

Private Members' Business

I am a member of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, which held months of hearings as a result of the Oka crisis. Both the member and I worked on that committee together, at odds at times but together nevertheless. In the end we came out with a report in the summer of 1990 which makes some very specific and constructive recommendations.

The member should bear in mind one recommendation. We produced a set of recommendations to the government. The member, by way of her motion, is also conflicting with the very report which she endorsed.

Let me read the recommendation which the members of that committee agreed to: "Recommendation No. 6: The land views conflict resolution at Kanesatake. The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs recommends that the government approach the parties regarding the advisability of putting in place a process to deal with conflicts between municipalities and Mohawk authorities over land use issues affecting both communities without prejudice to the land claims. The committee recommends the appointment of a mediator, upon the joint approval of the parties concerned, to facilitate discussions over land use matters such as zoning and other municipal concerns. The committee also recommends that the appointment of an arbitrator jointly agreed upon to make binding decisions where negotiations and mediation do not resolve the conflict".

I also want to point out to the members of this House that by supporting this motion, a precedent would be established whereby such an office could be established in every municipality in Canada where land claims were being negotiated, where there are difficulties and complexities that do take time, that do take consideration and extra work, that do take the expertise that is being put forward by the mediator and the Mohawk Council at this time, and also by the federal government.

For instance, does this House believe that the town of Inuvik should receive funding from the federal government to establish an office because of the negotiations of the Gwichin regional claim? Will the government be establishing such an office in Iqaluit because of the TFN plan it proposed to create in Nunavut. How much would these offices cost and what would be their purpose other than to undermine the land claims process agreed upon by the federal government.

• (1140)

All Canadians remember the tragic summer of 1990. I agree with the member opposite that we have to come together and look for a resolution. This motion is clearly provocative in light of what has occurred over the last couple of years. The conflict between the government and the people of the pines provokes emotional and psychological trauma for all involved. It is beyond me why anyone in Canada, much less the member of Parliament for the region, would want to jeopardize the system which has been established by the people since that tragic event to deal with land transfer processes.

I beg members of this House not to put our country into this volatile situation again and to not support this motion.

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on the motion that has been put by my colleague, the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau.

Members on all sides of the House know what a delicate issue land unification is for Kanesatake. Despite what the newspapers are reporting, negotiations are continuing among representatives from the province of Quebec, the federal government, municipalities in Oka and the band council. Indeed Grand Chief Peltier has already let it be known that he is unequivocally opposed to the proposal. He proposes instead a return to vigorous discussions at the negotiating table in order to make progress.

The efforts of the hon. member who put this motion to resolve the issue are well known and she deserves the support of all members of this House. However, certain important aspects of her proposal are unacceptable to the Government of Canada because unanimity has not been achieved among the principal parties involved.

The federal government and the residents of the two communities do not want a repeat of the events of 1990. We must enable the two communities to work together at re-establishing harmony.