

will be made after open, public consultation, particularly at the grassroots level. He went on to say that all these policies are dedicated to enhancing the ability and power of aboriginal communities to control their own affairs. I assure the House that this is my personal agenda as well.

This agenda is important not only to aboriginal people but to all Canadians. If we continue to perpetuate policies which cause aboriginal people to become severed from their roots, policies which permit their communities to disintegrate and lead to the abandonment of their cultural values, Canada as a whole will be the loser. The Government will not let that happen.

Aboriginal people, like all human beings, must have a sense of their own independence, a sense of purpose in their lives, a sense of who they are and a sense of their own self-worth. Those things have been denied them by previous Canadian federal Governments. This Government is dedicated to changing all of that. That is why this Government's record is clear and, if I could be so humble, commendable. We stand ready to look at each Member of this House and at each aboriginal person and to receive their criticism on actual policies, actual procedures and actual implementation of government policies; not on illusions, thoughts, scraps and documents that are lost in a waste basket somewhere.

If I could conclude, what we need is for all Parties to remember that we have the obligation which both the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior and the Hon. Member for Skeena made as a charge on the House earlier, and that is the obligation of us all. That is why I think the ideas and notions contained in the motion put by the Hon. Member should be utterly rejected by the House.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, I have a brief comment to make and one question to ask. I think the Minister understands from what he has heard from this side of the House so far that in fact it is the Minister's agenda that we want to see prevail. We have heard the Minister speak across the country. We have heard him respond to questions put in the House. We know that the reaction to his statements from the aboriginal community has been positive. It is his agenda that we want to see prevail. However, for the Minister to suggest that in some way the Opposition Parties have acted in an unbecoming manner because there came into the possession of one of those Parties a document which calls into question and undermines the Minister's own agenda, and we come to the defence of the Minister in this regard, is not fair. Surely that is a legitimate and fair role for Parliament to play.

The Minister has taken refuge in a system that allows him no comment, a system that allows an RCMP investigation to take place because a document has come into the hands of the Opposition. Surely what is happening here is further testimony and proof that our parliamentary system is desperately in need of reform. The fact that Parliament cannot participate in the formulation of public policy means that Parliament is not fulfilling its role and is not doing what those who elected us to this body wanted us to do. That is why I am delighted to be

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associated with the Committee on Parliamentary Reform headed by the Minister's distinguished colleague.

If the Parliament of Canada can only get involved after policies have become hardened and firm, when the Government must defend them even when they have inadequacies here and there which the Opposition must attack, there is a never-ending confrontation. No wonder the people of this country are asking what the parliamentary system is all about. The people of this country say that we only defend and oppose. They ask if they will ever see something that is mutually beneficial to a group of people like the aboriginal citizens who desperately need the concern of every Member of Parliament.

Will the Minister not agree that the system that binds him hand and foot by disallowing Parliament to be involved in the process of public policy formulation is wrong? Does he not agree that we ought to do something to change that?

**Mr. Crombie:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that he has me on good ground. I have been a long and fairly vocal advocate throughout the years I have been in this House for drastic, immediate, boots-up, forever-and-a-day reform of the parliamentary system. My good friend the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) is heading the committee on parliamentary reform. He has been making some advances on the matter and when the committee's report comes forward in its totality, I hope that its measures will be adopted by this House.

In answer to the question, quite frankly I do agree that this parliamentary system does indeed need reform. I think that we can do it during this term of office if the recommendations made by the Hon. Member for St. John's East are adopted by this House.

Could I hitchhike on the Hon. Member's question by responding to his comment regarding the Minister's agenda? As I have said in the past to the Hon. Member, I would certainly appreciate any support that he could give me with respect to the agenda and I would particularly appreciate support from him, an Hon. Member who is so well known by Indian people regarding these matters. I want to assure him that the Ministers' agenda is intact. I have exceedingly strong support from the Prime Minister, the caucus and all my Cabinet colleagues. We must ensure that we march forward together, and I appreciate the Hon. Member's willingness to do so.

● (1450)

**Mr. Manly:** Mr. Speaker, the matter which concerns Members of the Opposition, Indian and Métis people across the country, is the wide divergence between what the task force report said—the 396-page report which was leaked to the press—and what the Minister and the Prime Minister have said. Could the Minister tell the House what types of policy guidelines were given to the task force when it was performing its work? How was it possible for members of the task force to sit down and come up with a report which is completely at