

simply to the native people of Canada. It is important to all Canadians because what we are seeing happen to the Indian people is very likely to happen to other segments in Canada. A number of years ago someone made the comment that the Indian people are very much like the miner's canary, and I think most Members of the House are aware of the practice of miners who used to take a canary with them down into the mine. As long as the canary was able to live, the miners were assured the air was tolerable for them. When the canary got in trouble, the miners knew they were in trouble. In the same way, when the Indian people of Canada are in trouble, I think the rest of us can understand that we, too, are in trouble.

It was interesting to listen to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) today because he is very obviously embarrassed by the documents which are floating around, documents which have a degree of authenticity, although the Cabinet has yet to come clean on this issue. He is also embarrassed by the actions of his colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen). It was scandalous to hear the Minister say, when I asked him what guidelines had been issued to the Deputy Prime Minister's task force on native policy and programs, that I would have to ask the Deputy Prime Minister. The Minister was not aware of what guidelines had been issued to the task force which was going to be looking at programs within his own Department. This is a very serious indication of the wide divergence of views within the Cabinet, some members of which espouse one policy and others another policy. As a result, we do not really know in what direction the Government is going, although we have our suspicions when we look at where the real clout lies. It lies with people like the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), people who are interested in making cut-backs. The real clout does not lie with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who is intent on preserving programs and trying to enhance the lives of Indian people.

It is interesting that when that Minister was first appointed to his portfolio there were a lot of rumours that he really wanted to be appointed to the communications portfolio, and that the appointment to Indian affairs of a former mayor of Toronto was an example of the Prime Minister's rather warped sense of humour. However, I want to say that the present Minister took the ball and ran with it. He saw as his first task the establishment of a relationship with the Indian people. He saw the need to get to know Indian people and establish in them some sense of confidence in himself. Given the constraints of the colonial situation in which we all live with regard to Indian people, I think the Minister succeeded very well. However, his efforts have been very seriously undermined by the activities of other members of Cabinet, particularly the Deputy Prime Minister.

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Nevertheless, all the efforts of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development are really irrelevant to true understanding of what is happening between the Tory Government and the Indian people. The Minister of Indian Affairs

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and Northern Development does just fine with regard to personal relations, ceremonial affairs, and public relations. However, regardless of the Minister's desire to do a good job, he runs smack into the reality of the Government, the reality of cut-backs and elimination of programs, and the reality of secret task forces which operate under the guideline of cut-backs and the bottom dollar rather than of a trust relationship which the federal Government might have to look after the best interests of the Indian people.

Native programs were among the first six priority areas in which the Deputy Prime Minister established task forces to find where cuts could be made. It is astounding, Mr. Speaker, that the informal title of big report became "The Buffalo Jump of the 1980s". Perhaps that title is really instructive. It gives us a clue into the mind-set of certain people of Cabinet and the people who were active on that task force report. This is a kind of gallows humour with a racist flavour. It is a suggestion that the Indian people can somehow be stamped into a situation which leads to extermination, such as the buffalo were.

I would like to emphasize that there is absolutely no relationship between what the report calls for and what the Minister and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) have been saying in public statements. It is shocking for a Minister of the Crown to have to stand in the House and admit that he was not aware of any policy guidelines given to the task force.

In the report of the task force we see no recognition that the federal Government had a trust responsibility. The emphasis of the report is on legal obligations rather than on programs. It makes a distinction between legal obligations on the one hand, and programs that have grown up on the other. It speaks of beefing up the Government's legal services so that it can beat back any challenges that Indian people might be interested in making to past government mismanagement. While the Government wants to beef up its own legal services, it calls for a cut-back on legal funding to Indian people who might want to test certain aspects in court. It says that it is contemplating this cut-back in legal funding to Indian people because possibly the Charter of Rights and Freedoms could prohibit the granting of legal aid to one group but not to another.

I would like to remind government Members that Section 15(2) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which talks about equality, says:

Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

It is obvious that the task force did not even do its homework with regard to the Canadian Constitution. It is dragging up all kinds of spurious reasons for making cut-backs.

Sally Weaver has written a very interesting book called *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda, 1968-1970*. In that book she details the duplicity of the early Trudeau years in the area of making Indian policy. While the Government had set up an elaborate system of consultation with Indian peoples across the country, at the same time a