

*Government Orders*

The entitlement process requires a referendum of band members before any of the bands can finalize and reach individual agreements. The framework agreement understands that this is important and has agreed to provide reasonable funds for the holding of public meetings and the contacting of band members, some of whom may not live on the reserve but have chosen to live in an urban centre at some distance from the reserve.

The government has agreed to provide reasonable funds to ensure this referendum process is carried out and the people are adequately informed. I have been informed by a number of chiefs involved in the process that the government's interpretation of what reasonable means is different from what is actually necessary to get the message out to these bands.

I urge the government today in my remarks on this important bill to interpret the section about reasonable costs more liberally than it has been doing and to ensure that the flexibility exists for the chief and the council who understand their band membership better than anyone in Ottawa possibly could to interpret the adequate resources required to ensure the referendum process is carried out by a knowledgeable membership. I ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to take this back, discuss it with his officials, and ensure that the chiefs and councils have the adequate resources they need to conduct a fair and knowledgeable referendum on each of their reserves.

We are asked a question about the treaty land entitlement framework agreement settling all land claims in the province of Saskatchewan. We all recognize this is not the end of the process. Treaty land entitlement is land that a band is owed under the terms of the treaties but which has not yet been received. Some bands have other claims with a different legal basis. These other specific claims often arise because reserve land was improperly taken away by the federal government in the past. Specific claims by some of the bands have recently been settled by the federal government, but there are other specific claims outstanding. Those specific claims will be advanced by the bands for negotiation and the government has made clear that it will negotiate on these specific claims issues.

What we have here is simply a framework agreement to provide the basis for the settlement of outstanding entitlements on these 27 bands stemming from the treaties. Specific claims are not being addressed by this particular bill.

The framework agreement costs are shared by the federal and provincial governments with the framework agreement requiring the province of Saskatchewan to cost share land purchase money and purchase money for minerals and to honour payments, for example the reductions in the 1976 formula and the municipal school tax loss compensation. The funding, as I understand it at the moment, is shared 30 per cent provincially and 70 per cent federally. Canada and Saskatchewan have agreed that the province will experience savings as we move along and that Saskatchewan will eventually reimburse Canada an additional amount up to perhaps 19 per cent of the agreement cost based on actual savings over 15 years following the signing of the framework agreement. I am told that Saskatchewan's total cost to be paid out over 12 years is projected to be about \$247 million.

• (1150)

This is an important matter that I could spend a tremendous amount of time speaking about. I simply want to thank the House for the opportunity to say a few words on this legislation and I look forward to the conclusion of this important process.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Before I read this motion I should first apologize to all the bands whose names I am sure to mispronounce. I will attempt to do my best.

**An hon. member:** Could we dispense?

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Yes, we could dispense, but I think it is important for all to know that they are part of this bill.

Mr. Siddon, seconded by Mr. Loiselle, moved:

That 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 Keeseekoowanan, Muskowekwan, Ochapowance, Okanese, Piapot, Star Blanket, Yellowquill, Beards' & Okemasis, Flying Dust, Little Pine, Moosomin, Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head, Muskeg Lake, One Arrow, Pelican Lake, Red Pheasant, Saulteaux, Sweetgrass, Thunderchild, Witcheke 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, be read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to Committee of the Whole.