

*Supply*

discussed and what the possible parameters are for a subsequent decision. That is one aspect of the negotiation process that is very faulty.

Another problem occurring and giving rise to concern is the various definitions. For example, there are a great number of Canadians who thought this negotiation process would be addressed to existing treaties or the historical treaties. I believe the government approach was to negotiate those treaties and come up with an extinguishment thereof, then satisfy that commitment made in our history and then get on to building life as Canadians in unity. What we are hearing now are things like modern treaties, living treaties, aboriginal rights, extinguishment. We do not really know what these terms mean. This again is causing concern.

• (1310)

When the Hamilton report came out it tried to address the extinguishment and aboriginal rights. One of the things identified in the Hamilton report, or before that, is that when the aboriginals go in to negotiate a treaty they leave all their rights at the door. They go in trying to see what they can get. That is not cricket in negotiations. When a negotiation is entered into, one does have rights somewhere which should be identified. Even between management and labour the previous contract is a starting point.

One of the things that is happening is the concept of rights. What does that mean? The Hamilton report tries to address it with the following point of view. When a treaty is negotiated, the decisions reached by all parties become the rights of all parties and the next time a treaty is negotiated it commences with those rights. The report also suggests we address the extinguishment aspect of this. Once the topic has been addressed and agreed on it is extinguished and no longer comes up. I believe there is an opening clause. If not, there should be an opening clause so that when society changes that can come back to the table.

There is some sort of finality which could address the extinguishment. That tends to give rise to where this modern treaty or the living treaty comes into play. I do not believe this concept was apparent when the original policy was established. Unless we hear more information as to where this kind of thing can lead us, that in itself will provide concern.

To get back to the process and concern aspect of it, there is concern from a parliamentary point of view of actually getting to the point. I do not wish to address the contents of the bill on the B.C. commission at this point. My point is we had a bill come into the House for debate that was actually established by an agreement between three parties that had representatives

there. The House was actually debating something that had already been established.

I can understand that the possibility of defeating that bill creates a horrendous amount of work. We would have to backtrack to all that was done before that. However, because these are our representatives, it could possibly have been debated in the House before the parties went into agreement and that there were some parameters set so that we knew what was going to be on that table when the negotiations were undertaken.

Another thing that comes out of this when we are talking about cultural groups again is the process taking place. This concern arises when we hear such things as aboriginals referring to themselves as nations. The obvious conclusion to that would be nations within a nation. The perception of how that would work is unknown. That is a concern to us.

We also must look at the unity point of view. We have on the one hand a negotiation process that could feasibly terminate in this nations within nation concept or be the first step toward that in our future. On the other hand we have a parliamentary kind of process going on with the Quebec situation, which is again a divisiveness kind of thing. I should restrict my remarks to the aboriginal process. But are we creating through this process another possibility to be debating unity somewhere down the line? I have some concerns on that.

• (1315)

What we have to look at in this whole thing—and British Columbia is trying to get the message across to Canadians—is that a lack of information is getting out to the people. We do not know what is being discussed at the table. We are sitting here wondering with what we will be left.

The counter argument to that is we do have representatives there. My point is that they have not come out and discussed things with whoever they are representing and then taken that information back to the table.

To give my comments more clarity, think of management and union negotiations. We know what these people are talking about behind closed doors. We know all the parameters of it, but we know that their discussions will eventually lead to something. We may not get all we want, but we might get part of what we want.

I suggest very strongly to the government that it can no longer negotiate behind closed doors. It has to be up front. B.C. is in a position that it is much further ahead than the rest of the country on this negotiation situation. If we are having problems in British Columbia, then it is going to transfer all across this country as we go along, unless we change some of the things we are doing in the process right now. Municipal governments have to be informed of how their concerns get represented at that table and there has to be a mechanism for that to occur, et cetera.