

*Indian Act*

correct the things we are imposing on the Indians. I hope that will materialize.

I received a telegram from Chief Clifford Big Plume, who is a good friend of mine and an excellent Canadian citizen. He is the Chief of the Sarcee Reserve in my constituency. The telegram reads:

The Sarcee Nation does not accept that the Government of Canada has any legal or moral right to abrogate to itself the authority to determine membership in the Sarcee Band. For too many years Sarcees have allowed the federal Government to add to our membership those names the Government has decided should be included and to exclude those names the Government decided to exclude.

Sometimes I believe we are in Moscow when I witness the things that this Government does. The telegram continues:

No where in Treaty No. 7 signed between the Government of Canada and Sarcee in 1877 did we the Sarcee Nation surrender our sovereign right to determine our own membership.

To rectify wrongs the Government of Canada believes it has committed against some Indian people, it is the right of the Government of Canada to enumerate these people and compensate them. It is not the right of the Government of Canada to legislate that the Sarcee Nation shall compensate anyone by admitting them to band membership. Sarcee shall determine who are Sarcees.

If the Government of Canada unilaterally amends that Indian Act by passing Bill C-47 without regard to our sovereign right to jurisdiction over our membership and land, we will fight such legislation.

Chief Clifford Big Plume said it better than I could say it. He approves removal of the discrimination. But, the Government then has to inject itself into the membership of each tribe in this nation. That is completely wrong.

Again, we must vote on two principles: one principle which is good and another principle which is bad. The only hope I have is that a government will be elected which will deal with—

**Mr. Burghardt:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. After listening to the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) I would like to make one comment. If he continues to use his allotted time, in effect Bill C-47 will be talked out and killed. I want the Canadian public to know that, and especially the women of this nation. The Indian people—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I regret that that is not a point of order.

**Mr. Taylor:** It is not I who is wasting time, Mr. Speaker. I am through. The Minister took a full 20 minutes—

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** You asked me to explain the Bill!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Are there questions or comments?

**Mr. Shields:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague a question because I know that he spends a great deal of time in his riding talking to individual constituents. As well, I know that he has had a number of meetings with the bands on the reserves in his riding. Has it ever been his experience to find anyone—a treaty Indian, a member of the

band, a member of the band council, or a chief—who disagreed with the Indian Act, as it was written, in that it discriminated against women? Was he ever told that those clauses should be removed?

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I have not had an individual Canadian of Indian extraction say that to me. However, in a meeting with the Blackfoot Band Council about two years ago, they said they approved that type of legislation, but that they were not ready for it. They wanted some time to make arrangements. They indicated that they could not have several scores of people suddenly arrive on the reserve when there were already 27 people living in one house. They wanted to correct the situation on the reserve before further hardships were placed on them.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any further questions or comments? On debate, the Hon. Member for York North (Mr. Gamble).

**Mr. John Gamble (York North):** Mr. Speaker, I am driven to speak on Bill C-47, a Bill to amend the Indian Act, because of comments made in this House by Members from all sides and all Parties. It is obvious that this House is embarking on a plan which has been recognized as imperfect in the dying hours before the summer recess and possibly the end of this Parliament. We are passing a piece of legislation which has as its primary purpose—and I believe this is clear—the removal of discrimination against Indian women. When Indian women married outside the Indian community they and their offspring lost their rights to Indian status. Of course, it so happened that the same consequences did not befall an Indian man who married someone who was not Indian, and it did not befall his offspring.

• (1530)

The problem with the Bill is that it goes further than remedying the ill. The remedy would have taken the form of an amendment which would have precluded the disenfranchisement of Indian women. The Bill endeavours to rectify historical misjudgments, and mistakes which have been made by previous Parliaments in connection with this issue. The form of rectification was to be a reinstatement of women who had been disenfranchised, together with the reinstatement to full franchise entitlement of their children.

That second aspect of the Bill is the part which has created the difficulty, because the people affected, namely, the Indian bands, have taken very substantial issue with it on two understandable grounds. Some Indian bands are reasonably wealthy, particularly those in Alberta which happen to derive revenue from oil and gas leases on the reserves. It, therefore, becomes attractive for people who might otherwise never have claimed Indian status to make that claim, both for themselves and for their children. There is a financial advantage in so doing.

There are other circumstances where Indian bands are certainly less well off. As a matter of fact, the financial circumstances which prevail in these bands have caused very serious deprivation. Why people would choose to return to