

### *Government Orders*

closed doors. As it stands, Bill C-33 allows for future negotiations and amendments to be decided by cabinet alone. This is another dangerous precedent, not only with these negotiations but with future government negotiations.

Is this how the government intends to conduct its business? Is this the new direction of the Liberal government? This makes a very sad joke of the red book commitments of more and open democratic government.

Let me remind the government once again of its red book commitments and ask it to consider very carefully in light of this legislation. The red book says open government will be the watch word of the Liberal program. It is a shame that in reality these words are nothing but false promises.

Why is this government in this bill planning to do business behind closed doors at the cabinet level? It clearly conflicts with the red book commitment of open government.

Legislation should not be amended by a cabinet order. Legislation should be brought forward to this House, openly debated by each member elected here today.

The laws of Canada must be created through democratic procedures to reflect the democratic system of every Parliamentarian in this House. The creation of new laws must be carried out in a fair and, I remind the House, open manner. Each elected parliamentarian represents his constituents in every vote to create or amend laws.

In all fairness to the people of Canada who put us here today, every parliamentarian must be allowed to participate in this democratic process. This government has often lauded the principle that members are elected to represent their constituents' wishes in this House. However, cabinet on its own is not a democratic representation of the people and should not make legislative commitments.

• (2025)

If we are to allow cabinet to change and revise law without the consent of Parliament then why have we elected 295 members of Parliament when we only need 15 cabinet members to run the country? Is this the kind of red book democracy that we have been hearing about? Canadians deserve fair representation and this means bringing legislation before this House for all members to consider and debate in this House before it is passed.

The scope of orders in council regarding future agreements is too large because this is little more than government by cabinet decree.

Additionally, there are several other areas of concern in this bill. For example, section 14 states that there shall be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund the sums that are required to meet

the monetary obligations of Canada under chapter 19. This is in the bill.

According to the revision of this section more than \$242 million will be allocated to the 14 native bands which have agreed to the umbrella settlement with the federal government. Yet this government has not yet determined what its financial obligations toward these bands are. This bill gives money to native government without any obligation, requirement or mechanism to ensure that the money is distributed fairly. Where is the financial responsibility?

When Canadians give their hard earned tax dollars to the government there is a measure of trust involved in the exchange. Canadians expect their government to be fiscally responsible and this section of the act clearly does not show that responsibility.

I am sure that the government is aware of the need for financial responsibility and financial accountability to the Canadian people. I believe that is another red book commitment. Yet in this agreement the government arbitrarily provides a settlement that will amount to some \$242 million and does not expect any financial accountability in return.

Every individual is financially accountable to this government at the end of each year. Each of us here is expected to fill out our income tax forms and account for our earnings. Government departments, federally and provincially, are all accountable to the people. Why then are native groups exempt from this? There must be a system of financial accountability entrenched within this bill.

Another area of concern is the section that gives the provisions of land claims or transboundary agreements still to be negotiated paramountcy over all federal and territorial laws. This means that these agreements and amendments to these agreements can supersede all laws of Canada. Federal and territorial laws must be paramount over all agreements in Canada. This should not even have to be a question. It should not even have to be discussed at this point.

There can only be one set of laws to govern the people of Canada. We cannot have one set of laws to apply to one group and another set of laws to apply to another. This is clearly a dangerous precedent. It sets up two nations. It sets one group of Canadians apart from the laws that govern Canada and another group of Canadians.

In summary, Canada is one nation. We must treat all Canadians equally under one law, not two or three sets of laws.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.