

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Notice of motion No. 49, the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth).

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### INDIAN AFFAIRS

#### MOTION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, a special committee of the House of Commons, consisting of eleven members to be named, be established to investigate all aspects of the question of aboriginal rights of the native Indian and Eskimo people of Canada, with powers to report from time to time its observations, opinions and recommendations thereon; and

That the committee be empowered to send for persons, papers and records; to sit during sittings and adjournments of the House; to adjourn from place to place; to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by the committee; to appoint from among its members such subcommittees as it may deem advisable or necessary, and to delegate thereto all or any of its powers, except the power to report directly to the House; and to employ such staff at it may deem advisable or necessary.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) rises on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Orders, you could not state that the debate on motion No. 49 had begun, if a member was rising on a point of order or raising a question of privilege. I rose before you called notice of motion No. 49. I therefore ask that we return to the point of order, before dealing with notice of motion No. 49.

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I regret that I did not see the hon. member for Lotbinière before I called motion No. 49. I will now hear him.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I deplore the fact that while the whip of the Progressive Conservative party had the floor there was no simultaneous interpretation so that we were unable to understand what he was saying.

Furthermore, I feel that we have not yet reached the study of the notice of motion, but are dealing with a point of order. Are we dealing with notice of motion No. 49? It will be noted that several of my colleagues and myself definitely rose on a point of order.

• (1650)

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We are dealing with motion No. 49. The hon. member for Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Firth:** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that we have reached this stage, but I am not really happy to see what

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appear to be stalling tactics on the part of some hon. members. I would very much like to have this motion come to a vote. I feel as strongly today as I did when I first came to the House that this is a very important matter, and while we still have time today I would like it to come to a vote.

**Mr. Ian Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I intend to speak on this motion and I may speak right until five o'clock. I find it rather strange that two or three evenings ago in the standing committee on Indian affairs there was a clear intention expressed by members of the committee to proceed with the question of aboriginal rights during the next three sessions of the committee. In fact, we will have witnesses coming before that committee next week and for the following two weeks. It seems to me that what has happened here this afternoon is another example of what first occurred late on Tuesday evening, when that committee invited the Prime Minister of Quebec to appear before the committee in a way that was guaranteed—

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The amplification system was not working when the hon. member was speaking. However, it is working now.

**Mr. Watson:** The first clearcut example of playing around with a most serious problem for the sake of politics occurred the other evening in the Indian affairs committee when we invited the Prime Minister of Quebec to appear before that committee on the question of aboriginal rights in a way that was guaranteed to assure a rejection of the invitation. This afternoon we are again playing around with a serious problem that affects equally the Indian and Eskimo peoples of this country and we are doing it in a fashion that is not helping their cause in any way. We are simply playing politics.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Watson:** This House is playing politics with a problem that will require a non-partisan approach if we are to solve it. The Indian and Eskimo peoples of Canada expect a non-partisan approach from us in solving the aboriginal rights problem, the housing problem, the educational problem, the employment problem—in fact, the whole wide band of problems which we all agree exist so far as the Indian and Eskimo peoples are concerned. I do not think any party in this House can claim to have a greater interest than any other in these extremely serious problems which affect our native peoples. I do not think that any party in the House can claim to offer the ideal solutions, because I do not think we have ideal solutions.

If we are to approach effectively this whole problem of aboriginal rights, we will have to act initially in the committee, hearing the representative Indian groups as well as hearing from other concerned groups. We will have to determine an effective approach in the Indian affairs committee. I certainly have not seen any example or indication that that committee itself has adopted a clearcut approach upon how it will tackle the problem of aboriginal rights.

**Mr. Howard:** It certainly did since you were chairman.