

Supply

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, there has been an understanding that if there are reasoned amendments put forward, they would be dealt with during the proceedings of the day.

I also want to indicate that there have been discussions between the Parties and in an effort to facilitate passage of Bill C-50 and expedite the business of the House we will be co-operating 100 per cent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 82—CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD, 1987—
RIGHTS OF NORTHERN CANADIANS—FIRST MINISTERS'
CONFERENCE ON ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Broadbent:

That the Government should seek to restore existing rights of Canadians in Yukon and the Northwest Territories to the Constitutional Accord, 1987; and further, to make a commitment to hold a First Minister's conference to discuss aboriginal concerns, in particular self-government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the House rose at one o'clock, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grace—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) had two minutes remaining in his speech plus a ten-minute question and comment period.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, before lunch I referred to some of the concerns of aboriginal peoples with respect to the Meech Lake resolution. I mentioned that the aboriginal peoples want the resolution amended to provide for further First Ministers' conferences which would entrench aboriginal self-government. Section 13 of the Meech Lake Resolution provides for further conferences on fisheries and the Senate but does not mention aboriginal self-government. Surely aboriginal self-government is part of the unfinished constitutional business of this country and should be included in Section 13.

• (1510)

Second, the aboriginal peoples want Section 16 of the Meech Lake Resolution amended so that none of the Meech Lake Accord—not just Section 2 of the Act—will affect other aboriginal rights provisions.

Third, the aboriginal peoples ask the following question. If precision of definition was not necessary to entrench Quebec's distinctiveness and the spending power as set out in the Meech Lake Accord, why is precision of definition necessary to entrench aboriginal self-government, as was demanded by several provinces when they met to discuss aboriginal self-government and the Constitution? The aboriginal people say

there is a double standard on this matter and that should be resolved.

Fourth, the aboriginal peoples cannot accept that the fundamental character of Canada, as defined in the Meech Lake Resolution, be expressed to simply include French and English speaking Canadians. Certainly the aboriginal peoples are part of the fundamental character of Canada and should be included as such.

In conclusion, we support this resolution. We support that part which relates to the concerns of the northern Territories and that part which relates to the aboriginal peoples. In supporting the resolution, we do not believe that it conflicts or contradicts the five principles put forward by Quebec and which form the basis of the Meech Lake Accord. We do not see any good reason for refusing these requests made by the northern Territories and by the aboriginal peoples. The Government, I believe, has agreed to hold hearings on the Accord and to the possibility of amendments. Why does it not say yes to these kind of amendments right now?

Finally, I want to reiterate what was stated by the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent), that this motion should not be considered a motion of confidence or non-confidence in the Government but simply as an expression of will on the part of this House. As a result, I would ask Hon. Members, especially those on the Government side, to consider this motion in the terms put forward by the proposer, that they should express their will with respect to these matters and not be concerned about want of confidence in the Government. The measures proposed in the resolution are justifiable and will not derogate from anything in the Meech Lake Accord proposal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments? Since there are no questions or comments, debate.

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to rise to support the motion of my Leader concerning the constitutional aspirations of aboriginal people and territorial residents. As my Leader stated, we in the New Democratic Party, after extensive, exhaustive and, indeed, exhausting discussion, reached the conclusion that we could, in broad terms, support the principles on which the Meech Lake Agreement was founded and that we would be prepared to extend our every effort and commitment to improve that Accord by the process of amendment, committee hearings and open public discussion.

When we talk about the Constitution of our country, we talk of the basic, fundamental and supreme law which governs all of us, which binds our allegiance and commitment and which defines our institutions; which must enshrine our aspirations, and very much recognizes the inspirations from which this country has sprung.

The Meech Lake Accord provides the framework of the latest amendments to this Constitution. They are amendments of considerable import and great weight. They bring into full