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people for a proper economic base. This is why one of the agenda items has to be the whole question of resource sharing. Again, this is something that has to be decided upon by negotiation. There are reserves in western Canada where the aboriginal peoples have subsurface rights. There are others where they do not have those rights. It is important that they have a right to share in the resources of their historic lands.

• (1510)

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Madam Speaker, I wish to begin by commending the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) for proposing this motion. I think it clearly demonstrates, along with other of his actions, the strong leadership position he is taking with respect to the recognition and the elaboration of aboriginal rights in Canada.

Not only has the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition proposed this motion today, he was the only leader of any national Party who spoke to the aboriginal peoples' rally on Parliament Hill recently. He also issued a strong statement which was read at the summit of the aboriginal leaders held in Toronto just a few weeks ago.

I also want to thank all Hon. Members for their interest in this debate. I am pleased that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) was able to be here for part of the debate. I thank the Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly) for his contribution. I look forward to the words from an ally and strong supporter in this area, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand).

Very recently I had the opportunity to appear on a television program. Unlike many, this was a live program on the subject of aboriginal self-government. Before the interview began, the young interviewer coached me a little. She said: "You are a politician and we only have 12 minutes. Could your answers to my questions be brief?" I assured her that they would be, but she made me promise again. She said: "Please be brief". When the interview began, her first question was: "What is really meant by aboriginal self-government?" I said: "Emancipation". She blinked her eyes and asked me to elaborate. The elaboration is simply that the aboriginal people of Canada are seeking emancipation through our Constitution.

First, they are seeking emancipation from the Indian Act, which is a totalitarian Act of this House. It controls and regulates every aspect of an Indian person's life. No other citizens of this country would allow themselves to be dominated by an Act of Parliament such as the Indian Act dominates Indian people.

Second, Indian people are seeking emancipation from the overbearing, constant direction, superintending, and overseeing of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Again, there is no Department of Government that controls every aspect of the lives of other Canadians the way this Department controls Indian and Inuit communities in Canada.

Third, aboriginal people are seeking emancipation from a dominant society, which, as my hon. friend from Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands pointed out, continually seeks to assimilate these people and make them like us in the belief that somehow our industrial commercial system is the one we should all follow in order to be considered a success.

The Special Committee on Indian Self-Government was an all-parliamentary committee. The recommendations of that committee were unanimous in every case. When that special committee set out to do its work, we first had to steep ourselves in some little-known history of this country. It is not a history that is usually taught in the elementary or secondary schools, or even universities of Canada. However, if a person were to go to a college like the Saskatchewan Federated Indian College, that person would get quite a different kind of education regarding the early history of this country.

When the Europeans arrived in North America to explore and later to settle, what they encountered were various tribes and nations. That terminology comes directly from the Royal Proclamation of 1763. They saw different cultures, and economies in existence, and people speaking different languages. This was not a vast empty land; there was activity going on. People were interrelating and they were recognized by the British explorers and the British colonists as being tribes and nations. A government-to-government relationship was established in order for there to be accommodation and agreements. That was the *modus operandi* established by the Royal Proclamation. While it is a colonial document and we do not want to make too much of it, it has been recognized in our Constitution as being an important document on which to proceed.

The debate about negotiating and reaching agreement is not one that is being questioned. That is the way to proceed. What is being questioned is whether we begin with the right and then proceed to the negotiations and the agreements, or do we say that there are only rights if agreements can be negotiated? If we do it that way, I ask the House: Where will be what I call the constitutional imperative to begin those negotiations? If we do not have a constitutional imperative, once again we must rely on good will and co-operation.

I know that there is a lot of co-operation and good will in Canada, but I also know that there is a very bad history in this country of not negotiating in good faith and of not honouring agreements once they are made. A constitutional recognition of an inherent right seeks to change the direction we have been following for such a long time.

We must go back a long way in our history to see when this direction began to change. Early British policy did recognize sovereign self-determining nations. However, it was not long before that began to change and there entered a system of domination, of paternalism, and eventually assimilation, about which a whole history could be carefully documented and described for Hon. Members.