1982, the Committee asked for authority "to examine the government of Canada's total financial and other relationships" with Indian people. On August 4, 1982, the House of Commons responded to this request with a two-part Order of Reference.

The Committee was first directed to form a sub-committee "to study the provisions of the *Indian Act* dealing with band membership and Indian status, with a view to recommending how the Act might be amended to remove those provisions that discriminate against women on the basis of sex". Known as the Sub-committee on Indian Women and the Indian Act, its report was approved by the Standing Committee and tabled with the Clerk of the House of Commons on September 22, 1982 as the Standing Committee's Sixth Report.

Pursuant to the second part of its reference, the Standing Committee then appointed another sub-committee, which it called the Sub-committee on Indian Self-Government. This sub-committee was directed, among other things, to make recommendations to Parliament ". . .in regard particularly to possible provisions of new legislation and improved administrative arrangements to apply to some or all Band Governments on reserves taking into account the various social, economic, administrative, political and demographic situations of Indian bands, and the views of Indian bands in regard to administrative or legal change".

In December 1982, the House of Commons revised its committee rules. As a result, the House decided on December 22 to upgrade the sub-committee to a special committee. The reference from the House of Commons specifically stated that the Special Committee was to