

Supply

secret task force was busy developing what was later released as the 1969 white paper. That paper proposed turning Indian programs over to the provinces, termination of the Department of Indian Affairs, and eventual assimilation of the Indian people.

Weaver quotes from a former Liberal Minister of Indian Affairs, the Hon. Art Laing, who wrote:

The prime condition in the progress of the Indian people must be the development by themselves of a desire for the goals which we think they should want.

If ever there was a statement of the way in which different Canadian Governments have operated with regard to Indian people, that is it. It says that somehow the Government has to do the manipulative job of getting Indian people to accept the goals for themselves which the Government has already chosen for them.

We are seeing a repetition of history. The Prime Minister had a very open First Nation's Conference. He sat in the glare of the television lights. He met and talked with aboriginal leaders. He indicated that he was in favour of aboriginal self-government. The task force said that he was consulted, so he must have been aware at that time of the kinds of recommendations the task force was bringing forward.

I want to talk about some of the specific findings of the task force and the Cabinet memorandum that was put forward to try to implement it. First, it talks about cutting the impact funding on resource development. Let us take a look at the Estimates that were tabled by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development this year. On page 61 it says:

In addition to benefiting Indian communities, resource development impacts funding also benefits resource developers and contributes to the security of proposed major resource developments as it enables Indian bands to enter into effective dialogue and negotiations leading to settlement rather than only having recourse to resorting to negative court actions or the use of land claims to protect their interests.

This statement of departmental policy says that resource impact funding is perhaps a better route to follow than land claims. It says that resource impact funding helps Indian people to get a piece of the action. Yet the Cabinet memorandum suggests that resource impact funding should be cut. That document also suggests that land claims should be deferred.

On the issue of housing the Cabinet document suggests that there should be no encouragement for Indian people to build homes in isolated areas where the economy is in some difficulty. It suggests that there should be an even-handed policy to ensure that Indian people are encouraged to move away from reserves and into the urban areas. This brings us back to the 1960s when Indian people were lured into the cities with all kinds of promises of government support.

This year's Estimates point out that between 1980 and 1983 there was a decrease of approximately 5,000 students under the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs. The decrease does not necessarily mean that approximately 5,000 students ceased attending school. It means that the Depart-

ment discontinued funding all off-reserve students, thereby striking them from the departmental data collection process.

In other words, Indian people are being forced to leave reserves because the Government says there will not be any development there and it does not want to encourage people to stay in areas of economic difficulty. The people are forced to go to cities and once they are there, programs which they had been promised are cut.

Government estimates point out that one in three Indian on-reserve homes was crowded as defined by the 1981 census, compared to one in 43 non-Indian homes. This indicates the seriousness of the problem which must be addressed directly. It is going to require more funding, not less. To suggest that somehow we will solve this problem by forcing Indians to leave reserves is repugnant, Mr. Speaker.

● (1530)

We can look at the whole question of land claims policy. It says that negotiations should be deferred until the Government comes to some decision about what its policy is on native self-government. The Minister has indicated a process is in place. He hopes there will be some clarification within six months. We will be watching this whole question of land claims very closely, Mr. Speaker, because there has been a lot of stalling in the past. If there is going to be Indian self-government, which I think is a necessity for the Indian people, then land claims are essential. It is not possible to have Indian self-government without an adequate and decent economic base. That means land claims have to be settled in a just and equitable manner.

We can look at the question of health where the Cabinet's memorandum suggests that deterrence should be introduced. It does not say what kind of deterrence, just that deterrence should be introduced to keep Indian people from making as much use of health services as they do at present. At the same time the Government is cutting back on any consultation process that would help Indian people come up with their own health policies. We are cutting out one policy and we are not helping Indian people to put something else in its place.

The report talks about closing hospitals. At the same time I think there is general recognition that Indian health is far below the national standards. The average life expectancy for an Indian is ten years less than that for a non-Indian.

I see that my time is running out, but if I could have just a few more minutes, Mr. Speaker, I will try to conclude. The Government talks about amalgamating economic programs and using standard business criteria for them. This may be good, this may be bad. What do the Indian people say? What consultation process was followed? In the meantime, we see in the Estimates that there are cut-backs of some \$23 million in economic development for Indian people in the current financial year.

I would like to close by reading the final couple of paragraphs of a letter written by Tom Sampson, Chairman of the AFN, Constitution Working Group, who wrote to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). He wrote: