

Government Orders

He did refer to partners participating. Again, I agree with that. I believe he also mentioned about people making decisions at the top end. I suggest to him that the problem with the process as it is presently envisioned by the federal Liberal government and by the NDP government in British Columbia is that people are going to be making decisions at the top end for the non-aboriginal community and there is going to be insufficient input from the grassroots, as he put it, in the non-aboriginal community.

Since coming to Ottawa I have experienced that consultation is a word which is frequently used very liberally, if I may use a play on words, particularly by the civil service. Consultation really means that they are going to go through the process of appearing to consult, but after all is said and done, the die is cast and the decision has been made.

I would assume that the member believes in the equality of all Canadians as I do. Everyone of voting age meeting certain qualifications should have the right as a Canadian citizen to vote in any election. That also obviously extends to the broader issue of the equality of all Canadians. I wonder if the member would also agree with me that in the same way throughout this process there most probably are going to be ratification procedures for the aboriginal community which will be one person, one vote.

I wonder if the member would agree with my party's position that there also must be a ratification procedure which would be outside of the ratification by this Chamber or by the legislature in Victoria. The ratification procedure should be on the basis of one person, one vote for all people in the affected area, be they aboriginal or non-aboriginal. This would give us the qualification that all people are equal regardless of race, language, creed, colour, religion or gender. Would the member agree that in order for this process to work we must have one person, one vote by aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike in order to have a final and concluding settlement of this issue?

Mr. Dromisky: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the questions and his perceptions. I have to agree with him that the democratic process is a viable one. All interested and concerned parties who in some way will be affected must be involved in the process.

Because the negotiating process affects all people, it is possible that those who are interested and keenly want to become involved may do so. They may contribute to the process. That is why I say it is extremely important that people at the grassroots level do not shy away from the process but contribute to it.

• (1350)

When it comes to the actual decision making, whether a vote should be here or there, I am not too aware of the exact process or the technicalities involved. I am sure that all parties concerned will come to some decision as to how it should operate. I am sure they have, but I am not aware of the strategy they are using at the present time.

From what I can gather it is a consultative process, one in which consultation takes place with all parties concerned. Information flows and decisions are being made in light of the information they have generated. Alternatives are carefully examined and some consensus must be reached within a legal framework naturally by all parties concerned.

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I have a brief supplementary to my friend.

I wonder if he would give us his personal opinion. In order for us to arrive at a proper conclusion to this process as the aboriginal community will have one person, one vote, would he agree that the non-aboriginal community that is affected by the same process should also have one person, one vote? What is his opinion?

Mr. Dromisky: Mr. Speaker, my opinion is very simple. If the issue pertains to a treaty settlement in a particular reserve or area, the people involved are the ones who should be making the decision. There is no doubt about it.

For instance in my own riding in the reserve of Fort William, if there is going to be a decision made regarding the reserve's boundaries and so forth, the people who are involved in that decision making are the ones who are on the reserve and other partners. For people who might be affected by the decision who live 10, 15, 20 miles away in my opinion I would not expect them to be actively taking part and casting a vote.

Putting it simply, the people on the reserve are the ones who are being affected by the decision. Therefore they must through this process and come to some conclusion as to how it is going to be decided.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might give a lesson to the hon. member of the Reform Party on government and land claims.

In the aboriginal world, land claims have been going on for some time in which a particular group is formed to negotiate. For example the Inuit people of the Northwest Territories in the eastern Arctic formed an organization called the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut which in turn now is called Nunavut Tungavik Inc., to negotiate land claims agreements on the Inuit's behalf with the Government of Canada. The way the