

*Government Orders*

We need to not stand with our backs to the future gazing serenely over the past, over the wreckage of failed policies and massive outlays in expenditures by governments which have not worked and which have created a system of dependency and paternalism. We need to strive toward policies that include all people.

The Government of Canada has a serious obligation to deal with this problem and to deal with it in a manner that will, at the end of the day, bring all Canadians together as equals.

At the time British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871 the terms of union clearly spelled out that the federal government shall take all responsibility for existing and future obligations to native people.

There was one proviso in that agreement. The provincial government had an obligation to designate areas for reserve lands. The provincial government from 1871 through into the 1920s continued to set aside and designate lands as reserve lands, to the point where in 1924 the federal government acknowledged in writing that B.C. had met its obligations under the terms of union and therefore was discharged from any further obligations in that regard.

• (1245)

This is a very important and fundamental point because Canadians residing in British Columbia have been contributing through the tax system to the settlements of land treaties in other parts of Canada. They have been required to assist in the underwriting of the costs of the Nunavut settlement, of the Yukon land claims agreement, of the Sauteaux-Dene-Métis agreement and so on.

Now British Columbians will be asked to pay twice: once as taxpayers through the federal system and once as taxpayers and citizens of British Columbia through the alienation of land and resources. That is fundamentally wrong. That is asking the people of British Columbia to accept a situation of double jeopardy.

I believe very strongly the province of British Columbia should not be at the negotiating table other than as an observer. If the federal government intends to convey land and resources, it ought go to the province to find out for what the province is willing to sell those assets, the land and resources, in pursuit of the land treaty negotiations.

When we talk about these land claim issues and when we talk about treaty settlements and so on, as I said in my remarks a few minutes ago, the government tends to treat native Indian people as if they are all the same, whether it is the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en people in my riding, the Niska people or the Casca-Dene people. They are not. They are individuals like all Canadians. They have many different aspirations, goals and

desires. They do not all think the same way. They do not all want the same things; they want many different things.

In many cases the leadership in these native communities is acting in a fashion that is not supported by the majority of people they supposedly represent. I am deeply concerned when native Indian people come into my constituency office and say that they are very concerned about the ramifications for self-government because they do not know what it means. Quite frankly I do not think any of us know what it means. The Government of Canada and provincial governments have been talking for the last couple of years about recognizing an inherent right of self-government but they have never defined it. They have never said what that means.

The implications for that kind of statement are very serious indeed. It is instructive to note the native Indian people of British Columbia voted against the Charlottetown accord at almost the same rate as non-native people did although the provision for native self-government was one of the five key components of the agreement.

The ordinary grassroots people in native Indian communities certainly are not overly enamoured with the idea of native self-government. Their leaders are because their leaders understand the position of power and the position of authority they will end up in as a result. However the ordinary grassroots people in native communities are not in favour of it and certainly have grave reservations.

I remember very clearly that the Native Women's Association of Canada actively campaigned against the Charlottetown accord for the very reason the inherent right to self-government was one of the five key components of the agreement.

It is fine for the parliamentary secretary to stand and say that this is what all native people want, but it clearly is not what all native people want. They voted against it. I suspect that if I were to go into his riding I would find many native Indian people, aboriginal people, who would be very much opposed to the concept of self-government even though the member supports it.

• (1250)

Having given this matter a great deal of thought and having expressed my concerns, particularly in British Columbia, for two years now, I am convinced there has to be a better way. There has to be a way that the Government of Canada in concert with the provinces can negotiate agreements which will be inclusive rather than exclusive, which will bring Canadians together rather than separate them forever on the basis of race.

We have to recognize we are settling agreements that will be set in constitutional concrete. We have to think in terms of 50, 100 and 150 years down the road. We cannot settle the agreements on the basis of a five, ten or fifteen year window.