

*Government Orders*

Our ancestors welcomed many nations that came to this land. Today many nations benefit from the rich resources of this country. As aboriginal people, we seem to be living in a third world country in our own homeland. We have always declared that the creator put us here and the creator will always honour that, no matter what governments do, how they cut it and slice this country. The country will always be aboriginal land, Canada.

Today we are talking about the B.C. Treaty Commission. Today we are also facing another crisis dealing with Quebec, another incident that would divide Canada. If it is the will of God to honour the people he placed here, the aboriginal people, the original inhabitants of this land, then Quebec cannot separate. We have put our faith in the creator to sustain us. This institution is based on that. The Canadian Constitution is based on that. As a matter of fact it is written on a piece of paper I have that in the principles of Christianity is found the liberty that has made Canada great. It is so great that in the United Nations' annual listing of the world's countries for 1994 Canada was ranked first out of 173.

• (1230)

Canada has benefited from the relationship with the aboriginal people. When we make treaties it has to be understood by every Canadian that we are here to co-exist, to welcome the Europeans, to live side by side with each other, to respect and honour each other and not to dominate. These treaties must also have the view and philosophy of the First Nations in this country because the creator put us here. We could not have given the land to anyone because we do not own it. We could only share the land and resources that would benefit everybody else in this country.

We did not accept the European concept of land tenure which is to have property, to see it as a commodity and to exploit and develop it for the purposes of a company or one or a few individuals. Maybe that is why opposition members are afraid of the land claims we are making. Maybe they think we may become like them. We may acquire all these things and not share them. In assessing these things we tend to assess the successes of our land claims and businesses in our communities based on European values and not in relation to some of the traditional ancient values we used to have. However, they are coming back again today.

We have to get back to the ancient roots because we are very close to the creator. The land has caused so much hurt. Look at the Oka crisis. Corporal Lemay died in that situation because the Mohawks did not want their ancestral burial grounds decimated. This summer in Ipperwash, Anthony "Dudley" George was killed as a result of land, another aboriginal burial ground.

These issues have to be resolved. They have to be dealt with. Our way of thinking and our philosophy are ones that have always been shared with other First Nations in this country, to

share what we have, to share the land and resources. If we were to add up what it means in dollars and cents over the last 500 years I do not think it would even represent 1 per cent of the compensation to the aboriginal peoples. We probably would have been the wealthiest people in the world if we had been greedy and kept everything for ourselves. However, that was not our way of thinking.

That is why I am so honoured and humbled to be here, to be in this House which was created on the principles I espoused and which this place has sanctified to say all these things. All of us have to be reminded daily because we make mistakes as human beings. Personally, it has been a difficult journey for me to be involved in mainstream politics, provincially, nationally and internationally, in promoting this kind of philosophy.

• (1235)

The world's needs have come together because there is a global economy, a global movement which is happening, which is tearing our communities apart. It is influencing the communities in Canada. It is not just the aboriginal people, but Canadians as well. They feel helpless. They distrust governments. We have to restore trust.

I support Bill C-107. It will begin the treaty making process in British Columbia where treaties have not been made in the past, except for northeastern B.C., in the Peace River area, where Treaty No. 8 was signed years ago, as well as the treaty concerning Vancouver Island. However, most of British Columbia has never been in the treaty making process where land has been settled.

Our rights have never been extinguished. The Canadian Constitution has recognized that. There is not a requirement under the Constitution for any citizen or any nation to give up rights; rather, those rights which are recognized and affirmed in the Canadian Constitution should be expanded and defined. People are concerned about extinguishing land claims. They feel there should no longer be a requirement to extinguish land claims.

Several reports have been made to government over the past years. One was the 1985 Coolican report entitled: "Living Treaties, Lasting Agreements" which determined that extinguishing land claims were no longer an option. Today there is another report entitled: "Canada and Aboriginal Peoples: A New Partnership" authored by A.C. Hamilton. That report will be discussed in the near future. There was also the interim report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples entitled: "Treaty Making in the Spirit of Co-existence: An Alternative to Extinguishment". That report is also an alternative to extinguishing land claims.

All of those reports suggest a new approach. All of them ask that we come together, that we respect each other and that we negotiate in good faith. The rights of all individuals must be recognized. Whether they be aboriginal, government, business,