

*Government Orders*[*Translation*]

It is a great honour and privilege for me to speak today on the Nunavut bills, the bills to ratify the Nunavut land claim agreement and to establish the new territory of Nunavut. Both bills before us impact profoundly on the future of Canada's north and Canada as a whole. Both these bills change the course of history. Canada is evolving and the Inuit of Nunavut are in the forefront of that evolution.

[*English*]

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** For the benefit of hon. members, there is English translation on channel five and there is someone translating from English to French so that all members can understand what the member is saying in Inuktitut on this very special day.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Anawak:** This is a momentous and proud occasion for the Inuit of Nunavut. For me it is also very special for another reason. Today I am speaking both as a member of Parliament for the region concerned and as a beneficiary of the Nunavut land claim agreement.

I do not believe such a set of circumstances has occurred before in the House. This is a first, and for me this is a humbling experience.

• (1030)

[*English*]

For the Inuit the settlement of the land claim and the creation of Nunavut represent a bold new start and a chance to participate as partners in the development of our homeland and our country. Underlying everything is the hope of a better future for our children.

[*Translation*]

The land claim and the establishment of Nunavut are basic expressions of Inuit self-determination. For too long Inuit have been left out of the major economic and political decision-making process affecting our lives. Through the land claim agreement and Nunavut we are re-establishing some control over our own affairs. We are also ensuring the preservation and enhancement of our identity as distinct peoples: our culture, our language and our way of life.

Later today I will have more to say about the meaning of Nunavut when we deal with the bill to establish Nunavut.

[*English*]

The bill before us now, Bill C-133, is the land claim ratification bill. It is difficult, however, to talk about the land claim without talking about Nunavut because the two are inseparably linked.

Inuit have always tied the establishment of Nunavut to the settlement of the land claim. Obtaining a commitment to the territory of Nunavut was a fundamental component of the Inuit land claim negotiations from the beginning. It was in fact a prerequisite for the settlement of the land claim.

Bear with me while I continue in French.

[*Translation*]

What we are doing today is very important for all of Canada. The bill concerning the territory of Nunavut, which is connected with our claim, will confirm through legislation federal recognition of the new territory. However, hon. members and Canadians should realize that Nunavut already exists and has always existed in the minds and hearts of the Inuit. We know that Nunavut is our land.

We want to thank Canada for recognizing our rights and our desire to take control of our destiny and of our territory and help create a stronger Canada.

[*Translation*]

To continue in Inuktitut, I want to congratulate the Inuit of Nunavut for their achievement and thank those who represented them at the negotiating table throughout the years for their hard work, their determination, and for all the sacrifices they and their families made.

Many of the individuals involved were present at the formal signing of the land claim agreement in Iqaluit on May 25, but there were others who for a variety of reasons were not in Iqaluit on that day. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions made by so many.

Thanks are due to current and past negotiators, board members and staff of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada: Paul Quassa, James Eetoolook, John Amagoalik, James Arvaluk, Tagak Curley, Perer Ernerk, Donat Milortuk, Bob Kadlun, Jack Kupeuna, David Aglukark, Louis Tapardjuk, Mark Evaluardjuk, Louis Pilakapsi, Thomas Suluk, Simon Taipana, John Maksagak, Peter Ittinuar and Kane Tologanak.