

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 20, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

POINTS OF ORDER

QUORUM

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, according to Standing Order 29(4) whenever the Speaker adjourns the House for want of a quorum, the time of adjournment and the names of the members then present shall be inserted in the *Journals*.

I was present yet my name was not recorded. I signed the sheet.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member signed the sheet and there is a mistake. It will be checked out and if somehow it has been lost, his name will be added in the journals branch, so he need not worry about that.

I thank you for bringing it to the attention of the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BRITISH COLUMBIA TREATY COMMISSION ACT

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-107, an act respecting the establishment of the British Columbia Treaty Commission, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour had the floor. The hon. member for Surrey North has the floor for 40 minutes on behalf of her party.

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on September 21, 1992 the federal government, the British Columbia provincial government and the summit, which is a group representing aboriginal groups involved in this matter, reached an agreement to establish a commission called the British Columbia Treaty Commission. It would aid in the treaty

negotiation process by assisting the groups involved to become fully prepared for their role in this process.

In other words, the commission would not be directly involved in the actual negotiations but would ensure those persons who would be at the negotiation table would have arrived there fully prepared with all the *i*'s dotted and the *t*'s crossed. I am assuming the objective of this approach, i.e. the creation of a commission to facilitate, is to speed up the negotiating process and to ensure all parties are fully informed as to the nature and intent of the negotiating dialogue.

The September 21, 1992 agreement committed the three principals involved to establish this treaty commission via statutes in the case of the governments and a resolution in the case of the summit. This agreement also addressed the B.C. Treaty Commission's organization such as the membership, the terms of office, the location of the office, the quorum, the funding arrangements at least for the first five years, and so on. The agreement also identified the commission's mandates and its parameters.

It was all there on September 21, 1992. Very early in May 1993, less than one year later, the summit passed its resolution. Later that same month the B.C. legislature also passed its enabling legislation. However, here in October 1995, almost two and one-half to three years later, we are debating Bill C-107 which is the bill respecting the establishment of the B.C. Treaty Commission.

There has been an awareness of this need for legislation for some time, actually one year and three months since September. One can ask why this government is taking so long, since January 1994 for example when Parliament opened here, to carry out its obligations on this process.

The commission does exist but because of the delay in the passing of legislation here to establish it, it has been functioning informally. The fact that the commission has been functioning in our immediate past provides us here today with an insight as to the possible effectiveness of its role in the whole negotiating process to date.

For example, we have had some difficulties. In British Columbia six blockades were erected by the natives in the past year. One was a blockade on a road for private residences on Adams Lake near Kamloops that ran through an Indian reserve. Not far away was a two-week blockade disrupting business this spring at the Douglas Lake ranch after the ranch had asked