

Government Orders

are also steep costs if we keep putting negotiations off and if we keep putting them off any further than now.

For example, in 1991 a Price Waterhouse study indicated that every year land claims go unsettled in British Columbia the province suffers the following consequences. \$1 billion in potential investment in forestry, mining and other resource sectors is lost. Second, 300 jobs which would otherwise be created are not created. Third, 1,500 jobs are adversely affected. Fourth, \$125 million in capital investment is lost or deferred.

• (1600)

That is the price of inaction as outlined by the Price Waterhouse study. It is the price the critics of the process would have us continue to pay year after year until eventually it would be the courts which would force governments to pay billions more than they would have to pay if we settled these negotiations and these matters through fair, open negotiations with the First Nations people.

To help achieve this goal the B.C. Treaty Commission was established. It consists of five commissioners, five outstanding British Columbians, who represent the interests of all the parties to the negotiations. Two of the commissioners are nominated by the First Nations Summit, one by the provincial government and one by the federal government. The chief commissioner is duly selected and appointed by all three of the principals, namely the First Nations leadership, the federal and provincial governments.

The First Nations Summit includes all the First Nations in B.C. which have agreed to participate in the B.C. Treaty Commission's six-stage treaty negotiating process. The summit provides a forum for First Nations involved in the treaty process to meet and discuss negotiations. As one of the principals of the process it continues to provide direction along with the governments of B.C. and Canada.

Carole Corcoran was elected by the First Nations Summit as one of its first treaty commissioners. She also sat on the royal commission on Canada's future from 1990 to 1991. She serves on the board of governors of the University of Northern British Columbia. Unfortunately she had to resign recently.

On October 4 the First Nations selected Miles Richardson of Haida Gwaii as the second First Nations treaty commissioner. Mr. Richardson was a member of the B.C. claims task force which reported to the governments of B.C. and Canada and the First Nations on how the parties could begin negotiations to

build a new relationship. Mr. Richardson's appointment is pending order in council approval at this time.

The First Nations Summit has also elected as one of its commissioners Wilf Adam of the Lake Babine Indian Band. Mr. Adam, a former chief councillor of the band, is chairman of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation and is co-founder of the Burns Lake law centre.

The British Columbia appointee is Barbara Fisher, formerly general counsel and Vancouver director of the Office of the Ombudsman. She currently practises part time as counsel to the B.C. Information and Privacy Commission.

Since last April the Government of Canada's representative on the commission has been Peter Lusztig, a professor of finance at the University of British Columbia. He also brings considerable breadth of experience from the community, having sat on B.C.'s royal commission on automobile insurance and the B.C. commission of inquiry into the tree fruit industry. In 1991 he also chaired the Asia-Pacific initiative advisory committee which was struck by the federal and provincial governments.

Since last May the chief commissioner, the fifth commissioner, has been Alec Robertson, Q.C. The legal community is familiar with his past work as president of the B.C. branch of the Canadian Bar Association, as chairman of the Law Foundation of British Columbia and as a member of the gender equality task force of the Canadian Bar Association.

I have given some details of these individuals to show all members of the House that the B.C. Treaty Commission consists of five distinguished Canadians who are doing their utmost to ensure that the comprehensive claims process moves along in a timely and orderly manner.

It was mentioned earlier that one area where much progress has been made is with respect to consultation with the citizens of British Columbia and the rest of the country. That is of course consultation outside of the responsibilities of the First Nations and the two governments.

• (1605)

One of the recommendations contained in the commission's annual report which was tabled in the House last week is: "Canada and British Columbia make full use of their consultative processes so that the community at large will be confident that their voices are heard and their concerns are considered". This government strongly supports that recommendation. An effective dialogue, an effective exchange of accurate information is absolutely essential to concluding sound and sustainable treaties in British Columbia.