

*Supply—Privy Council*

day at a meeting of the committee on northern affairs or Indian affairs.

It should be of great concern to the government to consider very seriously the involvement of this group particularly with respect to our native Indian population when it gets into operation. As I suggested the other day, these people should keep out of the hair of our Indian people and allow these social activities to proceed under the aegis of the Indian affairs branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

If The Company of Young Canadians is to become involved in any aspect of the life and culture of our native Indian people then presumably it is for the purpose of filling a vacuum which has not been filled before by the Indian affairs branch or the respective provincial governments. This may involve another group of people in the affairs of our Indian population at a time when these affairs are being looked after by the federal Indian affairs branch, and to a lesser degree by branches of provincial governments, particularly in respect of co-operative community development.

I do not think that The Company of Young Canadians should be involved in any aspect of the lives of our Canadian Indian people primarily because the federal government is heavily involved in conjunction with the provincial governments. I say this particularly because I hope we are all conscious of the objective of promoting self-government for these people at the earliest possible time.

Our limited experience of the activities of do-gooders and enthusiastic outsiders concerning the affairs of Indians has not been good. It is a fundamental reaction on the part of human beings to resent the intrusion of outsiders in our affairs, whether these outsiders be of Scottish, English, Irish or native origin. I can well imagine the reaction of certain communities in British Columbia to a group from southern Ontario telling them how to organize their municipalities and run things. I am sure there would be an immediate resentment toward this well-meant intrusion by a group of outsiders.

In this sense The Company of Young Canadians would be a group of outsiders if they became involved in any way in working with native Indian peoples. This would be likely to develop a resentment against the company itself. I suggest that this group of young Canadians should not become involved in any way with the affairs of Indian people except as an adjunct to the operations of the

Indian affairs branch and only if the native Indian people themselves agree.

• (2:50 p.m.)

Only if these two things are treated as prerequisites to any activity on the part of The Company of Young Canadians will there be any chance of success in so far as working with the native Indian peoples are concerned. I leave those two thoughts with the minister because he is responsible for the administration of this pilot program. If he has anything to do with the company when it finally gets into operation, or whoever does have anything to do with it, I would strongly urge that this course of action be followed. Otherwise there will simply be, as I say, a reaction on the part of the inside group against intrusion into their affairs by a group from the outside. This reaction will be compounded and made even worse in a situation where the group from outside is young and enthusiastic because in most cases they may well be incapable of appreciating the full cultural value of the native Indian people and will thereby make matters even worse.

I gather that this has been the experience in some places in the province of Saskatchewan. Although I do not know the details, I understand that a group of university students either on their own initiative or sponsored by somebody else, a group of friends, as they call themselves, of the native people, visited last summer and I think again this year various Indian villages and lived with the people. I understand that these students were extremely gentle in their approach, extremely careful not to be intruders and to refrain from giving any advice on local matters. They were only there, as they said, to understand. But even with that sort of approach a reaction developed against them on the part of a number of native people. I do not know the reason for the reaction. It may have been the immaturity of the individuals involved. It may have been a reaction against a group of outsiders. It may have carried with it the flavour of racial differences which exist and the result of some years of racial discrimination, even in a mild way, which has been practised in some parts of our country against native Indian people.

Whatever the reason there was a reaction against this group, and all the potential good the promoters of this scheme conceived might come from it came to naught in certain cases. In fact it may well have set back any concept of a cultivation of the native Indian peoples.