

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pickersgill: I was attempting to avoid repetition. If I read the telegram it will be seen that the statement is in it. The telegram reads:

Hon. W. J. Dunlop, M.L.A.,
Minister of Education,
Toronto, Ontario

I have seen the report of the statement you made in the legislature yesterday to the effect that the provincial government would be ready to assume responsibility for the education of Indians on the basis of reimbursement by the federal government. I am authorized by my colleagues to communicate with you with the view to discussing this suggestion at an early date. Could you let me know if you would be prepared to discuss it and what might be a convenient date.

The telegram is signed by me.

Mr. Fulton: May I ask the minister a supplementary question? Would the implementation of such a proposal, if agreement were to be arrived at, necessitate an amendment to the Indian Act?

Mr. Pickersgill: No, sir, I understand not.
[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. A. Bryson (Humboldt-Melfort): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration arising out of his answer to the question asked by the hon. member for Brantford (Mr. Brown). I take it that the same offer would apply to any other province that so requested?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any question of any offer. I am sure the government would be prepared to enter into discussion with the government of any province which wished to consider taking over the education of Indians on some reasonable basis conforming to the Indian Act and the rights of Indians under the act.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**CLIFFORD WILLIAMS—REQUEST FOR INTERVENTION BY PRIME MINISTER**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Prime Minister in the form of an appeal in connection with the Williams case to which reference was made yesterday. Would the Prime Minister, in his capacity as Prime Minister, be prepared to look into that case in order to assure that if an injustice has been done—and that seems apparent—equity should not be denied because of the decision of the—

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member for Prince Albert contend that his question is

one which is trying to get information? He is asking the Prime Minister to take a certain action; he is not asking for information.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I cannot ask for information without putting it before the Prime Minister. I cannot ask a hypothetical question about a non-existent state of affairs.

Mr. Speaker: I quite realize that the hon. member cannot ask the Prime Minister to take a certain action unless he tells him what action he would like him to take. That is not the purpose of a question before the orders of the day. The hon. member for Comox-Alberni.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The purpose of the question is to ask the Prime Minister whether he will look into the case.

Mr. Speaker: This can be dealt with later on when the estimates of the Department of Justice are before the committee.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The man is in jail for 28 years.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Comox-Alberni.

Mr. Diefenbaker: On a question of privilege—and there have been several today—does Your Honour rule that a member of this house, on a matter concerning justice and equity, shall not be permitted to ask the attitude of the Prime Minister? That is all I want to know.

Mr. Speaker: I am not here to decide questions of equity; I am here to decide questions of order. May I make a request of hon. members, and my request applies to members of all parties. Whenever I intervene on a point of order would hon. members please refrain from applauding whether what I say pleases them or not?

The matter was raised in the first place by a starred question put on the order paper by the hon. member for Kamloops—it is the Clifford Williams case, is it not?

Mr. Fulton: That is right.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is what we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker: It appears at pages 2120 and 2121 of *Hansard*. The Minister of Justice answered at considerable length the question put by the hon. member for Kamloops. Later on, before the orders of the day were called, questions were asked on the very same subject with the intention of clarifying the answer. Replies were given by the Minister of Justice, and the question the hon. member is asking today was asked of the Minister of Justice yesterday.