

Routine Proceedings

ulations to Mr. Laforme for presenting so quickly the report that we can start to work on.

I am sure my counterpart, when he is named in the provincial government in the coming week, and I will be able to get together and work. The provinces across this country have a large responsibility when it comes to land claims and it is something that we have to work together on.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has been working with the people of Saskatchewan and of British Columbia on land claim issues there as well. We have some indications of agreement from the premier of British Columbia that he too is willing to work toward settling land claims in British Columbia.

Things have been happening on this matter. We are certainly going to continue to work in this area, with the help and the contribution of native peoples across Canada.

We hope to sign and work on land claims in the future. Certainly much has been done in the way of land claims since this government took office in 1984. We have signed agreements to settle claims both of a comprehensive type and of a specific claim type. I have been part of some of those in Ontario. Certainly my hon. colleague, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, has also signed them in the north.

We are proud of those agreements. They are agreements that have been a long time coming. The process is too slow and something has to be done to speed them up, but certainly we have signed and entered into negotiation on more land claims since this government took office than was done for many years prior.

As we go through the report, we see another point that was touched on by the committee. It was the need for economic development as a very important tool for the future development and progress of our native people.

The CAEDS program that our government put into operation is starting to work very well for native people. I have had the opportunity to work with several Indian bands on their programs. They have some very interest-

ing and innovative ideas for changes in economic development. We have committed some \$1.4 billion to native economic development over the next five-year period. There are some very interesting projects coming forward. We have a board whereby native people themselves make decisions as to whether or not a business should be funded.

We have a real responsibility to make sure as we help native people develop in the business field that they are successful and have all the backing that they require. Native businesses started some 20 years ago and we now have 5,000 native businesses. Some 2,500 of those have been developed within the last six months.

Our native people are making great strides in economic development, but as I mentioned earlier there is still more that can be done.

On the environment issues, I do not think there is a people in this country who has a better understanding or lives more closely to the land than our aboriginal people.

The Minister of the Environment worked on the development of *The Green Plan* which included an environmental strategy. The northern part of Canada must be protected.

We held consultative hearings *The Green Plan* which I attended in Yellowknife and Iqaluit. I had an opportunity to hear first hand the input from the native people and the concerns they had about conservation of resources, about protection of the water, and about the protection of the landscape itself. Much in the way of material has been left behind in the Arctic that must be removed and shipped out. It will be expensive, but it is required. When it comes to the Arctic environment, it is something that we cannot do alone in Canada because the Arctic is not exclusively ours. We are working internationally with other countries to ensure that we can work toward a clean environment in the Arctic.

We have consulted with our aboriginal people in the northern part of the country and will continue to do so. There are sections within the land claim agreements which offer the opportunity to put together groups so that native people will have a say in what is done as far as