

treaties drawn up between the government of Canada and other nations precluded these rights which they had emphatically been lead to believe were theirs throughout the years.

In my constituency the native people have been brought before the courts on charges of hunting illegally. One such case was taken to the Supreme Court of Canada. In this particular case, unfortunately the Supreme Court of Canada, on a split decision, ruled that the Migratory Birds Convention Act superseded Indian treaties. The government might feel that for the time being this gets it off the hook. However, time and time again the Indian people and many members of this House, including myself, have requested that the government renegotiate the Migratory Birds Convention Act with the government of the United States.

If the Supreme Court of Canada in its wisdom feels the Migratory Birds Convention Act supersedes these treaties which the Prime Minister of our country says he recognizes, then I believe there is only one solution. The treaty made with the United States, which it is claimed supersedes Indian treaties, should be renegotiated. Four years have gone by and the government still indicates its intention to renegotiate this treaty.

Of course, there are many cases of land disputes in so far as the Indian people are concerned. The government claims it set up the commission headed by Dr. Lloyd Barber to look into the claims which Indian people feel they have. The Indian people have given considerable study to the government's white paper. They found they did not like it and asked the government not to implement it at that particular time. However, as the hon. member for Skeena has mentioned, the setting up of this claims commission has already abrogated the government's assurance that nothing would be done in relation to the white paper until the Indian people agreed to it.

Government members from time to time tell us of the extreme interest of the government in the problems of the Indian people. As I mentioned before, in recent years Indian groups have formed brotherhoods in the provinces. They reached agreement with the government in respect of financial grants in respect of the administrative costs of these organizations. I know that in Manitoba particularly, the Indian brotherhood and its staff are doing a tremendous job of liaison between the Indian people of the province and the federal government. But I am told grants pertaining to the past fiscal year should have been turned over to these organizations many months ago.

Last Thursday the Indian brotherhood offices in the province of Manitoba reached the stage where they would have been forced to suspend operations if the moneys promised several months ago were not forthcoming. The question was raised in the House and it is my understanding that the government has made provision for these moneys to go forward to Indian brotherhood offices, particularly those in Manitoba. I understand other provincial bodies have had the same difficulty.

In debating and possibly voting on the motion of the hon. member for Skeena we should ask why, with all the

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members in this House continually talking about their interest in the native people, we have to reach a show-down whereby we have a deadline in respect of keeping an office open because of the lack of money which should have been forthcoming from the government. The answer of the government at that time was that sufficient information was not presented to it in order to allow it to pay these grants. This was not the case in respect of the province of Manitoba. I understand that the Manitoba grant and others were held up, even though the information was available, because one or two organizations in other parts of Canada probably had not presented all the information the government required. Therefore, the Indian brotherhood offices which had presented all the pertinent information the government required for these grants were discriminated against.

• (5:50 p.m.)

The hon. member for High Park quoted the stirring words of Chief Dan George in relation to treaty rights. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Indian people do have treaty rights which are not being recognized. Therefore, I support the motion of the hon. member for Skeena and hope that this House will unanimously support it.

Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to make in this chamber today the charge that the purpose of the appointment of the Barber Commission was to do a snow-job on the Indian people. In the absence of the production of the documents requested in the motion of the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard), I challenge anyone in this House to disprove my statement.

Mr. Mahoney: Sit down and listen.

Mr. Barnett: This commission was appointed through a minute of the meeting of the committee of the Privy Council in December of 1969. Neither the members of this House nor any of the Indian people in Canada really know what, if anything, Dr. Barber has been doing since he was appointed commissioner under the Inquiries Act. The hon. member for Skeena interjected that very likely he does not even know himself. I can support that statement without any particular discredit to Dr. Barber, because if one considers the circumstances of his appointment it is obvious that it was impossible for him to do a worth-while job even if he had wanted to.

Why do I suggest that the purpose of this royal commission was to do a snow-job or to pull the wool over the eyes of the Indian people across the country? I do so for one very fundamental reason if for none other, namely, that this House has never recognized that the Indian people have any rights in this country. It has never admitted that the original inhabitants of this country have any rights which stem from the fact that they were here before our ancestors arrived here. This was confirmed not long ago in the House by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) when he declared—and he stated it more than once—that all the lands in the Northwest Territories are held by the Crown, which means that the Eskimo people do not even