

*Government Orders*

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the chair.

**The Chairman:** Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-104, an act respecting an agreement regarding treaty land entitlement in Saskatchewan entered into on September 22, 1992 among Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada, Her Majesty the Queen in right of Saskatchewan and the Keeseekoose, Muskowekwan, Ochapowance, Okanese, Piapot, Star Blanket, Yellowquill, Beady's & Okemasis, Flying Dust, Little Pine, Moosomin, Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head, Muskeg Lake, One Arrow, Pelican Lake, Red Pheasant, Saulteaux, Sweetgrass, Thunderchild, Witchekan Lake, Canoe Lake and English River bands, and respecting an agreement regarding treaty land entitlement in Saskatchewan entered into on September 23, 1992 among Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada, Her Majesty the Queen in right of Saskatchewan and the Nekaneet band.

On Clause 2—*Definitions*

**Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Madam Chairman, I want to express my appreciation to all members for bringing Bill C-104 quickly to this stage. I also want to give notice that we will be proposing minor technical amendments to five clauses of the bill that have been totally endorsed by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations on behalf of the entitlement bands and the province of Saskatchewan. As I say they are technical and not substantive amendments. They have been prediscussed with and approved by the opposition parties.

As well there are minor but important corrections to the French translation of the schedules. In schedule II and schedule III of the bill there will be four amendments to the French translation to improve the accuracy of the translation which was not available at the time the schedules were originally signed with the original treaty land entitlements agreement. With that, I hope we can

proceed smoothly. I will introduce these amendments clause by clause as they arise.

• (1155)

**Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador):** Madam Chairman, I wonder if I might just ask the minister some questions. It is so seldom we get the land claims issue before the House of Commons that I want to be able to use this opportunity.

I congratulate all parties involved in the process for bringing the measure before the House today. It is an important step forward for the aboriginal people of Saskatchewan. I congratulate them and the two levels of government on the comprehensive agreement that has been reached and the important measure before the House. I want to say in that context that this is a very important issue, one of the most important issues in the country. That is why I want to take a few minutes to reflect on it.

We have before us a measure on behalf of the aboriginal people of Saskatchewan. The minister may be able to confirm this point, but there are something like 600 land claims across the country, all of which are in various stages of being addressed at this time. There is a limited budget on the part of the Government of Canada. Obviously there is a process to be followed. There is an order of precedence. There is a long list of people.

First, how does the minister intend after today to set up a process whereby we can see a speedy resolution of the rest of the land claims across the country?

It is important we are taking this measure today. It is very important for the people of Saskatchewan and they should be congratulated. However there are many other instances across the country where land claims are pressing issues.

We talked in the House of Commons yesterday about the rampant symptoms of alcoholism, substance abuse, sexual abuse and child abuse. We have heard of those symptoms and we deplore them. We carry our own responsibility on both sides of the House that this sort of thing is happening. It underscores the importance of speeding up the land claims process.