

# They're told they

## Indian Policy invokes bitterness, frustration with bull-shit efforts

The new Indian Policy presented by Jean Chretien is by far the major legal issue facing the Treaty Indians in Canada today.

The reaction has been one of immediate rejections from Indian organizations across Canada.

In an article printed in "The Native People" in July, 1969 the Indian Association of Alberta outlined their position.

The Indian Association of Alberta has rejected the proposal of the Policy Paper of the Federal Government and has asked them to come up with a new policy paper that is written in consultation with the Indian people. Their proposal essentially boils down to three areas:

- They want to do away with treaties.
- They want to do away with the Indian reserves.
- They want to throw Indians into the laps of the Provincial Government.

The Indian Association will be drawing up a counter policy paper, a position paper that will not only reject the policy paper of the Federal Government but will also give the alternatives that must be presented.

It is unfortunate that we spent a year in consultation meetings, tell the Government what we wanted, what they had to do, only to find a year later that they had not listened

or they had not heard what we had told them.

We are extremely disappointed to find that the Government has again made the mistake of the past—that is to make decisions on our future that we do not agree with.

The Manitoba Indian Brotherhood issued a blunt statement condemning the Policy. In an article printed in "The Native People" in August of 1969, Dave Couchene, President of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, stated:

"I am returning from Ottawa with feelings of bitterness, frustration and anger. Once again the future of Indian people has been dealt with in a high-handed and arbitrary manner.

We have not been consulted, we have been advised of decisions already taken. I feel like a man who has been told he must die and am now to be consulted on the method of implementing this decision."

The status of Indian people as we know it today is not the result of our decisions in the past. If we are at an impasse, it was government

who brought this about. A hundred or more years of acceptance on the part of the Indian, of policies and programs fostered by political experts who at the same time considered themselves amateur sociologists has led us once again up the garden path of false hopes, broken promises, colossal disrespect and monumental bad faith.

This government, while carrying out an obviously worthless program of consultation on Indian Act Amendments, had decided that they in their wisdom know what is right for us. This decision, like those of their predecessors, has been taken in isolation. What is worse, they have ignored what we have said and they have shut the door to real, meaningful dialogue. They face us with policies made and they ask us to have faith in their wisdom.

This is too much to ask. They have decided to impose upon all of us their solution to inequality. One of the methods suggested is to remove legislative distinctions, to eliminate pertinent references in the constitution to Indians to ensure that as an ethnic group, we are not separate or distinct.

The National Indian Brotherhood under the leadership of Walter Dieter issued the following statement to the Indian peoples in Canada.

"We are here before you saddled with a heavy responsibility that all Canadians share with us. One hundred years from now our grandchildren will reap the consequences of the actions we take in these next

few days—just as we are the inheritance of a legacy brought about by the actions of our forefathers. Our forefathers acted in good faith with your elected and appointed representatives, believing that they too were dealing in good faith.

When two partners deal in such a manner, it is pre-supposed that the two parties are on a somewhat equal basis—free to make their own decisions; free to make their own mistakes. In these past dealings we do not feel we took part in any decision making process and that the Minister has made a mistake.

The Minister's policy statement appears to be a departure from the year's consultations. We view this as a policy designed to divest us of our aboriginal, residual and statutory rights. If we accept this policy, and in the process lose our rights and our lands, we become willing partners in cultural genocide."

Dave Ahenakew, President of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, didn't mince any words in his rejection of the Policy. "As far as I'm concerned the new policy is a lot of bull-shit, it represents cultural genocide for Indian peoples."

And so it goes, all across Canada. Complete and total rejection. The government continues to maintain its stand that the white paper on Indians will become law.

In July at Vancouver, Prime Minister Trudeau stated that he would see the White Paper become law before he finished his term in office.

His statement reinforced Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chretien's recent White Paper on Indian rights. "It is inconceivable that one section of a society should have a treaty with another section of a society." Mr. Trudeau said, they (the Indians) should become Canadians as all other Canadians.

"We can't recognize aboriginal rights because no society can have special rights for a small minority of its citizens."

In a statement to "The Native People" Harold Cardinal, President of the Indian Association of Alberta stated:

"It is surprising that the Queen's first Minister should not honour treaties or recognize aboriginal obligations."

"I do not think the Canadian Government can renege on treaty, historical or legal obligations by appealing to the middle classes." Prime Minister Trudeau did this in Vancouver at a \$50.00 a plate function for the Liberal party. Aboriginal rights are facts. They are fact historically and they are facts now.

"The direction the Government is taking will lead to somewhat turbulent years because the Indian people will not sit back and let their treaty rights be taken.

Believe me, we are on friendly terms with Indians!



Dang Vulture, thinks we goin' die off.

