

Supply

A "buffalo jump" was a method of exterminating vast herds of buffalo to make way for colonial expansion.

Elimination of the buffalo was equivalent to elimination of the livelihood of Indian people—an act of genocide. The Prime Minister's initiative to take dollars away from Indian people is proof that the strategy outlined in the Cabinet Memorandum is being implemented. The object is clearly to kill the political effectiveness of the First Nations—to exterminate the "body politic".

The First Nations of this country have undergone tremendous political development over the past fifteen years. First Nations communities, tribal councils, regional and national organizations have steadily evolved to the point where they are beginning to tackle the many problems which beset the Indian people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order. Could the Hon. Member wind up his remarks in a few seconds?

Mr. Crombie: Give him some time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the permission of the House to continue? I have only four or five minutes or even less than that left.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for its graciousness in allowing me to conclude.

I shall continue to quote from the document of the Assembly of First Nations. It goes on:

This political development is graphically exhibited in the success of the First Nations' representatives in advancing their political goals in the First Ministers' Conferences of 1983, 1984, and 1985.

● (1230)

The Prime Minister has said many wonderful things to the public and to the Indian people in support of the unique rights of the First Nations. The initiatives of this Government, intended to stifle the political effectiveness of the First Nations, make a mockery of the Prime Minister's statements.

It is apparent that within the ranks of government Members an ideological struggle is taking place. An editorial in the *The Micmac News* described the Nielsen report as being "outrageous". The editorial read:

It's astounding that such reactionary thinking still exists in the federal Government during a time described by Prime Minister Mulroney as "a new era" in relations between Ottawa and aboriginal people.

The Micmac News editorial continued:

There is a major conflict between the two positions. Are the true colours of the Mulroney Government showing? What is the real position? All questions which demand immediate answers.

In conclusion, I would say to the House that the purpose of my motion today is to have the Government of Canada clarify its position regarding aboriginal peoples. A letter which the Assembly of First Nations sent to the Prime Minister said:

The level of goodwill and mutual trust that has emerged in our relations with your Government has been seriously undermined. The policy approach is in basic opposition to our objectives as unique and self-governing peoples within Canada. As the Assembly of First Nations, we demand a disclosure of the documents and full clarification of the status of the policy approach and recommendations contained in both the Task Force Report and the Deputy Prime Minister's memorandum to your Cabinet.

I call upon the Government and its members today to end the confusion, because it is fostering uncertainty, distrust, cynicism and outrage among the native peoples of Canada.

Please stop it. Move with vigour toward solutions which are just and equitable for our first citizens.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, it is with more than passing interest that I notice the motion which is before the House today concerning native people. I believe that the House will probably be treated to one of the most profound acts of hypocrisy that it has seen in many years. Even the most casual observation would tell a Canadian observing a native community that those communities have been deprived of adequate health care, housing and economic opportunities. In fact, the life expectancy of native people is less than that of Canadians. Their life opportunities are nowhere near those of many Canadians. I wonder how the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party of Canada, which is ultimately responsible for these acts, can stand before the House in open criticism and make these statements. Where was the Hon. Member when the previous Liberal Government was condemned for its failures to meet the needs of native people?

My only comment on what I see before us in the form of a motion, and what I perceive will be the note of the Liberal Party's presentation, is that it is an act of profound hypocrisy.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, I feel very sorry for the Hon. Member who just rose. His partisan skin is so thin that it is shrinking and disfiguring him in a very grotesque way. He has my sympathy.

Injustices against the aboriginal peoples of Canada have been going on for a century. I praise no Government for its endeavours. We worked hard with one of his colleagues, the Hon. Member for Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands (Mr. Manly), for whom I have great respect; a respect which I do not have for the Hon. Member who has just spoken. We worked together to present a unanimous report which the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development called the high water mark, because there is the period before the report and there is the period after the report. So I would ask the Hon. Member to mature, grow up and join with the rest of us in attempting to solve some of these serious national problems. He should get out of his narrow partisan skin, which is shrinking him into a small person, and become larger as a Parliamentarian. We would all appreciate that.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to have that deflection from the real issue. It is not an issue of partisanship, it is an issue of the previous federal Government. That Government was in power for approximately 50 years and it failed to meet the needs of Indian people. It played the game of divide and conquer, and it played the game of creating backlashes. It created, in many Indian communities which I represent as well as those which other Members represent, one of the most despicable pieces of Canadian history. I am very concerned. I would exclude the chairman of the committee who produced