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educational systems which reflect fundamental attitudes and values of Indian and aboriginal culture and tradition. Of course it does. What Hon. Member would debate, argue, or take exception to that? None of us, because it is what controlling education is about.

How does the Department of Indian Affairs interpret Indian control of Indian education? The Department has interpreted it to mean the administration of funds for certain aspects of education managed under federal guidelines and regulations. That is quite different. The implications of that may escape many. However, if they are seeking to control their own educational system, which is a way of enhancing their culture and giving it new life, that difference takes on a very great magnitude.

Recently I had the opportunity to go to Queen's University in Kingston which has an Institute on Intergovernmental Affairs. It sponsored a day-long workshop on aboriginal self-government called "The Search for Accommodation". As I participated in the workshop, it crossed my mind that one of the problems of those of us in Canada who are non-native Canadians is that we have not fully understood or appreciated the magnitude of the accommodation which has already been made for our patterns of settlement and development. For example, the question about natural resources posed to my hon. friend fits clearly into that category. We have not comprehended the magnitude of the accommodation which has been made for us. However, as we move toward the First Ministers' Conference at the end of next week, we have the opportunity to reciprocate and respond to that accommodation.

We can do it by putting into our Constitution a recognition of a right, which was never relinquished or given up; a right which could easily be accommodated in our federal system; a right which would give aboriginal people of the country a new meaning, a new sense of their own destiny, and a new control over their future which heretofore they have not had.

The special committee agreed unanimously that there must be in the Constitution a recognition of the inherent and inalienable right of Indian people and aboriginal people to be self-governing.

We cannot put that right in the Constitution and immediately hedge it in on every side, limit it, and confine it. However, that is the proposal which is being put forward by the federal Government at the present time. Even the Province of Nova Scotia, in its participation, has seen the folly of this. All aboriginal leaders find it to be unacceptable.

For example, the federal proposal indicates that the right to Indian self-government exists, but that it can only be recognized in accord with or subject to negotiated agreements. Madam Speaker, you know all about your rights and Canadians know all about their rights under our Charter. Would any of us allow our rights to be contingent rights? Would we say that our rights of conscience, religion, association, and assembly, those fundamental and democratic rights, are

contingent rights and that they only exist if we can negotiate agreements with Governments, and that only once we have negotiated those agreements we have those rights?

The argument that if we have a free-standing and inherent right of aboriginal self-government in the Constitution, the courts will be plugged with aboriginal people seeking a definition, seeking substance, and seeking an order to impose self-government, is a false fear. I suggest, further, that it is a big lie. Aboriginal people do not want to go the court route. They want to negotiate self-government, jurisdiction, financial agreements, and resource sharing. If they had wanted to go to the courts, they would have gone a long time ago under Section 35. It is a powerful section. They could have had all kinds of settlements out of Section 35. Only in British Columbia has that route been followed because the province refused to negotiate with aboriginal people there.

● (1530)

If we succeed next week in having a constitutional amendment that recognizes aboriginal self-government, we do not need to worry about people rushing headlong to the courts. But if we fail next week, there will be no other recourse. What our leaders fear most, namely, court action after court action, will take place because we will have failed at the First Ministers' Conference on aboriginal rights related to self-government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. St. Julien: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner) is a staunch defender of Canada's aboriginal people and I commend him for his dedication.

Earlier this week I sent a telegram to Quebec Premier Bourassa to urge him to be in Ottawa next March 26 and 27. When it comes to defending the interests of Quebec and aboriginal people, I think that Mr. Bourassa is an outstanding negotiator. Quebec's aboriginal people need him personally at this conference.

Quebec seems to be content with standing on the station platform and watching the train go by as last minute preparations are being made for the constitutional negotiations on aboriginal issues. Native leaders in Quebec and the rest of Canada are very concerned and disappointed that Mr. Bourassa should take such an attitude. Native people seek to have their political power within the federation enshrined in Canada's Constitution. Why stay away from this conference? More than anybody else, Quebecers are dutybound to speak up for the first inhabitants of Canada.

That was a preamble, Madam Speaker, and now here is my question. The greatness of a nation is measured in terms of respect for its minorities. Quebec Government officials must confirm their Amerindian and Inuit policy under which they should actively participate in the constitutional conference and attempt to convince the reluctant provinces that Quebec native people do have legitimate claims. Would the Hon. Member tell me whether the Leader of the Liberal Opposition has done