

*Government Orders*

piece of jurisdiction that we could take over?", the James Bay Agreement was quoted as a reference.

As far as I am concerned, it is still a reference, and just to show you how open-minded Quebecers are, they are now saying: "Even if we are always leading the way, under the present circumstances, we agree with the Crees on the need to update the James Bay Agreement model". This goes to show how open-minded Quebecers are concerning first nations and how far they are ready to go to meet native claims in Quebec.

I have some statistics before me that I should share with you because they come from the assistant to the Minister of Indian Affairs, Professor Bradford Morse, who, in a study he submitted to the task force, gives examples of a new constitutional partnership. As recently as 1992, Professor Morse wrote on the subject of land claims that Quebec was the first Canadian province to accept the continuity of aboriginal titles and to recognize them by trying to negotiate land claim settlements. Professor Morse concluded that, compared with the other provinces, Quebec has adopted a comprehensive position that can be seen as much more favourable to aboriginal people and their rights over their traditional lands.

I think that Professor Morse thus recognizes that the people of Quebec are ahead on land claims. They are so much ahead that, when this study was done, we had already concluded the model agreement I referred to earlier, the James Bay Agreement. However, the proposal that has just been made to the Attikamek-Montagnais was not yet on the table. This proposal would recognize what we call native areas, over which native people will have full jurisdiction. We will negotiate an agreement with them on how to divide the territory, over which they will have complete freedom with regard to, among other things, joint management of natural, non-renewable and other resources.

As far as these native areas are concerned, our proposal to the Attikamek-Montagnais even provides for a 40,000 square kilometre buffer zone, which we have agreed to share with the Attikamek-Montagnais. This shows once again that Quebec is in the vanguard of the drive to improve living conditions for Canada's native people.

On the question of self-government, Professor Morse goes on to say that, of all provincial governments, Quebec is the one that did the most to accommodate the desire of native people to exert more control over their lives and their community affairs.

The James Bay Agreement recognizes whole areas of jurisdiction that now come under the exclusive control of the Cree. These areas include culture, education and health. Instead of telling native people that they must go to all-white hospitals, follow the department's educational programs and comply with the directives from Environment Canada, the James Bay Agreement has put whole areas of jurisdiction under Cree control, and I think it is important to point this out.

• (1700)

The same goes for the language component. I just talked about culture, which is often closely related to language. Indeed, we Quebecers have known for a long time that our culture and our language are closely intertwined. We recognized that was also the case for aboriginal peoples. In that regard, it is rather interesting to see that, for several years now, the Supreme Court has been targeting Quebec's charter of the French language, Bill 101. Yet, that legislation must stay, and I want to tell you about some of its more interesting provisions. Quebec's charter expressly recognizes the right of aboriginals, Indians and Inuit to protect and develop their own language and culture.

The fact that Bill 101 even includes provisions which protect aboriginal languages in our province is an indication of how open minded Quebecers are.

This explains why, as professor wrote, aboriginal people in Quebec are much more successful in terms of preserving their language than those who live elsewhere in Canada. This is a perfectly normal and accepted way of doing things in Quebec where, for a long time now, young Crees have been taking Cree language classes with their own school board, while young Montagnais do the same in Pointe-Bleue or elsewhere.

It must be emphasized that Quebecers have always attached a great deal of importance to aboriginal cultures. We recognize the fact that aboriginals were here before us. We also recognize the fact that they have given us enormous wealth. In order to keep whole segments of these societies from disappearing, Quebecers strongly encourage the protection of aboriginal languages and cultures.

Incidentally, a while ago, Mrs. Beaudoin, the Quebec minister of intergovernmental affairs, submitted a claim to the federal government, which has not yet acted on it. As you know, the James Bay agreement deals with the sharing of costs relating to Crees and Naskapis. There is the James Bay agreement, but there is also the Northeastern Quebec agreement, which primarily concerns Naskapis.

Under that agreement, Quebec pays 25 per cent of the costs related to Crees and Naskapis, while the federal government pays for the rest. In the case of the Inuit, the proportions are reversed. However, some changes have occurred since 1987 regarding the sharing of these costs. Since that year, the birth rate among Crees has increased tremendously. Consequently, there are many more children attending school.

A special effort was made to develop education programs for adults. There is an increased demand for specialized education, including for young Cree children with special needs. The Quebec government pays for that component in the case of non