

has been a mere trickle of facts and help concealed in a veritable waterfall, a Niagara of words. There is need for more than that. This was to have been an attempt by members of this house to take justice out to the areas where justice was needed, an attempt by members of this committee, divided into subcommittees, to go to areas where there were genuine problems, really serious and difficult problems.

I know that when I went back to my constituency in the summer I spoke to band councillors five or six hundred miles north of Edmonton saying that this was what the parliament of Canada intended to do, and that in due course there would be official visitors in the shape of members of parliament going to those areas, as subcommittee members, to talk to the people. The very fact that a microcosm of parliament was ready to appear on an Indian reserve and was willing to entertain objections and complaints, the legitimate complaints of the people in that area was a wonderful thing.

I know the minister's views. I think he felt the same way. I think this illustrates the almost complete breakdown of our committee structure. We hear a lot of talk about parliament reforming itself. I do not think parliament wants to reform itself. I do not think it knows how. I will not refer to matters which have been decided by the house. I did attempt to inject a method by which members of the house could take some authority into their own hands and deal, in committees or subcommittees, with urgent problems as they rose without having to wait for government action. This suggestion was rejected.

I hope the committee on procedure which is being set up will take due note of what has been said here today, and direct its attention to this serious problem. If the committees are to work properly a great deal more attention will have to be paid to their organization. If they do not work, then I do not think parliament will work.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): I will support this motion in the spirit in which the hon. member for Fraser Valley supported the minister earlier when he dealt with the statement on housing. I will support this motion because there is really nothing else one can do at this stage. It should be obvious to every member of this house that there is not much a committee can do during the short period of time which remains before this session of parliament comes to an end.

Concurrence in Committee Report

As happens toward the conclusion of every session, we are confronted with a heavy backlog of work. Members find it difficult to agree upon a time at which they can be away from the house. It seems to me the house should approve the motion proposed by the chairman of the committee, but that the government should give consideration to setting up the new committee very early in the new session so that in 1967 the committee can do the work it was unable to do in 1966.

I wish to join with the hon. member for Skeena in deploring the kind of itinerary which was proposed for the committee. The major reason I said I would not make the trip when I was asked to do so was that it is completely useless for a member of a committee to spend an hour or two on a reserve. Those of us who know anything about Indians—most of us are not very knowledgeable, and this includes all members of the house on all sides, including most of the people we have had as ministers; this is not a criticism—know that if a committee goes into a reserve for two or three hours the only things members have an opportunity to learn are the things which the department wants them to learn, the things which the deputy minister, the commissioner and the agent want them to learn. The agenda is lined up. The speakers are lined up. What members of the committee hear is the official line. Surely every member of the house recognizes that often there is nothing so misleading as the official line.

I was one who attended the meeting at which members of the Ontario Union of Indians made representations regarding their hunting rights. I can tell the minister that the Indians who were present were most dissatisfied with the response they received. I can tell the minister, in case he does not know, that there is a great feeling among the Indians across this country that the community development program announced with such great fanfare a couple of years ago is now in a state of complete disorganization, and that among Indians and people interested in Indian problems there is a feeling that the whole program might as well be washed out altogether because it is nothing, really, but a paper plan.

One merely needs to look for the people who came into the department to plan this program to see that hardly any of them are left. They have gone. One went to the Prime Minister's anti-poverty secretariat, another to a teaching post at a university; a third, who was on contract, did not have his contract