

The Address—Mr. Penner

Committee on Child Care. We heard from many representatives of the native community about not having services for native children. Native people want control of child welfare in their communities and they want services to help promote their culture. Children are extremely important to them. They are the future of their communities.

Is the Hon. Member aware of some of the funding problems? I just found out about this situation in British Columbia. There are many many reserves on Vancouver Island, in the northern part of British Columbia and I think the Yukon as well, and only about \$45,000 is allocated for community funds. That is the only budget to cover anything on reserves having to do with families, and none of it, I understand, is for child care programs. At the same time the federal Government has been down-sizing the DIA staff and that means some pretty substantial salary moneys going back into the pot, I assume, which money, in my view, should be going to community services under the control of native groups. Does the Hon. Member have any comment to make about that issue and what should be done about it?

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, I would like to respond to that very relevant question. At the beginning let me say that I regret that I cannot directly give an answer to British Columbia. What is happening in one province is probably the same as in the other regions of the country with respect to Indian Affairs policy.

The best example on child welfare I can give the Hon. Member is in the Province of Manitoba where a tripartite agreement was arranged between the Government of Manitoba, the federal Government and the Indian leaders of the province. The first agreement was to run for five years. It is just now subject to negotiation and signing for another period of time. The idea was that when the Indian people of Manitoba assumed responsibility for child welfare there was to be a comparable level of service to that provided by the provincial administration.

In Manitoba, the child welfare programs now under the authority of the Indian people of Manitoba have worked extremely well. The goals they set for themselves have been met. They are satisfied with assuming this responsibility. The Province of Manitoba continues to set high standards for child care. The Indian people of Manitoba who have this responsibility find they cannot live up to the provincial standards because the Government here in Ottawa will not provide a comparable level of funding. We have created two situations. We have created two nations. This is where the theme of broken promises is repeated again, again and again. Although the Minister refuses to accept the fact so far that broken promises and broken agreements are the theme right across the country, I think the Assembly of First Nations, the Cree people in the James Bay area of northern Quebec and many other indigenous groups are gathering information which will convince the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. McKnight) that this is the pattern and it is a pattern that has to be broken very quickly.

Mr. Nickerson: Canadian parliamentarians, I am sure, were well represented by the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner) at the CPA conference in Great Britain. I for one, and I am sure most other Members here today, were pleased with the report that he gave us of that meeting. I have a couple of comments to which I would hope the Hon. Member can reply.

First, dealing with his report saying that Commonwealth members were trying to engineer the collapse of the Government of South Africa, I would hope that he is not a victim of Marxist theory according to which you have to bring a government down, get to a state of anarchy and then kind of build up from there. There are great dangers involved with that revolutionary approach, not the least of which is a possible bloodbath. I would hope that what might be achieved is a smooth transition from a racially restricted Government to one that embraces equal opportunity for members of all races.

This brings me to my second point. I have the honour to represent a constituency where about half the population is of aboriginal descent and the other half consists of Canadians of descent from all over the world including a fair proportion of recent immigrants. We, meaning the people of the west and Northwest Territories, for 20 years or so gave a great deal of thought and devoted a lot of energy to what might be the best system of government. We, collectively after that hard work and thought, have come up with the proposition that we should not have racially restricted Governments. It should be one person, one vote regardless of the race and everybody can work together for the Government and for the betterment of all people. That is what we want, which seems to go a little bit against what the Hon. Member was saying.

Would the Hon. Member be so kind as to reconcile on the one hand his abhorrence, which I share, with racially restricted Government in South Africa and, on the other hand, his advocacy of what appear to be racially restricted Governments in Canada? We talk about Indian self-government, Government by people of one race, and the establishment of what could well amount to homelands. How can he reconcile those two?

• (1510)

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, that question can be answered very quickly. First, the Member asks about the South African regime. He asks whether we do not want a smooth transition. Certainly we want a smooth transition. All that is necessary is for the present Government in South Africa to pass a Bill which would extend the franchise to all people who live within the boundaries of that nation. All that is necessary is to give the vote to the people.

The Member wants to draw a very spurious analogy between that situation and the advocacy of self-government for Indian people in Canada. If he will take the time to read what no less a knowledgeable person than the Hon. Mr. Berger has written, he will realize that the definition of apartheid is to refuse access. In the advocacy of self-government to give