

*Indian Affairs*

like to indicate that the latter part of his statement this afternoon was much better than the policy statement delivered the other day.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hope we do not re-open the debate. The hon. member has already had his time and has been recognized now for the purpose of asking a question.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** My question, Mr. Speaker, is, how does the minister answer the criticism of the Indian leaders who have almost universally expressed the idea that the policy statement enunciated ignores the recommendations they have made during recent consultations?

**Mr. Chrétien:** This often involves the kind of dilemma faced by the government. We have consulted with them. They have made their representations and we have noted and studied them. I have studied them myself and they have been studied by officials and employees of my department as well as by other officials of the government. I said to the Indians that we will propose a policy which they may consider. We had to say something and I spoke on behalf of the government. We now say this is the direction in which we wish to proceed. Let us study it along with the Indian people of Canada and the provincial governments, and then implement a proper policy. If we were proposing legislation today, there might be a valid criticism. We are not ready to legislate. We are ready to discuss this policy and bring forward legislation next fall, or perhaps two or three years from now. I do not care very much when, as long as everyone will agree that we are on the right path.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might be permitted to ask another question relating to a subject upon which neither one of us has touched. It has to do with consultation. I should like to ask the minister whether in the course of these consultations, and in light of the fact he has indicated a flexible approach to policy, he will be prepared to make some sort of payment and set up some sort of procedure which might result in the culmination of a national conference on Indian affairs such as the one held from April 28 to May 2? Will he guarantee some procedure to provide the Indian people with the wherewithal to meet with him to express their opinions?

**Mr. Chrétien:** I have said in the house many times that we are ready to provide the Indian associations with funds to assist them in their job with their own people and to consult with the government. I hope soon to be in a position to make an announcement in this regard. I have made a proposal to the Treasury Board and I hope soon to receive a definite answer. I have referred to the special committee on Indian rights and treaties. Funds will be made available to that committee, not directly through me, but through the commissioner who will be appointed soon.

**Mr. Speaker:** I trust that hon. members will not be dissatisfied if I say that pursuant to Section 13 of Standing Order 26 I am satisfied that the debate has now been concluded. This house stands adjourned until Monday, July 14 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

At 5:50 p.m. the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to special order.

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