

Government Orders

It is not simply a matter of saying we should have done this earlier or we might take a little longer. Time has run out. A large group of people in the gallery feel it is now time for the Parliament of Canada to do its duty and adopt Bill C-133 and the companion legislation which we will come to momentarily, Bill C-132.

I would plead with the hon. member to understand that this is an extraordinary circumstance, but it is an extraordinarily wonderful opportunity for the people of Canada to do something good; to reach out to the Inuit who, after all, for thousands of years have managed and husbanded that wonderful territory, their land they call Nunavut; and to accommodate that in this legislation.

I might point out the hon. member has had since last Friday when first reading occurred and the bill was tabled to study this bill. He was offered briefings. He was given a briefing, I gather, by the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut in recent days. I hope he will be prepared to focus on the essence of the bill so we might get on with passing it and Bill C-132 today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member want to comment on the minister's remarks?

Mr. Nowlan: Yes, Mr. Speaker, just very briefly. If there is another question I will take it in the short time for comments.

I understand what the minister explained and I gave him some credit. We had discussions yesterday as the minister well knows. I am sorry about the position I am in because of the Standing Order 78(1) closure motion.

After the discussion yesterday and knowing that some of it happened very recently, I thoroughly expected the proper thing would be to have the debate. I not surprised with the turn-out in the House on a Friday afternoon we could have got into second reading without a closure motion, had exchanges on certain questions and the matter would have still proceeded. If it did not get through this Friday, I certainly feel with the Prime Minister taking such an active interest, and with the consistent interest of the minister, it is not beyond the realm of probability or possibility that there could be third reading debate and a vote next week in the extended hours we will have then.

The minister speaks very sweet language. He has worked with this and I give him credit. In his own speech he said he was very happy when it was finally consummated. I am saddened that from his work and the Prime Minister flying north the parliamentary process as far as I am concerned has been abused in trying to do a good thing.

• (1305)

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut]

[English]

I would like to just make a very brief comment to the hon. member from Annapolis Valley. As a member of Parliament for the area concerned, as a beneficiary under the claims and as a representative for all the people who will be benefiting from this agreement, I have absolutely no hesitation in stating here that we have no problem whatsoever with the tactics that were taken earlier today to limit the debate in order to get this very important bill for the Inuit of Nunavut passed today.

I say to my colleague that it is the Inuit who approved and ratified the agreement, and consequently the bill was presented in this House on Friday. A great majority of the Inuit in the eastern Arctic ratified the agreement.

I have absolutely no hesitation in saying let the bill go through third reading and be passed and sent to the other House today.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, to reinforce the point just made by my colleague, the distinguished member of Parliament for Nunatsiaq, this is one of those rare occasions in this House where there is consensus on every side of the House and on the part of every political party. Therefore there is a desire to see this proposal go forward. The time allocated may not even be fully taken up, who knows, by the time we conclude. We will see.

I would only like to make the following brief remarks. My first remark is that Bill C-133 is an historical bill and therefore this is an historical day and an historical step. It contains a decision of enormous importance for the Inuit. It is a chance for them to participate as partners in the development of their homeland, as the member for Nunatsiaq already very eloquently put it.