

Plight Of Indians Said Canada's Shame

Halifax — Robert Andras, minister without portfolio, said that the continuing plight of Indians is Canada's "earliest failure" and probably its major national shame. "We must and should bring about a dramatic reversal in our past performance," Mr. Andras told the third annual national citizenship seminar of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews.

"If we fail to do better, all the talk of a just society will have been an empty gesture, the rhetoric of an election campaign, and this we will not accept."

Mr. Andras was appointed to the Trudeau cabinet in July and given special responsibility for developing

new policies in the Indian affairs department.

Mr. Andras said previous government policy on Indians was based on paternalism "ensuring a state of nearly absolute dependence on government."

"And we wondered why the Indian lacked self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-initiative."

He added that the holding of reserve lands in trust and having the government manage resources on the reserves, while earlier considered as a means to protect the Indian people, now merely preserves "a slavery of the spirit."

Canada had broken faith with the Indian people by

failing to fulfil treaty obligations and standing by while the courts stripped Indians of their ancient hunting and fishing rights.

"Some form of redress of these legitimate grievances is needed," he said.

The government must be prepared to break the vicious cycle of dependency in which the Indian finds himself. A start had been made in the consultations with Indian bands on a new Indian Act.

But more must be done. All - Indian organizations, armed with resources and facilities, must be encouraged so they could press demands and protect Indian interests on a basis of equality with government.

But the people of Canada must help. Without it, government efforts would be "an exercise in futility."

The Indian problem was a problem for all Canadians, he said.

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Toronto — Don't call me the Negro MP from Hamilton West, says Lincoln Alexander who was elected Canada's first Negro member of Parliament in the June general election.

"We don't say the Irish MP from such-and-such a constituency, and we all know by now that I am a Negro, so just say that I am the MP from Hamilton West," the Progressive Conservative member said at Negro Freemason Fellowship Day service.

"I am being very cautious right now because I know that many eyes are upon me," he told the audience of 300 Masons from Southern Ontario, Buffalo, Detroit, New York and Montreal.

"I hope my election will inspire many who perhaps thought that this was not possible."



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