

*Canada Lands Surveys Act*

[Translation]

**CANADA LANDS SURVEYS ACT**

## MEASURE TO AMEND CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources)** moved that Bill C-4, to amend the Canada Lands Surveys Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

**Mr. Maurice Dupras (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-4 which I have the honour to introduce provides amendments to the Canada Lands Surveys Act which will make it possible to control and manage more effectively the survey of public lands in Canada. Those lands, according to the definition given in the Canada Lands Surveys Act, in its present form, mean "any lands, belonging to Her Majesty in right of Canada or of which the government of Canada has power to dispose, that are situated in the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories or in National Parks of Canada and any lands that are surrendered lands or reserves as defined in the Indian Act".

The present legislation on the survey of Canadian land also provides for the appointment of a Board of Examiners which will look into all matters concerning the examination, admittance and qualifications of the candidates to a commission of Dominion land surveyor or to a certificate of Dominion topographical surveyors.

[English]

The Canada Lands Surveys Act, which came into effect in January, 1952, replaced the former Dominion Lands Surveys Act. It has been amended twice since then, once in 1956 and again in 1966. As a result of increasing exploration in Canada's offshore areas and rapid technological advances in surveying techniques, particularly in the last few years, it is felt that changes in the act are needed.

The application of the act should be extended in order to bring the legal surveys required for the management and control of offshore resources under legislative authority and to facilitate better the administration, direction and control of surveys of all Canada lands. Accordingly, the term "public lands" has been deleted from the act and has been replaced by the term "Canada lands", which is broader in scope and more appropriate with respect to the new legislation. In addition, there is a need to re-define the professional standards of Dominion land surveyors, appropriate to the new era that has been opened up by rapid technological advances.

The revised standards should be comprehensive enough to embrace all persons engaged in surveying, whether on land, over or under water—mainly the offshore environment—or from the air, including the use of satellites, as well as in the interpretation, processing and display of resulting data. There is also a need for revision of educational and apprenticeship requirements in relation to the methods of qualifying surveyors of Canada lands and for an expanded board of examiners,

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier).]

designed to administer effectively what is, in essence, a public trust.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, one of the main objectives of these amendments is precisely to bring under the administration of this legislation the official surveys made in off-shore areas, as is the case for lands situated in the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories, Indian reserves, surrendered lands and national parks. Current regulations on oil and gas lands in Canada provide that only a federal surveyor may carry out an official survey of Canada lands in the sense intended by the regulation. The department intends to apply the provisions of the Canada Lands Surveys Act to all official off-shore surveys and to the specification of standards related to these surveys.

Another objective is to give to Yukon and Northwest Territories commissioners the power to undertake surveys of Canada lands they are administering in their respective territory. At the present time, the legislation empowers the ministers responsible for the administration of land in Canada to request the surveying of that land, but since the administration of the pieces of land that encompass territorial communities has been transferred to the commissioners in council, that power should also be extended to the commissioners.

A third objective is to repeal the sections requiring that Canada lands be laid out in quadrilateral townships, except where otherwise directed by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. That system, which was initially devised for the subdivision of lands in the Prairie provinces, is not applicable for it provides for the establishment of a rectangular system of reserves so that roads, whether they be north-south or east-west oriented, may be equidistant. It is obvious that such a system is not practical in mountainous or uneven regions, as exist in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and in practically all national parks and in several Indian reserves. Moreover, the repeal of those sections would make it unnecessary to amend the act following metric conversion.

As to the need to redefine the professional standards of federal lands surveyor, we could improve the quality of land surveys in Canada by making sure that surveyors are better qualified and fully conversant with the surveying methods which apply to off-shore areas. It would also be desirable to convey a new title to surveyors, that of Canada Lands Surveyor, to replace and supersede the previous title of federal surveyor or Federal topographer. It would also be desirable to gather under this designation all professionals who meet the requirements of land surveying in Canada, because in this era, conditions keep on changing, no matter whether these professionals operate on land, on sea, on the ocean floor or in the air. This new title stems from the new definition of "Canada Lands" which appears in the act.

The bill proposes to increase the number of members on the Board of Examiners from three to five, four of them being