

*Government Orders*

They infer that these opening positions will lead to lost property for third parties across the province. They ask: "What will become of your cottages? What will happen to the jobs in the mining and forestry sectors? What will happen to the fisheries?" They raise these fears without adding that the treaty process provides for all sectors of British Columbia from cottage owners to the broad spectrum of industries to have a voice in the process.

They neglect to tell the people at the town hall meetings and on the radio talk shows that the Government of Canada consults with a treaty negotiations advisory committee representing many of their interests. They do not tell people that no negotiation can proceed until a regional advisory committee has been created to provide the views of British Columbians from that particular part of the province who are not at the negotiating table. They do not say any of these things.

This pattern of misinformation and fear mongering is typical of the tactics some members on the other side of the House have used to score cheap political points. They have often criticized the government for its dedication to the inherent right of self-government as a cornerstone of the Government of Canada's aboriginal policy.

We have said since the beginning, since the red book that provided our election platform, that we believe the inherent right to self-government to be an existing right within Canada's Constitution.

Hon. members of the third party have often made the case that no one has defined what self-government means. The argument that self-government has not been defined has been erected as an obstacle to prevent justice from getting through to the aboriginal communities across Canada. That argument speaks to the kind of meanspirited and narrow minded approach that has thwarted efforts to bring justice to aboriginal issues for years. It speaks for the tyranny of the status quo. It speaks for the preservation of the paternalism of the Indian Act.

Is that what Reform members want to uphold? Do they really want to impede progress, to impede righting past wrongs, to impede certainty, to impede economic stability, to impede job creation?

We want to make progress. One way we are doing it is by acknowledging that the inherent right to self-government is an existing right. We are now negotiating with First Nations on how that right is to be implemented.

No one wants to return to the constitutional debates to implement self-government. Self-government arrangements can be negotiated with individual communities based upon local culture, traditions and needs. That is exactly what we have been doing. That is how we are going about the process in British Columbia.

I remind the House, especially members of the third party who seem to specialize in misinformation and misunderstanding, of the six stages that a claim must go through before a treaty comes into effect. Hon. members will observe that it is a very thorough process.

In the first step a first nation files a statement of intent with the B.C. Treaty Commission. The commission makes sure that the statement is complete and forwards it to the federal and provincial governments. It is at this stage that the First Nations describe the geographic area in British Columbia that they consider to be their traditional territory. Forty-seven statements of intent have been filed. They represent over 70 per cent of the aboriginal people of British Columbia.

The second stage is the commission convenes a meeting to prepare for negotiations. All three parties exchange information, consider the criteria, discuss the research they will do to prepare for negotiations and identify issues of concern. Each party appoints a negotiator with a clear mandate. Each party establishes a ratification procedure and the parties agree upon the substantive and procedural matters that will be negotiated.

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This is the stage at which the Canadian and British Columbia governments establish their own mechanisms for consultation with non-aboriginal interests. One of the requirements the B.C. Treaty Commission imposes on the two governments is the establishment of a regional consultative mechanism to represent third party interests. It imposes that.

When a commission determines that all three parties have met the criteria for readiness it confirms that they can proceed to stage three. This is where all three parties negotiate a framework agreement, a negotiated agenda, and identify the issues to be negotiated, the goals of the negotiation process, special procedural arrangements and a timetable for negotiations. So far four framework agreements have been signed and another three initialled by negotiators.

It is in the fourth stage of the treaty process that the parties negotiate an agreement in principle. These are the substantive negotiations. The parties examine the framework in detail.

Then the fifth stage is that the principals negotiate to finalize the treaty and remaining technical and legal issues are then resolved at this stage.

The sixth and final stage is the implementation of the treaty. Long term implementation plans need to be tailored to specific agreements.

All commissioners have agreed that significant progress has been made in the treaty process. The BCTC process is working. The process is fair. It is equitable and it is open. No one denies the negotiations ahead will be tough. Negotiations are tough. All negotiations are tough. There are some very complex issues that must be brought to the table.