

*Government Orders*

However, on this one I feel sad for the hon. member for Nunatsiak who made a great speech and the people in the gallery who have lived this. This should not be snuck in as though people are ashamed of the deal. It should have been given a proper debate and historic debate.

Mr. Speaker, you are from the west. The provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta entered Confederation in 1905. You can go through the *Hansard* for that time. I am not going to take time doing so because my time is limited.

The member from Comox—Alberni started. According to the table we have exactly one hour and 13 minutes left to pass this bill on the basis of this rather complicated agreement; one hour and 13 minutes from the time the member from Comox—Alberni started, to pass this bill in all stages including Committee of the Whole consideration if we ever get to it. Then the old hammer chops and that is it.

I could compare that with what happened in earlier days. I am not going to over-dwell on it, but there was debate on Bill C-69, the Alberta Act, 1905, and debate on Bill C-70, the Saskatchewan Act, 1905. There were different indices then to get the material. Just a quick review of the index in those days when new provinces were being brought into Confederation and being made part of Canada shows that it was not done in the dying days of Parliament. It was not done on a late Friday afternoon or in the dark of night. It was done in open daylight. It had debate at first, second and third readings. There were 84 pages of index of both bills. I think 52 members participated in debate on one bill and over 52 participated in the other debate. That is what used to happen.

I say this is a perversion of the rules and I say it sadly. It is a travesty of Parliament which by its very name, as we all know, means we are supposed to speak. We are supposed to be able to speak. The government House leader stood after 18 minutes and in effect invoked closure, allocation of time. We were to have one hour and 45 minutes from when he moved that and we are now down to one hour and 13 minutes when the member from Comox—Alberni stood. It boggles the mind.

After all, as we have heard quite properly, this is a mammoth exercise by government and the people. According to the maps, some of the briefings and the

material I have assembled that I think is correct, we are dealing with one-quarter the size of Canada in terms of defining a new territory. Undoubtedly and with full credit to the people of that territory, be they 16,000 or 17,000 Inuit of the total of 20,000, over time there will be an emancipation process as there should be perhaps to develop a state or a province.

We have a bill affecting one-quarter of the land mass of Canada as a result of negotiations for, I thought, 15 years or 16 years. The minister's speech does not even begin to represent one year for each of the years of negotiation. In that sense it is not doing justice to the Inuit or to Parliament because it is a travesty of Parliament to have this type of motion at this time.

There are so many questions one could ask. However this is second reading and perhaps a better time would be at Committee of the Whole if that is what we are going to do. I know some of these things have been negotiated. This should not just be done in the dying days of a Parliament but when the focus of public affairs is on many other matters. There has not been the public focus on the implications of this bill.

• (1255)

I listened to my friend's speech because I respect him very much. There were many matters that could perhaps have been examined in the brief time we have. There will be a new public service in the territory. There may be an influx from the south coming north. There may not be the majority that would presently be the majority in the territorial Government of Nunavut. There are many things.

When this was first announced as recently as 1991 Ovide Mercredi raised questions about the inherent rights of aboriginals being adversely affected by this process. There is something else that I do not think many appreciate. It was part of the give and take and one of the reasons we were able to get an agreement. The creation of this bill, for the first time as I understand it, actually transfers the land ownership. I am not talking about aboriginal title. I am talking about the actual land ownership over a good section of this land. It affects all Canadians because until now all Canadians north and south of 60 have had an interest through the Crown in that land. I am just not sure where the interests of Canadians from coast to coast north of 60 lie under this bill.