

*Adjournment Debate*

I might say that there were objections to the application of proposed Section 84(1)(b) to exports by the Canadian Bar Association and by Hydro-Quebec. These objections were made on the ground that the exact meaning of the words "public convenience and necessity" could not be precisely defined. The proposed amendment, according to Hydro-Quebec, could also raise doubts in prospective customers' minds as to the reliability of Canadian electricity exports and would therefore render negotiations of export contracts even more difficult than they are already. Even if contracts could be negotiated, the additional uncertainty might result in a lower border price than would otherwise be obtained. Hydro-Québec further argued that there would be an effect on existing contracts. This proposed change could, therefore, impact on export contracts worth several billion dollars.

After weighing these arguments, the minister agreed to consider modification of this proposed subsection in Bill C-108 relative to its application to electricity exports. Serious consideration is being given to this matter by the minister and, indeed, it is presently under review by the Standing Committee on Energy Legislation.

INDIAN AFFAIRS—JAMES BAY AGREEMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON TAIT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS. (B) SAFETY OF WATER SUPPLY

**Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin):** Mr. Speaker, on May 18 I rose to ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) when he might expect a decision from the cabinet on the review of the implementation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. His reply to me was, "Soon, very soon." I am here tonight to see if I can find out what "soon" means.

I have here a copy of the agreement, and it is 454 pages long. It was signed on November 11, 1975, by representatives of the Canadian government, the government of Quebec and representatives of the Cree and Inuit who live in northern Quebec. They gave up much of the territory they had inhabited for centuries—since time immemorial—for a cash settlement that is to be paid out over a period of 20 years and also for a number of benefits which are to accrue to them. Such benefits are housing, education, fire protection, roads, fresh and pure water in their villages, air strips and a number of other things. Unfortunately, many of these things have not been forthcoming.

Last March representatives of the Cree and Inuit came before the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development and told us of a great number of cases in which this agreement has been seriously breached. We heard of conditions that would make the Third World look pretty good. In one instance we heard of seven children dying in 1980 because of gastroenteritis which had been caused by unsanitary conditions. We heard of tuberculosis throughout the northern villages of Quebec. We heard a litany of complaints that it was a very bad situation.

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At this point the committee made a report to the minister pointing out the terrible things that were going on in northern Quebec. He agreed that the situation should be reviewed and appointed an official from his department to go to the area. The official did so and presented an 87 page report to the minister, with recommendations. I understand that this report went before cabinet in January.

On February 18 the minister called a meeting of the Standing Committee of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to discuss the review. He thought that it would be through cabinet by February 18, but unfortunately that was not the case and so we could not discuss it. Every day since then we have expected the decision to be handed down.

On May 14 the chairman of the Standing Committee of Indian Affairs and Northern Development asked the minister when we could expect a decision from cabinet and the reply was that it would be available reasonably soon. I asked the same question a week later and the answer was "soon, very soon."

Today the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development was tabled. Item 12 of the report states as follows:

Recalling your committee's earlier report to the Minister respecting the implementation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, your Committee is dismayed by the delay of the federal Cabinet in reaching a just decision based on the recommendations of the department's review, providing for adequate funding according to the terms and conditions of the agreement.

This contract was entered into between the Cree, the Inuit and two governments. It has been broken. It was supposed to be the hallmark of future land claim settlements in Canada. It is a sad situation that we have not been able to honour the agreement. I put the question to the parliamentary secretary, when can this decision be expected?

**Mr. Ray Chénier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Cariboo-Chilcotin (Mr. Greenaway) as well as other members of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development have expressed concern regarding the time it has taken for cabinet to consider the report on implementation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It is unfortunate that it has taken longer than originally anticipated to adequately study this issue and to develop appropriate remedial measures. I am pleased, however, to inform the House that cabinet is in the final stages of considering this matter and I anticipate that the decisions made by cabinet will go a considerable way in resolving the difficulties being experienced by the Cree and Inuit.

The member for Cariboo-Chilcotin is rightfully concerned with the safety of the water supply in the Cree Community of Paint Hills. I assure him I share his concern and steps have been, and will be, taken to improve the situation as quickly as possible.