

Parole Act

among men. All the sub-chiefs under Sitting Bull were men among men in those days. I say to hon. members of this House, look around you; how many prominent men do you see in today's Indian race? Is it the fault of the Indians? No, it is because the white man has failed to understand them; in fact, has demonstrated an expressed unwillingness to understand them. He has not cared; he has shown no desire, no love, no appreciation of Canada's first citizens. We have run roughshod over our first citizens. We have said they are "no accounts." On the white man's conscience must rest that responsibility. He has failed to hear, to listen and to pay attention to their problems.

Of course, we have not been as bad as the Americans. We can proudly say that we have not created a Wounded Knee in Canada—yet. But just look at the James Bay project. The courts have played havoc with the treaty of 1812 which the native people up there signed. The courts have played havoc with the conscience, the heart, the beliefs and the soul of those native people. True, the Supreme Court is hearing that case today; but we in this House have allowed the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) to rise in his place and plead that he understands the Indians and encourages them in their fight.

● (1750)

This government has the right to move in and disallow, if necessary, any provincial legislation which it feels is wrong or detrimental to the well-being of Canada and its future. If this House so desired, it could have moved in and dealt with the question of James Bay and the lands involved in the area. It could have revoked the provincial legislation that brought about that problem. But it chose not to do so.

Speaking to the bill before us, Mr. Speaker, I have no harmful thoughts with regard to the chairman of the National Parole Board. He has been in office at a very difficult time because this House has failed to lay down the criteria by which he could administer the Parole Act. I do not have time to go into the whole concept of capital punishment versus its abolition. However, I do say that we have placed the chairman of the National Parole Board in a very difficult position during these past years, because we have failed to lay down the concepts that he must adhere to and he has had to try to judge the mood of the people on his own. He has tried to judge what is best for people who have run afoul of the law and who perhaps can be released.

The only part of this bill that I wish to speak to is the first amendment standing in the name of the hon. member for Skeena which suggests that two of the ten ad hoc members of the Parole Board should be native people. How can I disagree with that, Mr. Speaker, when I sit here in Chief Crowfoot's name? Nearly a hundred years ago he said that there shall be peace as long as the rivers flow, the grass grows green and the sun shines. Well, Mr. Speaker, the rivers are running, although more polluted, the sun is shining and the grass has been growing green, particularly in the summertime. In saying that, Chief Crowfoot placed his trust in the hands of the white man and said, in effect, "I acknowledged your greater numbers. I acknowledge your great armaments. I place in your hands a trust that

[Mr. Horner (Crowfoot).]

you will take care of my people, that you will not see them in want or suffering starvation, and you will see them treated fairly and equally."

Mr. Speaker, anybody interested in the history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or, as they were called at one time, the Northwest Mounted Police, should read "Across the Medicine Line". It tells how the RCMP dealt out justice fairly and equally and won the respect of the native peoples of the plains and of the northlands. Is there a man in this House who can say that we have continued to understand the problems of the Indians and the native people since that time, when over 25 per cent of the inmates of our jails and penitentiaries across the country are native people? What percentage of the Canadian population do they represent, Mr. Speaker? Just 2 per cent.

I ask every member of this House to examine these figures, to examine his conscience and ask himself as he goes to bed tonight if his conscience is clear, as a white man, taking over this land from its first citizens. Let him ask if he has dealt fairly with the native people as Chief Crowfoot would have wanted. There is not a white man in Canada who can say that we have. It is all well and good for us to pass this bill, Mr. Speaker, and make a number of amendments to please ourselves. Normally, I do not support the ideas of the hon. member for Skeena, particularly his socialist ideas. But on this occasion, when he asks that two members of the National Parole Board be native people, I do not think he is going against the desire of most white men in this House of Commons.

There should not be one Liberal cabinet minister rise in his place to say that he is against this amendment. If there is, I hope that every native person in Canada remembers who it was and the political party to which he belongs. It was the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) who gave the native people the vote and told them that the only way they could exert pressure upon the white man was through the exercise of their vote. I hope they remember, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand) is a very capable native person, one who has a right to be proud amongst his native people. But if he fails to stand up and speak in favour of this amendment, then I would not blame the native people for saying that he has become one of those who has been washed in some kind of water which has cleansed him of his native beliefs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m. Order, please. May I remind the hon. member that his time has just expired.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): No, Mr. Speaker. I do not agree with that. I was watching the clock very closely, and I have two minutes left.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. We will be able to check.