

October 7th, 1971

Yesterday the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chretien, publicly attacked the Indian people of Cold Lake and Kehewin, accused them of playing around with the future of their children, and charged them with "political blackmail" in withholding their children from school.

It is unfortunate that the Minister has decided to employ a forked tongue in attempting to cover up his totally inadequate reaction to the plight of the Indian people in Northeastern Alberta.

This approach as the great white father from Ottawa who is concerned about the educational well being of his little Indians is at best hypocritical. At worst it is a cheap political stunt intended to shift the focus from the role his Department has played in creating the conditions that have deprived our people of decent education and limited their prospects for a future.

We charge the Minister of Indian Affairs with hypocrisy because he and his Department have consistently ignored the needs and the representations of our people when they used those channels the Minister considers "proper".

We charge the Minister of Indian Affairs with playing the "great white father who knows what's best" because when we met with him in Ottawa to discuss the school strike situation Mr. Chretien said, "If they stay out for a whole year that will not change one thing in my mind". Apparently we are going to be saved in spite of ourselves.

We charge that the position assumed by the Minister of Indian Affairs is no more than a cheap political stunt because:

1. His proposal to remedy all conditions prejudicial to health, safety and general well being of students in all federal schools is farcical because no new monies are being made available to make this possible.

## improve it soon.

2. His proposals as affecting Cold Lake and Kehewin only scratch at the surface and are discriminatory in application as they ignore and neglect the other five reserves in the area that have the same acute problems.

3. His purported concern for the welfare of Indian children is somewhat short of convincing because to implement the so-called remedies for Cold Lake and Kehewin his Department must divert monies from other reserves within the Alberta region. This is unjust, punitive and discriminatory against reserves such as Fox Lake, Sunchild--O'Chiese, Brockett, and others who must also deal with pressing problems with very limited resources.

If the Minister is concerned with the Indian children of one or two reserves -- does that mean the great white father in Ottawa is going to neglect all his other Indian children. The Indian people of Northeastern Alberta did not go on strike to penalize their brothers in other parts of the province.

The Minister of Indian Affairs has charged our people with "political blackmail" but neglects to tell the Canadian public of his Department's

five-year plan and budgetary projections that promised the people of the area more of the same abuse and deprivation they have enjoyed in the past. He says nothing of the economic and political coercion used to make our people accept an educational system that meet nobody's needs but that of his master plan for the Indian solution.

When the Indian Chiefs of Alberta presented their "Red Paper" in June of 1970, the Prime Minister promised us that no solutions would be forced on our people. Yet we find our people forced to take ever increasing drastic measure to turn back solutions forced on them and on their children.

Our people have invited the Minister of Indian Affairs to come to their reserves to see the conditions they are forced to endure and to see the results of his policies and Departmental practises. He cannot find the time to carry out this portion of his Ministerial Portfolio.

Our organization urges the Minister to stop his unethical and cheap political maneuvers and begin to seriously take action that will solve the problems our people face rather than compounding the grave situation that confronts them. If the Minister is unable to meet his responsibilities to the Indian people we suggest that he notify the Prime Minister of his continuing inability.

I went to see Mr. Bill Thomas, Regional Superintendent of Schools, in his office on the 27th floor of the C.N.R. Building. He gave me a short statement on his position that contained in it evidence of his ambivalent feelings on the situation in N.E. Alberta.

"The people are asking for an upgrading of school facilities, programs, and resources, to have a better way of life. The whole community way of life has to be upgraded.

"For the past several years the branch has spent considerable money off the reserves for the kids to go to school off the reserves and has not done anything appreciably parallel on the reserve schools!

Inherently this is wrong. There should be a compromise. "I know we have to upgrade these facilities but it will take several million dollars and without that several millions we cannot do anything. I understand the situation and what they want, I'd like to do it but with the boycott..

"I can only work to the extent of the facilities, staff and money we have. There are now severe limitations on these, especially money!"

"I am working for minister and government of Canada. I have to abide by these rules. I cannot go out on strike and shut my department down in support of what the Indian parents want



even though I am in sympathy with them."

"Want to get more involved in provincial schools and see we get money's worth. We have not always got money's worth although we have spent a lot of money on off reserve schools."

"I have no indication that Ottawa building more reserve schools will be a new policy but we are building reserve schools. They want to start on schools for younger children and see how it goes."

# BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

1. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons. *Opening Statement by Hon. A. Laing...House of Commons Committee on Indian Affairs...Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources, May 19, 1966.* ----a policy statement regarding the necessity of greater Indian management of local affairs and of their economic resources.
2. Canada, Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Dev. *An Address by Hon. A. Laing...The Indian People and the Indian Act...Ottawa Press Release, Oct. 16, 1967.*
3. *'The Tripod' The Indian People, the Gov., and the Canadian Community by Hon. A. Laing...Ottawa, Press Release, Feb. 16, 1968.*
4. *'Indian Policy...Where does it Stand? A Speech by Hon. J. Chretien...Ottawa, Press Release, Oct. 16, 1969*
5. Canada, Dept. of Northern Affairs & National Resources. *A Historical Review of Indian Affairs, Policies, and New Directions for the future. An Address by...Mr. R. F. Battle, Ass. Deputy Minister Indian Affairs Branch. Ottawa, Press Release, Jan. 22, 1966.*
6. *Opening Remarks of Mr. E. A. Cote to the National Indian Advisory Board. Ottawa, Press Release, Jan. 10, 1966.* ----acceptance by Gov. of proposals set forth by National Ind. Ad. Board.
7. Canada, Indian Affairs Branch. *A Handbook for Indian Band Chiefs and Councillors. Ottawa, 1968* ----a list of the legal obligations and jurisdictions of the Band Council as the political tool of the Indians.
8. *Annual Report 1968-69. Queens Printer for Canada, Ottawa 1970* ----statistics regarding native people of Canada. Econ., Pol., Educational advances & fiscal report for 1968-69.
9. *'Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy. 1969.'* Presented to 28th Session of Parliament by Hon. J. Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Dev. ----"white paper"--radical proposal for gaining the Indians equal status as Canadians.
10. *Indians of the Prairie Provinces--A historical review. Ottawa, Jan. 1966.* ----description of the effects of the explorers, traders, and expansion of white settlement from 1800-1870. Resume of 7 treaties. Effects of early missionaries. History of education & economic development to present.
11. B. Y. Card. Ed. *Perspectives on Regions and Regionalism. Proceedings of the 10th Annual meeting of the WASA. Dec. 1969. U of A Printing Services.* ----regions and regionalism as significant and basic phenomena in understanding the nature and problems of future society, especially in Prairie Provinces.
12. Cardinal, H.: *The Unjust Society, Edmonton, Hurtig Pub., 1969* ----A Cree Indian gives his personal views on the Indian problems with regards to Indian confrontation with the Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern development. Gives recommendations for what he hopes will alleviate current Indian problems.
13. Davis, A. K. *Canadian Confrontations, Edmonton, U of A Printing Services, 1970.* ----selected speeches & papers presented to WASA conference. Dec. 1969. Ideas of the Metis. Ass. of Alta., Native Alliance for Red Power, Sask. Metis Assoc., Ind. Assoc. of Alta.
14. Hawthorne, H. B. *A Survey of Contemporary Indians of Canada. Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 Indian Affairs Branch, Queens Printer, Ottawa, 1967.* ----an in depth analysis and research of Indian Economic, Social, Political, and Educational needs in Canada.

In the city you need money to do anything, to play a game of pool or to take your girlfriend out to a show. You just haven't got that . . . . Like say\*\*\*\*\*and myself, on welfare. That's ten dollars a month and after we pay off the things you really need like shampoo or toothpaste or things you

really need each month, all you got is seven dollrs. It's just cheaper to get together with a few other friends and buy a bottle of wine, and right away your worker's on your back saying you're drinking up all the money.

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