

### Supply

It went on to refer to the Dene of the Northwest Territories, but the following comments could refer to any native Canadian:

When the Dene refer to themselves as a nation, as many of them have, they are not renouncing Canada or Confederation. Rather, they are proclaiming that they are a distinct people, who share a common historical experience, a common set of values, and a common world view. They want their children and their children's children to be secure in that same knowledge of who they are and where they came from. They want their own experience, traditions and values to occupy an honourable place in the contemporary life of our country. Seen in this light, they say their claims will lead to the enhancement of Confederation—not to its renunciation.

Those words were very remarkable, especially when we consider that they were spoken 10 years ago. Perhaps if we had got on with the settlement of native land claims, we would not be in a position today where we have competing interests for land.

I recognize that the Minister is not responsible for Saskatchewan. He is a Minister for Canada but he does not speak for the Government of Saskatchewan. However, he took part in the constitutional debate recently. He is from Saskatchewan and very close to its Government. Of course he is familiar with the constitutional positions on native matters of every provincial and territorial Government.

What is the position of the Saskatchewan Government on native land claims? How does it differ from the position of the Government of Canada, if it differs in any way?

**Mr. McKnight:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. However, in the best interests of accuracy, I must decline.

I should inform the Hon. Member that the entitlement discussions which are taking place between the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan stem from an exchange of letters in 1979 between, I believe, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) and the former administration of the Province of Saskatchewan under Premier Blakeney. The entitlement was identified and the fulfilling of that entitled land, which had not been transferred after the signing of the treaties, would be drawn from Crown lands, the lands provided by the Province of Saskatchewan according to the Natural Resources Transfer Act of 1930.

● (1650)

Some transfers have taken place in the Province of Saskatchewan, not as many as we all would like. At present one, I know, is under discussion, namely, the Lucky Man transfer with which my colleague, the Hon. Member for The Battledowns—Meadow Lake (Mr. Gormley) is familiar. That band has been rooming and visiting with the Little Pine people for 100-plus years, I believe. Hopefully they will receive part of their entitlement very shortly. Regarding claims or entitlement, I can answer the Hon. Member's question regarding Saskatchewan, but I do not pretend to speak on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan in the House.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, after nearly two decades in this place, I have come to realize that progress is never made in giant steps but little by little. When the Minister made reference to the revised comprehensive claims policy, I want to recognize, as he already knows, that there was some response to the report of the special committee and some response to the Coolican task force. We do have certain improvements. I would describe them as modest, but we are moving forward and that is important.

However, the Minister knows that in his claims policy there can still only be six claims negotiated at any one time. In the Province of British Columbia, 13 claims have now been accepted by the Government of Canada for negotiation. There are another seven that are being actively considered. The Minister has said with respect to British Columbia that he "hopes to discuss the policy with Ministers in B.C. and to propose more specific measures to ensure a more fruitful negotiation process in that province". I wish him well, Mr. Speaker. I want to encourage that undertaking. Specifically, though, has the Minister had these discussions? If so, how many of them? During the course of those discussions, if they have taken place, what proposals has he made and what response has British Columbia given?

Finally, what hope is there at all for the Haida people that their rights will be recognized and accommodated at some moment in time in the Province of British Columbia?

**Mr. McKnight:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize the real concern of the Hon. Member. I also believe that the changes are modest, that we will only know how successful those changes we propose and have implemented in comprehensive claims are after we have had an opportunity to proceed. As the Hon. Member is aware, we have one mandate in place for the Dene-Métis. Hopefully we will be negotiating with the CYI and Yukon Government before the middle of June. TFN is next on the list. The discussions I said I would have with the Province of British Columbia have not taken place. The one claim we are negotiating now that has been accepted for negotiation and is on stream is the Nishga claim. I hope to be able to address that in the time period of the other claims that are left, the CAM claim and the Labrador claim.

The reason six are prescribed, as the Hon. Member knows, is because of the resources and the expertise needed to enter into these negotiations, some of which have been going on far too long, some of them for almost 12 or 13 years. We do not have within the Department the ability to handle any more than that.

I will be discussing with Ministers in British Columbia in a more direct manner the British Columbia claims process when we come to British Columbia. All parties are involved in the other areas we are negotiating. Up to this time the Province of British Columbia has chosen not to negotiate. That is what makes the claims process in British Columbia very difficult. Again, and I have expressed this view, I find it more comforting, and I believe it is a more accurate reflection of the