

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.

To the Assembly of First Nations, it is absolutely essential that the disclosure and clarification be made by you as soon as possible. Upon receipt of the documents, we would respectfully request a meeting to discuss the ongoing constitutional talks.

The divisions within this Government have cast a great deal of uncertainty and distrust not only within this House but among Indian people right across the country, among the Métis and the Inuit people. I think it is incumbent upon the Government to come clean on this issue and to make a full and complete disclosure of all documents. The Government should say what its policy is. Let the Government release the 396-page task force report. That is not a Cabinet document. That can be released. And let us have the Government's official response to that task force so that Indian people can engage in a dialogue with the Government instead of having to fight shadows in the dark.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and then a brief question. I regret that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) is not here. I think we should commend the Minister for keeping the comments he made at the beginning of his speech direct, honest and sincere, as is typical of him. No one in this House could question those values of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The reference he made to Cabinet confidence, I think, is of the strictest importance to the effective process of our system of Government. I do not think that this process should ever be tampered with.

The aboriginal conference referred to by the previous speaker came very close to resolving many of the problems of our aboriginal people. The motion here, which really has not been dealt with effectively by any of the speakers says:

That this House condemns the Government for:

—using the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as the frontline ambassador of good-will—

Can the Hon. Member for Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands (Mr. Manly) suggest a different way of being an ambassador? Should we continue to follow the old route of former successive Liberal Governments that really got us nowhere?

**Mr. Manly:** I thank the Hon. Member for his question, Mr. Speaker. I do not think I would want to hold up former Liberal Cabinet Ministers as a model for anybody.

**Mr. Rompkey:** Why not?

**Mr. Manly:** I would like to ask that the present federal Government not follow the policy of the Trudeau Government in 1968-69 when it said one thing in public while something else was happening in the back rooms. That is what this motion is concerned about. That is what we are concerned

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about. On the one hand we are getting statements from the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development that sound good. I believe he is sincere when he makes them, although I do not believe he has the full confidence of the Cabinet behind him when he makes them. I believe there is a tremendous gap between what that Minister says and what the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) is looking for.

I am very concerned about where the real power in Cabinet lies. The Hon. Member commented that the recent First Ministers' Conference came very close to resolving some of the problems. I do not believe that was the case. I watched the Prime Minister at that conference. I saw him attempting to manipulate the situation rather than dealing with it in a forthright manner when the Provinces of Manitoba and Ontario said on the last day that they were not prepared to go along with the Saskatchewan proposal unless it carried with it the consent of the aboriginal people. The Prime Minister completely ignored that and acted as though he still had the consensus of seven provinces. He manipulated the situation by refusing to recognize some of the real concerns that people raised with respect to some of those issues. In addition, he watered down the whole concept of aboriginal self-government to such an extent that the Indian people felt there was absolutely nothing in it for them. There was no constitutional recognition of their right to Indian self-government but only a vague accord that there would be negotiations. There was nothing that would bind the provinces in any way. In other words, when he said, "Let's put a little bit of water in the wine", there was not much wine left at all but only an awful lot of water, some of which didn't smell very good.

● (1540)

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to this Opposition motion and especially the first part of the motion which concerns the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

First of all, I would like to point out that the approach taken by the Government to constitutional discussions on Native issues is a comprehensive one which must consider the many important interests that are at stake. The Prime Minister himself confirmed this in his preliminary remarks at the First Ministers' Conference in April. He insisted, and rightly so, on the need for identifying, defining and protecting aboriginal rights, and for doing so within the Canadian Constitution. In fact, it is a process that has been going on for several years or at least several months, and at the First Ministers' Conference held by the former Government in 1984, three of the four national native people's associations made a joint proposal for negotiations leading to the application of their ancestral rights. Among these rights, the right to self-government appears to be the most important and the most fundamental one, and, in fact, the basis for successful negotiations.

The Government of Canada agrees with the native representatives that self-government will help native groups to have