

Supply

people in, but by a process of coat-tailing, a process by which they are subordinated to the wider constitutional process.

The territorial governments, and all the people of the Northwest and Yukon Territories, are disappointed with the Meech Lake Agreement. They felt that there was an implied commitment on behalf of the Governments of Canada that they would be admitted to Confederation when the time was due. There is a unanimity of territorial opinion on this point. The Territories have seen the amending formula slide from the pre-1982 position, that only the federal Government's say-so was required, to the 1982-87 position of the seven provinces, 50 per cent rule, to the 1987-onward position which seems to say that there must be unanimity to allow a new territory into Confederation.

The Government Leader in the Yukon said "We have become second-class citizens". Others have compared the situation now to that of foreign countries that might seek admission into the Canadian federation. Therefore it is not surprising that the governments have filed, in their own Supreme Courts, actions designed to object to and to state their objection to the Meech Lake Accord.

The letter that I saw recently from the Prime Minister concerning the admission, eventually, of the Territories, whether it be after, or concurrent with, the division of the Northwest Territories into Nunavut and Denendeh, seems to equate the admission of new provinces with a *de facto* constitutional amendment. That surely is at variance with our history, and at variance with the process that brought Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba into Confederation. Indeed, I feel that it is somewhat sad that we do not have the sort of oral history within the majority cultures in the country that would have provided us with some examples of the hopes and aspirations of what were then the Northwest Territories and which are now Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Canadians are very disturbed by the social and economic inequities that aboriginal peoples face. The average family income is much lower while unemployment is much higher. Indeed, no statistical social measure seems to be positive in the case of the comparison between the aboriginal people of the country and the wider society.

Those conditions can only be alleviated by providing a framework under which aboriginal people will be able to develop their communities as their own centres of cultural integrity, of economic opportunity and of administrative and political development. These are the goals of aboriginal self-government.

The letter that the aboriginal summit, the four major national groups, sent to the Prime Minister contains the aboriginal peoples' commitment to constitutional development within Canada, a commitment that is there despite all the problems, a commitment that is part and parcel of the emerging and encouraging renaissance that aboriginal peoples and aboriginal communities are undergoing in this country. Despite all the rejections it states "We believe that the

Constitution must stand as a symbol of hope and inspiration for aboriginal peoples, as well as for other peoples of Canada". The aboriginal commitment to the Constitution of Canada is there. They only desire to be part of the circle of Confederation.

It is obvious, and not only through hindsight, that the Meech Lake Accord could not of itself bring aboriginal people into the Canadian Confederation because they, after all, were not represented at that meeting. What is most insulting and most discouraging to aboriginal people and their leaders is the apparent omission of any framework, any hint of the process, that will eventually bring them into the Constitution. Aboriginal self-government rights in the Meech Lake Accord are relegated to the level of "other matters". Surely, that must be a profound criticism of the lack of a continuing high priority awareness that all our leaders should be bringing to the situation of aboriginal people in this country.

On May 27, 1987, the aboriginal summit wrote the Prime Minister outlining eight points. I will go through them briefly. They are: explicit constitutional recognition; a guarantee of non-derogation and non-abrogation; a guarantee that opting-out provisions will not prevent aboriginal people from delivering national programs through their own governments; a guarantee that the Territories will be admissible on the same basis as before; that aboriginal people will be able to participate directly on matters that affect them such as fisheries; that they will be able to negotiate constitutional provisions that might arise out of the Meech Lake Accord and affect them; and, finally, a timetable. Out of those eight legitimate claims that the aboriginal people made, only one, the non-derogation clause, was actually recognized.

We have from *Le Droit* of Ottawa:

[Translation]

—the headline:

NATIVE PEOPLES ASTONISHED.

And they have every reason to be, Mr. Speaker, as Konrad Sioui, regional leader for Quebec of the Assembly of First Nations pointed out:

"The federal Government is handing over to the provinces areas that until now were under federal jurisdiction. And from now on, the provinces will be free to opt out of certain shared cost programs. This means that federal programs for native peoples may be turned over to the provinces, which may decide either to change them or drop them altogether."

• (1530)

[English]

That is a major concern of aboriginal people who, after all, are in the early stages of being able to offer those programs through their own Governments.

I should like to refer to the fisheries. The number two item in the Meech Lake Accord after Senate reform—and I do not want to get started on it because I could say so much—is the fisheries. Surely that is something on which the aboriginal