

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Yukon. At almost every stop we heard representations both from spokesmen for the Indian brotherhood and for the Métis association, urging the government to take immediate action on this point. They were not so much concerned with rewriting the constitution as with redressing the inequities of government practice ever since the time of confederation, inequities which have brought such strong reaction in recent days from both these groups.

In view of the articulate presentation made by such leaders as Harold Cardinal, who recently published his book "The Unjust Society", and the Indian brotherhood which have brought forward their red paper in answer to the so-called white paper of the government, and in face of strong representations made crystal clear in presentations on behalf of our first Canadians in regard to neglect in the area of aboriginal and treaty rights as well as land claims, I hope the government will now move much more expeditiously than in the past.

One of the reasons I want to raise this matter at this time especially is because the Prime Minister in his reply indicated that all members of the House concurred in the recommendations of the white paper. That, of course, is inaccurate, because in 1963 there was a motion on the Order Paper regarding the establishment of a land claims commission made up of a sufficient number of members to deal adequately with the complexities of this problem. Matters changed, of course, when the Liberal administration came into office.

This question has international implications that can only be sorted out by very careful legal study. The claims affect Indians living on both sides of the border. The United States government is proceeding to deal with the problem on their side, and I point out with reference to land claims in the Northwest Territories that it will take considerable legal documentation and deliberation on the part of expert researchers to settle long standing claims under Treaties 8 and 11.

• (10:10 p.m.)

I trust that the Parliamentary Secretary, who I note is speaking for both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien), will assure us that these important actions will be taken.

Mr. Judd Buchanan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)
[Mr. Dinsdale.]

ern Development): Mr. Speaker, the Indian people have expressed concern about the fulfilment of treaty obligations and the administration of lands and funds as well as their claims to aboriginal rights. They have established a national committee on Indian rights and treaties, which the government is supporting, to do research into the whole question of Indian rights and claims. The government last December also appointed a commissioner to examine the claims of Indians in respect of treaty obligations and the administration of land and funds.

At the meeting between the government and Indian leaders on June 4, it was proposed that a consultative mechanism be established to provide a forum in which consideration could be given to many subjects of concern to Indian groups across the country. Discussions have been going on informally between representatives of the National Indian Brotherhood and the government on this question. At the June meeting the Indian associations also raised the question of how their grievances might be resolved. They were advised that the government would be prepared to examine their proposals. Consultations on this aspect have not yet taken place with Indian leaders.

In addition, it should be noted that an Indian group, the Nishga Tribal Council from British Columbia, has taken court action to affirm their aboriginal rights and, according to our information, an appeal has been taken to the Supreme Court. In view of this it would be inappropriate for the government to comment on this subject at this time.

POWER—SKAGIT RIVER—APPLICATION OF SEATTLE CITY LIGHT COMPANY TO RAISE HEIGHT OF DAM—EFFECT OF INTERNATIONAL RIVER IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Mr. Jerry Pringle (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question today is in connection with a flooding in British Columbia of one of our very beautiful valleys. There is a very serious problem resulting from an arrangement between the province of British Columbia and the city of Seattle department of lighting relating to the flooding of the Skagit valley which is located in Canada. The original arrangement was made in 1942 and provided a power dam to be built for the benefit of power requirements in the U.S.A. on a river running south from Canada into the United States.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that back in 1942, during a time when we were all ravaged