

Government Orders

• (1020)

As such they are indicative of co-operative land management regimes which will greatly benefit Canada's internationally renowned national park systems.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, basically, the purpose of Bill C-59 is to amend the National Parks Act to bring it into line with the two agreements concluded with two native peoples, or should I say, three.

[*English*]

First, the act we are debating here today allows for the creation of a wildlife advisory board for Wood Buffalo National Park. It does so with the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan. It allows for traditional aboriginal hunting activities within the park as negotiated in the 1986 Cree Chipewyan Specific Land Claim.

We support this and we would like to congratulate all those on the aboriginal side who were involved for their patience and their perseverance.

Second, the act permits the establishment of the Gwaii Haanas South Moresby National Park Reserve under the National Parks Act as established by the British Columbia Canada Agreement.

Some time ago we, the Liberal Party, supported the all-party motion on South Moresby in the House. Even more specifically, I am proud to say it was a Liberal government that drew the line in the map which first indicated federal interest in South Moresby.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that because of a previous commitment my colleague, the hon. member for Davenport, cannot be here. As Minister of the Environment, he was the person who took the lead on this. Indeed, it is a tribute to his vision that we are here today.

The act we are in the process of debating authorizes the Minister of the Environment to enter into an agreement with the Council of the Haida Nation respecting the shared management and operation of the park. This agreement was ratified by the Haida Nation in a May 19, 1990 referendum. It is clear that occasionally referendums can work.

Let me highlight some parts of this agreement. The Haida will be authorized to carry on specific cultural and traditional renewable resource harvesting activities. Commitments are made to encourage Haida employ-

ment with the Canadian Parks Service and other economic opportunities associated with a national park reserve.

Following the aforementioned agreement, legislation was also required to authorize cultural activities and traditional renewable resource harvesting activities since harvesting of plants and animals is contrary to the National Parks Act unless specific amendments permit it. That is what Bill C-59 is all about.

Earlier on, the Haida Nation was concerned with the wording of the bill when it was introduced for first reading in February. I have been informed they are now satisfied and that is crucial, as far as my party is concerned, with the amendments that have been proposed by the government. The final act will now reflect the agreement that was reached some years ago.

We can only deplore that it has taken so long to bring forth this bill and to fulfil the agreement that was reached with the Haida Nation and with the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan.

In these circumstances my party will support the bill as amended. My colleague later on will be expressing his views and other views from a slightly different perspective on this bill but within the context of our support.

I point out to the House how ironic it is that we stand up here giving all-party support to this bill on the day after the government announced its decision in the case of the Oldman dam.

The Oldman dam demonstrates the desperate need in this country for us to come up with a way and a policy of dealing with the environment and all aboriginal Canadians that is fair, by sitting down and discussing and negotiating, not by imposing, not by ducking and weaving and not by turning our backs on our very clear and strong fiduciary relationship.

Yesterday, this government, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Transport after having hidden, camouflaged and kept away from the Canadian people for over a week the review panel's report on the Oldman dam, finally brought it forth in a way that does not do the government credit. At the same time that they brought it forth, they clearly rejected the number one recommendation of the panel report. At the same time as they brought it forth, they refused to give us the full report until it was far too late and we had to make do with a summary.