

### Government Orders

I have some difficulty understanding why, in 1994, we have yet to clear up this ambiguity. I think back to a time full of promise when, in 1969, the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau promised action to bring about the full participation of native communities. Even then, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, today the honourable the Prime Minister, said that the legislative and constitutional basis of discrimination must be removed. The government of the day was adamant that services must come through the same channels and from the same government agencies for all Canadians. The lawful obligations of natives must be recognized and, to this end, responsibility for administering native lands must be transferred to native communities.

Despite the Trudeau era and his minister, 25 years later, the problem of native self-government has yet to be resolved. Why is this? Because the promised action was never taken, despite the fact that, on June 25, 1969, the Minister of Indian Affairs made a commitment to this House to act so as to give natives control over and title to their lands. Listen to what was said at the time. The minister promised to transfer to the provinces federal funds normally provided for native programs so that the provinces could take over the same responsibilities for natives that they had for other citizens in their provinces. He was committed to dismantling the department of Indian affairs and giving its mandate to other federal departments.

• (1540)

What was this minister talking about? He was talking of transferring jurisdictions to the provinces, according to the Trudeau government; of eliminating costly and unproductive duplication and overlap. What did he actually do? The department is still in place. It will spend over \$5 billion. As for transferring jurisdictions, in today's federal arena, only the Bloc Quebecois maintains that it is necessary.

The Sahtu agreement paves the way to something other than reserves for Natives. The Sahtu lands will fall under two categories: those covered by the regulations and municipal lands.

In the case of regulated lands, certain special conditions will ensure the Dene and Metis' title to the lands. These lands cannot be sold, mortgaged, seized or expropriated without being replaced. Municipal lands, on the other hand, can be sold or ceded, but if it is to an individual, they will no longer belong to the Sahtu. The Sahtu's improved municipal lands will be taxable, but those that are not improved will be tax-exempt.

This issue of ownership raises several questions, especially since the Native crisis of the summer of 1990. This crisis arose from claims for territorial autonomy and self-government. The claims made at that time almost amounted to an offense affecting

urban areas inhabited by thousands of people with deep roots in their community.

In my mind, the Bloc Quebecois' support of the agreement with the Sahtu Dene and Metis does not mean opening the door to all land claims from a distant past. Neither the Bloc Quebecois nor any other political party can recognize the rights of one people at the expense of another. That is why negotiations on self-government are so sensitive. We must consider these negotiations in the light of today's realities, without forgetting the past, of course, but by acknowledging that lasting relations are based on mutual respect.

As the member for Châteauguay where the Kahnawake reserve is located, I know that this agreement is good. I salute the Mackenzie Valley agreement; I hope that it is only recognizing today's reality, above all, and that it does not discriminate against anyone.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):**

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktituk.]

[English]

I rise to address the House on Bill C-16, the Sahtu Dene and Metis Land Claim Settlement Act.

I am extremely pleased to speak in support of the legislation. Bill C-16 fulfils one of the most important commitments made in the red book, a commitment to resolve outstanding land claims. As has been stated on a number of occasions this is a priority for the government.

In the speech from the throne the government made a more specific commitment to put before Parliament legislation to further the implementation of northern claim settlements. Bill C-16 is such legislation. It is an action to back up our words.

• (1545)

Bill C-16 completes some unfinished business. It is a result of governments and aboriginal people working together in a new partnership of trust and mutual respect to ensure more certain and prosperous futures for all northerners.

As hon. members are aware, Bill C-16 implements the land claims agreement signed last September by Canada and the Sahtu Tribal Council, which represents some 2,000 Dene and Metis in the Sahtu settlement area of the Northwest Territories.

In the ratification vote held last July, 87 per cent of the Dene and 99 per cent of the Metis were in favour of the agreement. Voter turnout was very high.

As the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has stated, the House is now being asked to support the wishes of the Sahtu Dene and Metis as expressed in their ratification vote. I should say that the interests of the non-aboriginal people, northerners and all Canadians are amply protected in the agreement. The certainty of land ownership and rights provided