

*Government Orders*

The province-wide treaty negotiations advisory committee meets on a regular basis to provide advice to both the federal and provincial governments on sectorial issues such as fisheries, energy, petroleum and mineral resources; lands and forests; wildlife and governance. Regional advisory committees are being organized at the local or regional level in areas where First Nations are entering the treaty process. The government is committed to a consultation process that works effectively. Such a process is critical to the success of the treaty making process.

In this year's report the commissioners also recommend that an interim measures agreement be negotiated in a meaningful and timely manner so that the treaty negotiation process is not undermined. Interim measures are of critical importance to First Nations and should be included as a necessary element in a co-ordinated treaty making process. Interim measures should provide First Nations with adequate protection of their affected interests until a treaty is in place, thus avoiding the necessity of litigation.

The federal government is prepared to consider requests for interim measures where the issues are critical to concluding the treaties. The commissioners recommended that the principals review the current funding program to ensure that First Nations have adequate funds to prepare for and carry out negotiations and to enable the commission to carry out its responsibilities in allocating funds in a fair, independent and effective manner. The issue of funding is under review by the principals.

The commissioners also recommended that the principals address ways to effectively manage a treaty making process where more than 43 First Nations will be involved in negotiations. This issue has become even more critical to the principals as there are now 47 First Nations involved in the process. The principals are involved in discussions with each other and with the commission to find creative ways to manage these complex negotiations while respecting the right of all 196 First Nations in British Columbia to participate in this historic treaty making process.

I am pleased to report that the implementation of the commissioners' sixth and final recommendation is nearing completion with the introduction of Bill C-107, the British Columbia Treaty Commission Act, in the House on Wednesday, October 18, 1995. The enactment of the bill, together with the resolution of the First Nations Summit and the provincial Treaty Commission Act, will formally establish the British Columbia Treaty Commission as a legal entity.

Chief Commissioner Alec Robertson, Q.C., and Commissioners Barbara Owl Fisher, Will Battam and Peter Elugzik continue the work begun by their predecessors in fulfilling the commission's role as the keeper of the process. Miles Richardson was recently nominated by the First Nations Summit to replace Carol T. Corcoran, one of the original commissioners. These individu-

als are to be thanked for their dedication and perseverance during these trying times. This is a new process and they have worked long and hard to ensure that the process will work.

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During the first year of operation the commission's emphasis was on accepting First Nations into the process. As the parties move into framework and agreement in principle negotiations, the commission's role will be focused on monitoring and facilitating progress.

The commission and the government are committed to the treaty making process and to doing everything possible to ensure that it carries the people of the province of British Columbia into the next century with healthier communities and more productive relationships.

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

*[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]*

*[English]*

As I said earlier, it is always a pleasure to listen to people who have some understanding but also support the aboriginal people.

In the long run land claims is a misnomer. I guess the whole issue evolved because of the fact that all of a sudden more people were here than had been previously, since 1492. Prior to that we had been a stable population.

Christopher Columbus came over in 1492, which reminds me of a joke that should not be taken seriously. Dick Gregory, a comedian born in 1932, said: "You have to say this for the white race. Its self-confidence knows no bounds. Who else could go to a small island in the south Pacific where there is no poverty, no crime, no unemployment, no war and no worry and call it a primitive society?" Basically the same thing happened here when Christopher Columbus arrived.

However the reality is that this is 1995. We have gone through a lot of changes over the years. Now I think we are finally getting the recognition that should have been there right from the beginning.

I have a question for the hon. member on the British Columbia Treaty Commission. What will the B.C. treaty commission do to ensure that all British Columbians are informed of the treaty negotiation process?

**Mr. Loney:** Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question, as part of its duties the British Columbia Treaty Commission is responsible for the provision of a public record on negotiations. The commission is required to report annually to the legislature, Parliament and the First Nations Summit on the progress of the negotiations.