

NY FIRST PAGE
Honorary Princess Voices Plea
To Better Indian's Legal Status

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An honorary princess of Alberta's Stony Tribe yesterday offered a plea for improvement in the Indian's legal status.

Mrs. John C. Gorman, wife of a Calgary lawyer, presented a detailed brief to the Canadian Bar Association's Civil Liberties Section. She said the Indian "definitely has legal status inferior to an average Canadian."

Indians living on reserves came under a kind of benign dictatorship by the government, she said. If, as provided for under the Federal Indian Act, they once left the reserve and were enfranchised as Canadian citizens, neither they nor their children could ever return as full members.

"These terms make the Indian dread enfranchisement," she said. "To him it is a threat rather than a privilege. . . ."

Nearly every aspect of the life of the reserve Indian "is subject to the discretion or consent of either the Department of Indian Affairs or the cabinet." In neither case could the Indian, who is not allowed to vote, have a voice in the appointment of those who rule him.

Mrs. Gordon, an honorary princess of the Stony tribe at Morle, Alta., north-west of Calgary, suggested that a section be added to the present Indian Act making possible an appeal to the courts on Indian affairs rulings.

At present the Indian affairs branch comes under Immigration Minister Pickersgill's jurisdiction. His ruling on the affairs of reserve Indians are not subject to appeal.

Mrs. Gorman said "in all fairness to the government this dictatorship is . . . for the Indian's protection."

The fact remained, however,

that if the Indian affairs branch chose "not to act in the Indian's better interest a great injustice can be done."

The Civil Liberties Section applauded the slim, dark lawyer's wife when she concluded her brief which was supported by a similar plea from the Prince Edward Island branch of the Association.

The section decided to establish a three-man committee to look into the whole problem of the Indian's rights and report to the next annual meeting.