

Indian Land and Treaty Claims

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. I am sure the hon. member appreciates that he was given the floor not on a point of order but to permit him to present his case.

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, these remarks will probably also deal with the point of order that the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson) tried to raise. May I point out that this notice of motion for the production of papers refers to Dr. Lloyd Barber, Chairman of the Indians Claims Commission, who was appointed by order in council PC 169-2405 and who reports directly to the Prime Minister. This matter is not in the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It concerns the office of the Prime Minister, whose repeated statements have indicated concern for our native peoples. I am advised that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Buchanan) will be in the House because of his interest and concern in this matter. I, therefore, believe that the hon. member's point of order is incorrectly based.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. The Chair is somewhat embarrassed, because there was no point of order in the first place. I thought that the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) was rising to explain why he had not risen initially to speak in the debate. Under the circumstances, I should like to see this debate proceed properly. Will the hon. member for Skeena indicate if he intends to speak on another point of order or if he intends to speak to the motion?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I realize that Your Honour has to make sure that debate in the House takes place in an orderly fashion, in accordance with the rules. That, I hope, will be the case. I raised my point of order because the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and his parliamentary secretary were not present in the House when this matter was called this afternoon. If you are insisting in our proceeding with the debate then, in the absence of those hon. gentlemen who seem to show no interest in the subject, I have no choice except to make a few comments.

Mr. Boulanger: Withdraw the motion.

Mr. Woolliams: Don't be ridiculous.

Mr. Roberts: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker; if I recollect correctly, and I was sitting near you, you had recognized the hon. member for High Park (Mr. Deakon) when the hon. member who has just spoken raised a point of order. I do not really see how, having given the floor to the hon. member for High Park, you can now give it to another speaker. I myself, would be happy to hear what the hon. member for High Park has to say on this matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): It is not difficult to answer the hon. member for York-Simcoe. I am sure hon. members of the House realize that they can bet even

[Mr. Gibson.]

money on the hon. member for High Park speaking after the hon. member for Skeena has spoken, or vice versa. So, we are just playing games. However, since the hon. member for High Park indicates that he will cede the floor to the hon. member for Skeena, the hon. member for Skeena has the floor.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to accept such graciousness from hon. gentlemen in the Liberal party who do not want to see this matter come to a vote and intend to talk it out in any event.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): On two occasions, first on March 11, 1970 and then—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. Is the hon. member speaking to the motion now?

Mr. Boulanger: The hon. member wants to kill his own motion.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I am in error, but I thought you had recognized me for that purpose.

Mr. Deakon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have heard the hon. member for Skeena many times and always held him in high esteem. Before he makes remarks about other hon. members, I wish he would listen to what they have to say. He has not heard my speech. I would ask him to listen to any remarks I might make before making such comments.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): I did not think I was making comments about the anticipated speech of the hon. member for High Park. I was talking about the attitude of the Liberal party in general which has denied to certain people access to the documents in question. Members of that party have talked out, I think, eight other notices of motions for the production of papers on Thursdays and thus prevented those matters from coming to a vote. I made my remarks in that context. If the hon. member for High Park feels that he is part of that group called the Liberal party which denies certain people certain freedoms and rights, he will have to wear that hat and be content with it.

This particular hour for debating notices of motions for the production of papers was set aside, under our rules, in order that those notices of motions for production of papers which were objected to on Wednesdays, when no debate may be permitted, could be transferred to another part of the order paper, under "notices of motions (papers)", and debated and voted on. When the rules were changed, hon. members harboured a companion thought. It was thought that this hour would provide an opportunity for the exchange of views on such papers. We might learn why they cannot be produced and argue why they should be produced, and a vote might be taken. The government on many occasions has resorted to the subterfuge of using this mechanism within the rules to deny us the opportunity, in many instances, of talking about these matters, and to prevent a vote.