

*Indian Affairs*

that the government has made an arbitrary announcement. It has ignored the recommendations of the various Indian leaders and communities across the country that have resulted from the recent consultations.

In fact, the government has repudiated the policy that it has been talking about over the last few years in this house. The government has said that a new Indian Act was going to emerge from these consultations, that this Indian Act would be an Indian Act in fact as well as in name. As has been pointed out, the present Indian Act was an enactment of the attitudes of the white community to the Indian population. We were assured over the past two or three years that the new act would emerge only after long, continued and very careful consultation with the Indian community. These consultations have been carried out.

A Minister without Portfolio was appointed to carry on these negotiations, and he established an excellent rapport with the Indian community. This responsibility was suddenly removed from him by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when a disagreement developed between the minister of Indian affairs and the Minister without Portfolio. I suppose it was a result of that disagreement that the government rushed pell mell into making an ill-conceived announcement of this kind.

Let me continue the quotation from Chief Courchene because I think it is fundamental to the issue:

I am calling together the Indian leaders in Manitoba—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have to interrupt the hon. member as his time has expired. If he wishes to pursue his remarks, he can do so with the unanimous consent of the house.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** May I just complete the quotation from Chief Courchene because I think it is basic to the argument:

I am calling together the Indian leaders in Manitoba to discuss the statement in depth. It is our intention to prepare a brief that will contain realistic alternatives to social disaster.

We will not meekly accept cultural genocide—we will marshal support from all sectors—we will fight.

That is the opinion of the Indian leaders themselves, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault), in one of his typical partisan speeches, quoted extensively from

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

statements made in this house by my colleague, the member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) and myself, each of which purported, in his opinion, to express a position that was completely contrary to that which we are taking today. Nothing that we said in the quotations to which the hon. member referred is at variance with our criticism of the statement made by the minister.

We maintain that Indians must be first class citizens equal with all other Canadian citizens. We have said that Indians are entitled to be treated as equals, that separate education and health and welfare facilities for Indians are wrong. I said on one occasion, and I repeat now, that just as the United States Supreme Court has ruled that separate but equal educational facilities for Negro citizens are not equal because they are separate, so must separate educational facilities for Indians be considered not equal to the educational facilities of other Canadian citizens. I personally look forward to the day when educational facilities for Indians will be administered by the provinces, as is the case with educational facilities for other citizens.

We have said that the Indians are entitled to see an end to the paternalism that has been so characteristic of the Indian affairs branch. I hope to see the day when the Indian affairs branch as we have known it, and more sadly as the Indians have known it, will disappear. I make no apology for saying this. But none of these things can take place unless and until the Indian people themselves want them to take place and are prepared to give their co-operation and support. Even if we know that opposition on the part of the Indians to a particular proposal is wrong, we cannot impose the proposal upon the Indians. Obviously, if we really believe in consultation and co-operation with the Indians, in letting the Indians make the major decisions on how to improve their living conditions, then we must oppose the method that the minister has in good faith used in bringing forward his white paper.

I am going to put on record the fact that there is almost unanimous rejection by the Indian people of Canada of the white paper that has been brought forward by the minister. I should like to quote from some telegrams I have received and which have been received by the leader of our party. I am sure the minister has also received them.

The first one is addressed to me and is from the president of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, Dave Courchene, to whom the hon.