

YUKON LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I wish to applaud the settlement of the Yukon First Nations land claim.

Many people have put their lives and their hearts into these negotiations on behalf of their people. In fact, in 1905, Chief Jim Boss first advocated the justice of a land claim in the Yukon. Negotiations which have settled this claim have taken place over the last 17 years.

Yesterday, in celebration of the claim, I was pleased to see three members who came down to Ottawa in 1973 to advocate that land claim. They were the respected Indian elder Elijah Smith, the creator of the Yukon Native Brotherhood, Judy Gingell, the Chair of the Council of Yukon Indians and Sam Johnston, the present Speaker of the Yukon Legislature.

• (1410)

I also congratulate the Yukon territorial government, the federal government and the work of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in reaching this settlement which is a model of consensus making.

In celebrating this, I would urge the minister to continue his strong work on behalf of the Dene-Métis claims so that we can have true justice for land claims in the north of Canada.

* * *

FATHER RUFINO NICCACCI

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Madam Speaker, I want to share with the House a glorious moment in the life of our country that occurred last night in Toronto.

Over 700 members of the Canadian Italian and Jewish communities in Toronto, with many others packed a hall to honour the memory of a Franciscan monk, Father Rufino Niccacci of Assisi, Italy who, during the Nazi holocaust in Italy, helped to save thousands of Jews from destruction. His success owed much to the support of the entire population of Assisi, who also risked their lives to shield and protect fellow citizens whose only offence was to be Jewish.

S. O. 31

Here in Canada decades later, we reflected on the watchword of Father Rufino Niccacci drawn from the Bible: "I am my brother's keeper" and we committed ourselves to struggle against discrimination and racism. We launched and funded a new joint committee to take up this mission.

The beautiful face of multiculturalism was radiant in Toronto last night.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, this past weekend marked the expiry of the FRDA between the federal government and my province of British Columbia.

Across Canada these agreements represent the largest environmental rehabilitation program ever undertaken, as well as one of the finest examples of the benefits of federal-provincial co-operation.

Moreover, the agreement represents thousands of jobs, not just jobs for today but jobs for future generations.

On behalf of the people of British Columbia I am stating emphatically that although the agreement has expired, we must not allow the FRDA initiative to die. The original agreement accomplished a lot. The new agreement that we must negotiate will do likewise.

Few government initiatives are as essential for both environmental and economic reasons. We must insist on the early renewal of this agreement.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Madam Speaker, the Conservative government's plan to tax every service we receive from the time we are born until we die demonstrates that this government does not care about the people of this country or what they are going through.

The proposed goods and services tax will be applied to the cost of funeral arrangements. It will have a dramatic impact on the bereaved citizens of Canada.

The effect of the GST on such services as the prepaid funeral arrangement will cause an administrative nightmare for those in the funeral business.