

Fork Tonguistics

by LANCE

Thanks should be extended to those who took the time during their summer holidays to look at and talk at the Indians on Lennox Island. Greater thanks are due to those who spent half a day away from their usual activity of capturing the essence of Island culture, getting to know the problems of the Indians, and expending a greater effort publishing an article which indicated how the Indians have failed to keep abreast of their problems. It is refreshing to read an article which has not lampooned the Department of Indian Affairs and our government. It illustrated nicely what Indian Affairs people have been saying for a long time; our native peoples are not ready to handle their own affairs.

Canadians are tired of hearing this constant bickering by their native peoples. What do the Indians want anyway? They constantly complain about the dreadful conditions of their reservations, the lack of equal opportunity, white prejudice, and so forth and so forth. To meet these complaints our government meekly admitted its past mistakes with regard to its Indian policy. Note this statement by Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. John MacDonald to the Senate Committee on Poverty:

"...There have been, basically, three weaknesses in our approach to this matter: we have been paternalistic, even though it has been benevolent; we have tackled the problem of poverty in a fragmented and discriminatory rather than an integrated way; and we have misjudged the degree of competence required in human relations, and in the evolution and implementation of effective policies.

Moreover, our government has developed a new formula and policy on the advice of its non-Indian Indian expert. This policy gives the Indian



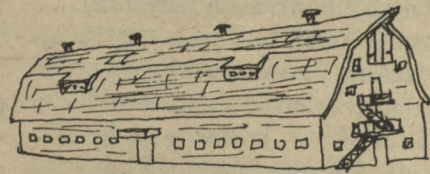
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every opportunity to become a white man and fit into our great Canadian Mosaic. What more can they ask for? After all isn't the problem of the Indians their Indianness - Their discriminatory Indian status? Says Mr. Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, "Get rid of the INDIAN ACT. Treat Indians as any other Canadians." For how else are we to rid our society of prejudice against the Indians. The solution is simple for Mr. Trudeau: Get rid of the Indians. Say Mr. Trudeau, "Forget the treaties. Let the Indians become Canadians."

What is perplexing is the Indians' response to our government's understanding and sense of justice.

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