

Government Orders

Third, the charter of rights and freedoms will apply to aboriginal governments as it does to all other governments in Canada. This of course makes sense only if we are talking about protecting rights within Canada.

The fourth principle is that federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal laws must work in harmony.

While we are prepared to negotiate a wide range of powers, there are some areas that must remain with the federal government. As a general principle, matters which are integral to the aboriginal culture or internal to the aboriginal group are open for discussion. These might include areas such as education, health care, policing, natural resource management, agriculture, the establishment of governing structures, internal constitutions, elections and a leadership selection process.

• (1315)

However there are a number of areas where there is no compelling reason for aboriginal governments to exercise law making authority. Those areas include matters relating to Canadian sovereignty such as international diplomatic relations, foreign policy, national security and defence, international treaty making, immigration and international trade.

It includes as well matters affecting the fundamental national interest such as the management and regulation of the economy, the banking system, currency or broadcasting, postal service, emergency and peace, order and good government powers, and matters relating to the maintaining of law and order such as the Criminal Code.

While this is a federal policy we know we cannot go it alone because many of the jurisdictions contemplated by this policy are provincial. It is essential to have the territory or province concerned involved in the self-government negotiations. Its involvement will be crucial to the ultimate success of the process.

Not only do the provinces have jurisdiction over many of these areas, they also bring with them invaluable expertise in their administration. Having the three parties at the same table will allow new aboriginal systems, such as education, to be harmonized with existing provincial structures and minimize conflict down the road so as to create the best possible aboriginal governments. I am sure that is something we all agree with.

Fifth, where all parties agree we are prepared to protect rights and self-government agreements in new treaties. Finally, the government has made it clear that all funding for the negotiation and implementation of self-government agreements must come from existing resources. There will be no new money.

I have outlined the principles that will guide our discussions. As a government, we believe that they are both fair and realistic. We believe they provide a solid foundation on which to build. We believe they advance the rights of aboriginal people in a way which also protects the rights of all Canadians.

I have spent some time discussing inherent right because I am pleased to report that those involved in the B.C. treaty process have endorsed our self-government policy. Chief Joe Mathias of the First Nations Summit said that the new policy "means finally we have an important initiative that will bring First Nations into the 21st century".

Surely that must be our goal. With this bill we can begin to create the certainty that will encourage economic growth. We can provide the aboriginal people of B.C. with the tools they need to create the future they deserve.

We can move beyond the adversarial postures of the past to a new relationship based on mutual respect, trust and understanding, a new relationship that reflects the true Canadian values.

Some 50 per cent of all the aboriginal peoples in our country are under 25 years of age. It is an important point if we are to address their needs and make sure they have the systems in place to be the best they can be so that Canada can ensure them a long and successful future. It is an important point because all too often we talk about how we believe our young people are one of our greatest resources. Yet we do not always put our money where our mouth is in terms of implementing policies that will allow them to be just that, our greatest resource. We must do that more and more.

• (1320)

I am pleased to support Bill C-107 and encourage all parties in the House to pass it quickly and to agree with us in our position.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always encouraging to listen to members that understand what processes we go through, the hardships we go through. One of the most often asked questions by members opposite, and other people I am sure, concerns the definition of self-government or inherent right. The two seem to always be an issue with some members of the public or politicians.

I will try to define what I think inherent right and self-government are. The hon. member elaborated on it. One time I was asked about the inherent right of self-government. I replied that as far as I am concerned it is the acceptance or the acknowledgement that we have been here for a few more years than anybody else. In the Indians' case it is something in the neighbourhood of 35,000 years; in our case it is a little shorter, only 3,500 years. However, we do not feel left out by the fact that the Indians have been here 30,000 years longer than we have.