

The Address—Mr. Chénier

is, in exchange for extinguishing their rights, they received cash and a more conventional, if not a bit firmer, legal title to a much reduced area of land.

The Nunavut proposal, as it is called, is not intended as a real estate transaction. It is a contract proposal, but one principally of a social and political rather than a commercial nature. The basic goal of this proposal is the formation of a new government—a new government which would find its place within the constitutional framework and would, of course, be subject to the ultimate sovereignty of the Parliament of Canada.

In the context of self-determination as the major principle of that proposal, I would like to refer to the international covenant on economic, cultural and social rights, as well as the international covenant on civil and political rights. These covenants were passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1967 and were ratified by Canada in May 1976. Article I, subsection I, of both covenants proclaims:

All people have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status, and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.

Article 2 of the international covenant on civil and political rights says:

Where not already provided for by existing legislation or other measures, each state party to the present covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps in accordance with its constitutional processes, and with the provisions of the present covenant, to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present covenant.

Through the land claim proposal of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, it is our feeling that we are providing the Government of Canada with an opportunity to give effect to the international commitments it has made.

It is understandable, given the present climate in Quebec, that the federal government shuns such terms as self-determination. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) made it explicitly clear to the Indian chiefs who met in Ottawa a couple of weeks ago that in his mind they did not constitute a province. I suggest to the Prime Minister and his government that self-determination is not in the least threatening; in fact, it is enjoyed by the vast majority of Canada's people. Self-determination is indeed possible under confederation, for it exists for some; the renewed federalism which the Prime Minister promises could extend this right to all Canadians.

I should like to end my comments, Mr. Speaker, by saying that, while I do not always understand members of this House and I believe that they do not always understand me, if we agree to try and understand each other, then perhaps some of these goals of northern people can be realized.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1610)

[Translation]

Mr. Ray Chénier (Timmins-Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech has spared nothing to set the priorities enabling

our new government to take up now and not tomorrow or in the year 2000 the challenges which must be overcome with concrete steps. First, I would like to congratulate the previous government which soon realized that the Canadian people deserved another opportunity to decide—

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) on a point of order.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, is it not the Conservatives' turn to speak now?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I will point out something that I am sure is fairly obvious to the hon. member for Bow River. If no member on his side of the House stands to be recognized, I have to look to those members who do stand.

Mr. Taylor: On that point of order, the hon. member was standing. There was an agreement made between the House leaders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Chair has an indication of who has sought the floor. I have twice looked to hon. members on my left to see whether they did, in fact, seek the floor. Certainly on the first occasion no member stood on my left. On the second occasion I gave enough time to recognize an hon. member who might speak on my left. There is no question but that it was the turn of a member of the Progressive Conservative Party to speak. But I saw no such member standing, and for the second time I have had to recognize someone other than a member from the Conservative party. However, I will certainly pay attention to the members on my left.

Mr. Taylor: Whether or not you saw him, he was standing.

[Translation]

Mr. Chénier: Mr. Speaker, I have nothing against the hon. member opposite speaking before I do. On the other hand, I would like you to recognize me when he has completed his comments.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins-Chapleau (Mr. Chénier) has offered to step down in favour of the hon. member for Simcoe South (Mr. Stewart) so that the proper sequence of speakers can continue. Is that agreeable?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Mr. Speaker, first I wish to thank the hon. member for Timmins-Chapleau (Mr. Chénier) for his courtesy.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I congratulate you on your appointment, and to Madam Speaker I offer my con-