

Second, with regard to the all-Party compromise that we reached in the last couple of days, I would simply like to remind the Minister of the chronology of it. Two nights ago, we reached a kind of a meeting of minds in the committee and we made some suggestions to the drafters of the Bill who then worked through the night. In the morning, they presented the Minister with a set of draft amendments which the Minister took to Cabinet. After they were approved, then we as members of the committee saw those amendments. We had no way of knowing whether or not they followed our recommendations completely until after they had been approved by Cabinet and there was no possibility of further change. It is this kind of last minute procedure that I feel is very much at fault which is the reason for some of the flaws that continue to be contained in the Bill. It is for that reason that we regret the late introduction of this Bill.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, during my remarks, I got so wrapped up in Bill C-47 that it completely slipped my mind that this was the last day that the Minister will be the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. He has been a Member of the House for 22 years, I believe. In the last couple of days, members of the press have been asking me to assess him. The Minister assessed me in the House a few weeks ago—

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): But I took that back.

Mr. McDermid: However, he apologized. I must admit that. I said to the press, and I will say today, that there is probably not a harder working Minister in the House.

Mr. Whelan: Oh yes, there is.

Mr. McDermid: And that includes you, Whelan. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

He is a Minister who, I believe, had the concerns of the aboriginal peoples deep in his heart and he worked extremely hard for all of them. I wish him Godspeed in whatever the future holds for him. Rumours have it that he will find one of those nice appointments that come along from time to time. However, I do wish him good luck.

I know the quandary the Minister has faced when dealing with this Bill because we have all faced it. I do not think the Minister is happy with the Bill. I know that he is defending it because as the Minister he must do that. But, deep down in his heart I know that he is not happy with the Bill. When we assume the responsibilities to govern this great country of Canada, we will be prepared to make the legislation work in a way that is not unfair to the Indian people of this country.

● (1520)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there further questions or comments? On debate, the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor).

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, in the very few minutes which have been allotted to me I want to make several points. I would first like to say that this is another

Indian Act

example of the sloppy way in which this Government brings in legislation. The Government brings one good principle into every Bill in order to get two or three bad principles passed. We have seen examples of this all through the session. An example of that is the enfranchisement of Indian Women, the good principle. Every one supports that. But, then the Government injects itself into the membership of the reserves. I will confine my remarks to the membership of the reserves.

In my view, the Government has no right to tell people who can be on the Sarcee Reserve, the Blackfoot Reserve or the Stony Reserve—which are in my constituency—any more than it has the right to tell other Canadians that they have to live in Alberta or Saskatchewan. It is the right of Canadians to choose for themselves.

The Bill solves one problem, but it creates several others. One of the worst problems appears in Clause 109(1) of the Bill. That Clause gives the Minister and the Governor in Council the right to say who is enfranchised. It reads:

On the report of the Minister that an Indian has applied for enfranchisement and that in the opinion of the Minister the Indian

(a) is of the full age of twenty-one years,

(b) is capable of assuming the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, and

(c) when enfranchised, will be capable of supporting himself and his dependants, the Governor in Council may by order declare that the Indian is enfranchised.

That is going too far in telling people what is good for them. That is a serious objection I have concerning the membership matter. This legislation is in conflict with Bill C-52. Under that Bill the band council determines who will be on the reserves, and properly so. There are two pieces of legislation before the House at the same time which are in conflict.

Further, the legislation is a betrayal of Treaty No. 7. Treaty No. 7 was signed by the Government of Canada and the Indians in my area. It gave sovereignty to the tribes to decide who was going to live on the reserves. But the Government is injecting itself again and will take the power upon itself to determine what Indians will live on the reserves. That is completely contrary to the law which is in existence. I think this legislation could be challenged as a betrayal of Treaty No. 7. Again, we see the Government acting with haste. The Government has wasted time on various pieces of legislation. It could have brought this piece of legislation forward two years ago had it wanted to. The betrayal of Treaty No. 7 is very serious.

A further point which I would like to make is that the legislation affects all Canadians. It will require millions and millions of dollars to look after the people on the reserves. That money will come from the taxpayers of Canada. All Canadians should be concerned about this legislation.

All of the people on the reserves in my constituency are opposed to this Bill, and it would seem that all Indian people are opposed to it, yet we are imposing it on them. I only support the Bill because it removes discrimination against Indian women. The clause which makes me feel a little better is the one that provides for a review which will take place shortly after a new government is elected. The review will