

certain degree of control over only one-quarter of 1 per cent of the land in Canada. I say only "a certain degree of control" because we know that Indian lands are administered under the authority of the Indian Act and that the Department of Indian Affairs has a great deal to say about how that land is used.

Also we must talk about resources at the upcoming First Ministers' Conference. When the country was explored and then settled, the indigenous people of Canada were the people who controlled wildlife resources and the fishery. It was their livelihood and it gave their lives meaning. Today we have court cases and disputes about control and jurisdiction over wildlife resources and the fishery. Surely Canada is mature enough, and surely there are those people in the country who can provide leadership, so that we can arrange some kind of co-management agreements which will work, and quit engaging in terrible confrontations such as the one we saw in the Province of British Columbia when the federal Department of Fisheries engaged in hand-to-hand combat with native people over the fishery. I felt ashamed to see that on television. We cannot blame the fisheries officers; they are simply carrying out orders based upon a policy made by the central Government. We must talk about those matters and resolve the question of wildlife and fishery resources.

In respect of other resources, there must be a facing up to the reality that the revenues which flow from resource development must be shared in one way or another with the original peoples of Canada. Finally, we must be very practical, serious, and detailed about the legal and financial relationships between the Government of Canada and the native people.

I do not want to repeat the Manitoba situation again because there have been questions about it in the House, but it resulted from an unsatisfactory financial regime between the Government of Canada and the Indian people in that province who were given the responsibility of providing local services.

We require what was contained in the report of the special committee on Indian self-government—nothing other than a new, fresh, workable relationship between the central Government, of which we are a part in one way or another, and the Indian people of Canada, the indigenous people of Canada, the original inhabitants of the country. Surely to goodness we can accomplish that. I think the rest of the world is watching carefully to see whether we can provide leadership in this area. The opportunities are present. If we fail at the next First Ministers Conference, it will be to the lasting shame of our great country.

Let me say that the present policy of Indian self-government devised by the Department of Indian Affairs is totally unacceptable. It is too slow, and it is too restrictive. I should like to refer to the national management plan in respect of self-government to the year 1990. It indicates that from the adoption of the federal Government's present self-government policy to April 1, 1988, a minimum of five Indian bands and Inuit communities are expected to be under the self-government regime. Can we imagine anything moving as slowly as that? If we talk with the Sechelt people of British Columbia,

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who just yesterday finally had their self-government Bill proclaimed, they will say that that is the pace at which we are moving. What is even more disturbing from the management plan is that up to 1990 we expect a minimum of 20 Indian bands and Inuit communities to be under the self-government regime. At that pace, the Department of Indian Affairs will be with us another 100 years. That is exactly what some of us anticipated when the Department of Indian Affairs embraced the policy of self-government and said that it would make the policy work. It is going to make it work on its terms. It is going to guarantee its own longevity. It is going to be around for a very long time and the pace is going to be as slow as all of that.

● (1500)

The aboriginal peoples of this country are becoming impatient. They want decisive action. Let no one misunderstand what they are seeking to do. In advocating self-government they are not seeking to separate from the rest of us. There is no question of that at all. They are seeking to join Confederation, to become working partners with the rest of us so we can have effective government at all levels. No matter how it is worked out, what the indigenous people of Canada are seeking is to have more control over their own affairs.

In the closing minutes, if I have enough time, permit me perhaps to quote two of the leading spokesmen in the indigenous community who can speak with far more authority on this than I could ever hope to. Dorothy Wabisca, Vice-President of the Native Council of Canada, says:

Self-government includes the right to have a meaningful say in our day-to-day lives.

What could be more reasonable than that? Who among us in this House of Commons would want to have every aspect of our lives rigidly controlled by an Act of Parliament? We would be the first to be screaming for emancipation. Yet the indigenous people of Canada live under an authoritarian Act of this House called the Indian Act. It is an intolerable situation. I turn to another leading spokesman, Mr. Georges Erasmus, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, who says:

What we are after is power where it is possible and in as many cases as is logical and reasonable for the First Nations to control their own lives without influence.

I think that says it all, Mr. Speaker. I intend in the course of this session to introduce a resolution which will support what will take place at the First Ministers' Conference. I will be asking all Hon. Members to support that resolution not only by making good speeches but by standing in their places and, when you call the vote, Sir, saying yea and not nay.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear from the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner) about the Commonwealth Conference which he attended. I share his pride and agree with the position that Canada has taken regarding apartheid. I would like to ask him about the situation here at home. I know he is interested in native children as well as in native communities. I know that he will share some of the concerns that we have had in the Special