

*The Constitution*

In the opening paragraph the Prime Minister said we had a Constitution that still needs to define the place of our aboriginal peoples in Canadian society. This was only the beginning, but it was a beginning that will reject some of the totally unacceptable approaches of the past; the approach of what sometimes is termed assimilation or termination, an attempt to absorb aboriginal peoples into the mainstream of Canadian society and cause them to lose their identity and distinctiveness. The statement categorically rejects that approach. We know that in the past this has been tried by a variety of means.

The opening statement also rejected the possibility that we could have in this country complete, total sovereign enclaves existing in isolation from the rest of the country. That, of course, is not realistic, and it offers no real hope for aboriginal peoples. The real hope is to become full and complete partners in Confederation. Therefore, the Prime Minister indicated that it was something between assimilation on the one hand, which had to be totally rejected, and something else on the other hand which has been described as sovereignty and which has no basis in realism. It is looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses.

To allow the aboriginal peoples to become full partners in Confederation also means that there will be an end to the paternalistic approach to these people, as if their affairs need to be managed by someone else; that there needs to be an entire department of well-meaning people who are going to be sure that Indian people are not alienated from their land; to be sure that Indian people are going to be able to look after their capital trust funds and that they will be doled out in amounts they will be able to manage, that we will not actively encourage independence by way of economic development—how much better it is to dole out small amounts of money and keep a half million people or more dependent upon the Government of Canada through social assistance. To become full partners in Confederation means the end of all of that. It means a new beginning.

The Prime Minister went on to say very clearly in his statement, reflecting what parliamentarians have been hearing for a long time, that the heart of the matter is to come to that moment in the constitutional discussions within the next few years when we will recognize the right of aboriginal peoples, Indians, Inuit and Metis, to manage their own affairs.

The task force hopes to define for Parliament and explain to the people of Canada exactly what Indian self-government means. We do emphasize that it means above all that they are going to be part and parcel of the Canadian Confederation. They are going to participate in it along with the Premiers, the leaders of the Territorial Governments, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice at conferences which are going to define and describe their future.

• (1810)

I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that it will not be enough as we forge ahead toward that definition based on this very admirable Accord, an Accord which is just a beginning. I compliment the Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan), and I share the sentiment of all the other Members of the House

who have praised him for his good work at that conference, but it is a beginning. The next step must be the recognition of aboriginal peoples' ability to manage their own affairs. Along with that, Sir, must go the economic wherewithal to manage their own affairs.

Under Section 36, Parts I and II of the Constitution, we have provided for the Provinces the economic base to manage their own affairs within the jurisdiction assigned to them. That same step, Mr. Speaker, must be taken when we recognize Indian self-government. To simply recognize it and let it lie there as a constitutional right and to allow the present arrangement, relationship and dependency to be perpetuated will not be satisfactory. We must follow the example set by the agreement we have with the Provinces by saying: "We recognize you, we will negotiate your jurisdiction and we will provide you with the economic wherewithal so that you can realize your own destiny, so that you can establish your own priorities and so that you can give the leadership to your people that you have always wanted to give but that has been frustrated for hundreds of years because of the domination of one level of Government over your governments."

I conclude, Mr. Speaker, by simply saying that I think we have made a remarkable and amazing beginning and I applaud and commend the Minister of Justice and the Government of Canada for setting us off on the right road. I look forward to seeing where this process will lead us in the next decade and beyond.

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, I will not keep the debate going for very much longer, but as the representative of the Sarcee, Stony and Blackfoot reserves I do want to make one or two comments on this historic occasion.

As so many Members have said, this is the beginning, and that is really all that it is. It is the beginning of negotiations. I would like to make some suggestions in regard to the continuation of these negotiations.

When I was with the Department of Highways in Alberta, I had the responsibility of negotiating with the Stony Indians for a right-of-way for the TransCanada Highway through their reserve. I spent many, many hours listening to the elderly chiefs in the band councils. One of the things that sticks in my mind is that time and time again the elderly chiefs outlined, sometimes in their own language which was interpreted and sometimes in good English, how the white man had deceived them. That was the biggest obstacle we had to overcome. They had learned to disbelieve white men because they had been deceived so many times.

I would like to suggest to those who do the negotiating now that we must be honest with our Indian friends, we must be honest with our Metis friends and we must be honest with our Inuit friends. There has been too much deceit on the part of white man in order to take advantage of these people. I believe that should be the base upon which we start to build a new relationship with native people of the country.

I remember one chief who must have been 90 years old. He had a tremendous memory. I think they called him Chief Buffalo Robe. He was a very religious man who was converted