

Routine Proceedings

member has said that he feels that he made that in good faith. The hon. minister has withdrawn any suggestion that there was any deliberateness on the part of the hon. member and I think that that is where the matter must end.

Again, it is an example of how careful we do have to be, even in debate, and even in the rough and tumble of exchanges in this place.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Government's response to one petition.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni) moved:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, presented to the House on Thursday, March 29, 1990, be concurred in.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to take this opportunity to rise in the House and request that the House concur in the second report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

As the House will be aware, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, over the period of last winter and last spring, took it upon itself to interview leaders of the national and regional aboriginal organizations in order to develop an agenda that Parliament, the government and the people of Canada could deal with through the nineties, to address, as per the title of our report which is called *The Unfinished Business Between Canada and its Aboriginal Peoples*.

As a result of this investigation carried out by the standing committee, we identified an agenda of approximately 30 items, extremely complex and detailed items, identified thanks to the assistance of the aboriginal leadership of Canada. There were 30 items which represent the outstanding grievances of aboriginal people in Canada and also represent what aboriginal people would like to see dealt with in the 1990s.

It would be appropriate, although this is not one of the recommendations in the report, that Canada consider the decade of the nineties as the decade in which we, as Parliament and we as a people, commit ourselves to finishing that unfinished business remaining between us and our aboriginal people.

I understand that the government is required to respond to the reports of select standing committees within a certain period of time. I believe that period is 120 days. Well, 120 days has expired and what response have we received from the government on this detailed report, concurred in by all parties represented on that committee?

I will tell you how the government responded to that report, Madam Speaker. The Secretary of State for Canada cancelled funding for aboriginal representative organizations, cancelled funding for native communications, newspapers, reduced funding for organizations such as friendship centres and native broadcasting organizations. The government has consistently refused to set up an institute, again through the Secretary of State, to protect aboriginal languages which are dying out in this country at a great rate. Yet at the same time it set up an institute for heritage languages that have a base overseas. Aboriginal languages are the languages resident in Canada, born in this country. If they die out here, they will not remain anywhere in the world. Yet the Secretary of State refused to set up an institute for aboriginal languages, as proposed by one of my Liberal colleagues.

There have been continued delays and obstruction by the Minister of Indian Affairs to the settlement of important native claims and grievances. That, along with the funding cancellations, has led to the incidents we saw this summer. The refusal of the government to allow natives to be recognized, either in the constitutional process or recognized as distinct and founding peoples in