

As well the people of the Northwest Territories have held two referenda on this question. This was most recently in the spring of 1992 when the question was put by the decision of the assembly of the Northwest Territories and with the sanction of the government leader and cabinet. The question was put to all the people of the Northwest Territories with respect to the western boundary line of the Nunavut settlement agreement being adopted as a new political boundary to establish Nunavut on the eastern side of that line.

I remember the night here in Ottawa, I think it was December 15, 1991, when we had a long and fruitful discussion about whether the federal government had the will to make this commitment which we are about to endorse today. I remember in a sense taking a risk but I did in fact call the Prime Minister and we decided that we could make that commitment which is reflected in article 4 of the land claim agreement. It led to the negotiation of the political accord which I spoke of a moment ago and the ratification vote by the people of Nunavut.

The legislation before us today will literally redraw the map of northern Canada. As well this bill will provide for a new and improved political and economic future for the Inuit of the eastern Arctic. In so doing it will bring benefit to all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

I seek the support of distinguished members on both sides of this House today, because I am confident their support will be forthcoming.

I have every reason to believe that my colleagues will have the vision and foresight to approve this bill, so that the Inuit and other residents in the north will be able to build a better future.

The Nunavut political accord was signed on October 30, 1992, and it will become effective once the legislation before the House today, Bill C-132, is passed.

The creation of a new territory, with its own government, has been a fundamental objective of the Inuit of Nunavut for more than 20 years. An act of Parliament is required to make this dream come true.

I would like to point out that Bill C-132 was drafted with the close co-operation of the Government of the

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Northwest Territories and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, to ensure that it reflects the objectives and intent of the Nunavut political accord.

• (1335)

[*English*]

Bill C-132 provides for the creation of a new territory, Nunavut, translated in Inuktitut meaning "our land", new institutions of government similar to those of the existing territories and will come into effect by 1999 on April 1.

This legislation provides for a transition process to lead us to that point. This will not be a form of aboriginal self-government in the usual ethnic sense of the word. It will be a public government to be elected and fully responsible to all the residents of the new territory, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike.

Nevertheless given the Inuit predominance in the region this new public government will naturally reflect and be responsive to their aspirations and ways of doing things.

Bill C-132 is modelled on the Northwest Territories Act which has existed for many years. By this bill the act is modernized and adapted specifically for the needs of the people of Nunavut.

I want to draw members' attention to some of the key features contained in Bill C-132. In keeping with the terms of the political accord, Bill C-132 will provide for the creation of a Nunavut implementation commission. This is an important feature because we are talking about a transitional process.

This commission independent of the governments and of the people of Nunavut through the Nunavut Tungavik will advise the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories along with the successor to TFN to be called Nunavut Tungavik on a range of issues.

A majority of the commission's members will be residents of the Nunavut region. I believe it will be six of nine. The governments of Tungavik will share equally in nominating members of the commission with the other governments, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada in establishing the commission.