

each Indian government. It has been incorporated into the proposed Act and will detail the provisions for accountability of band governments to their memberships.

Finally, the proposed legislation anticipated the recommendation to reject the Indian Act membership criteria as a basis for establishing political participation in Indian government and relies instead upon a membership provision proposed by the Cree and Naskapi under the comprehensive Agreements. In its final report released on November 3, 1983, the special committee on Indian self-government specifically supported the initiative of the Cree-Naskapi Act in that it is intended to address the needs of these bands. I wish, Mr. Speaker, to thank sincerely all of the members of that committee and Mr. Penner, its Chairman, for its support.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the hopes and aspirations of the Cree and Naskapi and the results of months and years of discussion and negotiations are before us in this Bill. I call on my fellow parliamentarians to follow through as quickly as possible on our obligation arising out of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

[English]

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to participate in the debate on the Cree-Naskapi Act, known as Bill C-46. This particular Act has been long awaited. It has been under negotiation for approximately eight years now. There have been extensive consultations between the Cree, the Naskapi and the Government. Thanks to the leadership and driving force of Grand Chief Billy Diamond of the Cree, the chief of the Naskapi, their very efficient staff, along with the negotiators and staff of the federal Government within the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, these consultations have come to fruition. I want personally to extend my congratulations and thanks to them.

I would also like to thank the Minister for the very kind remarks which he made this morning publicly as well as privately. I appreciate that. I congratulate the Minister for honouring his commitment to have this legislation tabled in the House before the end of the session. I congratulate him because it is the only commitment he has been able to keep so far, and this just made it under the wire at that. One of the candidates running for the leadership of the Liberal Party said that you should not go to the locker room before the game is

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over. I can assure you that the Minister has not gone to the locker room, he was in the House this morning and presented the Bill. I do not think he has gone to the locker room, although he may have this afternoon because he is not here, as yet.

We had a misunderstanding over the last couple of days regarding this Bill. It was decided that it would receive first and second reading, go to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and then return to the House for third reading. This was agreed upon by all Parties and the standing committee. The chairman of that committee insisted that this should happen to this Bill. Neither the chairman nor the vice-chairman was available this week. I am sorry that they were not available so that this Bill could be examined in committee after that agreement was made. This is a fairly extensive Bill. I feel badly that the negotiations which were agreed to were, by necessity, changed rather quickly. I hope that in the future when we are dealing with legislation such as this, when agreements are made they will be adhered to.

This Bill is a very significant Bill. It is composed of some 120 pages and some 200 clauses. It deals with a significant portion of the unfinished business stemming from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It institutes Section 9 of that Agreement. It enables the Cree and Naskapi to become the local government authority on Category IA and Category IA-N land. This encompasses an area of approximately 1,300 square miles in the Province of Quebec.

● (1410)

This historic Act, which I believe it is, will apply to eight Cree communities in Quebec and the Naskapi of Quebec. Because I believe this is a historic time for the Cree and the Naskapi, permit me to read into the record the bands and the names of the present Chiefs of those bands: the Great Whale River Band, Chief Robbie Dick; the Chisasibi under the leadership of Chief James Bobbish; the Wemindji under the leadership of Walter Hughboy; the Eastmain Band, Chief Ted Moses; Rupert House, Chief Bill Namagoose; the Nemaska Band under the leadership of Chief Lawrence Jimekin; the Waswanipi under the direction of Chief Abel Kitchen; and Chief Mathew Coon-Come of the Mistassini Band. Of course, there is the Naskapi of Schefferville and their Chief, Joe Guanish.

There are two other people who should be mentioned. They have been very much involved in the negotiations and in encouraging the development of this Bill. They are Philip Awashish, who is the Executive Chief and one of those who was involved in the original negotiations on the James Bay Agreement, as was Chief Ted Moses. Another individual who should be mentioned is Johnny Jolly, who has been the main Cree co-ordinator over the last eight years and has done a marvellous job as well. I felt it fitting that their names should