

COMMUNIQUE

Jack Anawak
M.P. for Nunatsiag
Official Opposition Critic for
Northern Affairs and Associate
Critic for Environment

Jack Anawak
Député de Nunatsiag
Porte-parole de l'Opposition officielle
pour les Affaires du Nord canadien,
et porte-parole suppléant pour
l'Environnement



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OTTAWA - THE MEASURES PROPOSED BY PREMIER MCKENNA OF NEW BRUNSWICK TO SOLVE THE CURRENT CONSTITUTIONAL IMPASSE ARE COMMENDABLE. THEY DO NOT, HOWEVER, ADDRESS IN FULL THE CONCERNS MANY NORTHERNERS AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE HAVE EXPRESSED ABOUT THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD.

WHILE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS RESPONDS TO MOST OF THE DEFECTS IDENTIFIED IN THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD, THE PROCESS INVOLVED TO TURN THESE PROPOSALS INTO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS REMAINS FLAWED. THIS IS BECAUSE NEW BRUNSWICK'S PROPOSALS ARE CONTAINED IN A "COMPANION RESOLUTION" TO THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD. THE "COMPANION RESOLUTION" IS NOT MEANT TO TAKE ANYTHING AWAY FROM WHAT WAS ACHIEVED AT MEECH LAKE.

THUS, WHILE THE NEW BRUNSWICK RESOLUTION DOES RESPOND TO THE

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Telephone
(613) 992-2848

CONCERNS OF THE NORTH REGARDING FUTURE PROVINCE-HOOD AND TO THE CONCERNS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE REGARDING A PLACE ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL AGENDA, THESE CONCERNS ARE STILL DEALT WITH IN A SECONDARY WAY. ONLY IF MEECH LAKE BECOMES LAW, WILL THE "COMPANION RESOLUTION" HAVE ANY VALIDITY. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE, FURTHERMORE, THAT NEW BRUNSWICK'S PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE OTHER PROVINCES.

PREMIER MCKENNA STOPS SHORT OF ACTUALLY CHANGING MEECH LAKE. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO INUIT AND THE NORTH. "THE 'COMPANION RESOLUTION' CONTINUES TO SHORT-CHANGE US. OUR CONCERNS ARE STILL RELEGATED TO THE SIDE-LINES. IN THIS RESPECT, NEW BRUNSWICK'S PROPOSALS, I BELIEVE, ARE DESIGNED MORE TO SATISFY QUEBEC THAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OR THE NORTH", SAYS ANAWAK.

"TO HIS CREDIT", ANAWAK STATED, "THE PREMIER OF NEW BRUNSWICK HAS PROVIDED CANADIANS WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION IN A SPIRIT OF GOOD WILL AND FLEXIBILITY. IF OTHER FIRST MINISTERS HAD DEMONSTRATED THE SAME DEGREE OF GOOD WILL AND FLEXIBILITY SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, WE WOULD NOT BE IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL MESS WE ARE IN TODAY."