

Government Orders

With the passing of this legislation and the support of this House we will see a real step forward for Yukon and I believe for Canada.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member representing Yukon, and I know that her discourse was passionate and heartfelt, is it better in her estimation to pretend problems do not exist, to consider everything that is done in this House on behalf of the Indians of Canada since the beginning of our recorded history, if the perpetuation of that and the situation that the aboriginals in our country live in today is representative of the kind of compassion that this House has afforded them, if this is worthy of continuing, or perhaps some of the foundations and some of the ideas that this House taken as a self-righteous mantra should be questioned.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the member's question correctly I think it is an appropriate question. It is true that this Parliament historically has not respected the First Nations people of this country, historically has implemented legislation which resulted for example in Indians not having the vote until the 1960s. It has passed legislation in the past that has made a distinction between who and who is not an Indian through defining status Indians.

Historic wrongs can be righted. What is being acknowledged in this legislation is the right of First Nations people who were not defeated in a war, who were not a conquered people, to the lands which they occupied before both the hon. member's and my ancestors came here.

The honour in this form of legislation and the honour that comes to this Parliament with this legislation is that we can acknowledge that those were historically wrong decisions made in the cultural context of the time and that it is possible to address those in a way that benefits First Nations people, acknowledges their rights and responsibilities, but also, as do this legislation and the companion pieces, Bills C-33 and C-34, serve to enhance the rights and responsibilities of all Yukoners.

• (1655)

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a couple of comments and then I ask a question of the hon. member for Yukon.

I would like to say that because the Reform Party and I in particular was against the legislation that was in front of the House, it does not mean that we are against resolving land claims. We are against the kind of land claims that have been brought in front of this House today for the reasons that I outlined: the generosity of the agreements, the fact that it created more bureaucracy and the fact that entitlement to existing programs was guaranteed in perpetuity under those agreements.

If the hon. member is as concerned as she appears to be for the welfare of native people, maybe she will join with me and go and talk to her friends in Victoria who have designated the Tatshenshini-Alsek area a world class park, a class A provincial park. Then maybe she will join with me in trying to convince our friends across the way that we will withdraw the nomination to declare that area a world class heritage site.

I ask the hon. member will she join with me in those efforts?

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, certainly I again think it ironic that the member for Skeena has suddenly discovered the interests of the First Nations people of Yukon. I can assure the member that as the representative for Yukon, representing all of the people of Yukon, Chief Paul Birckel has been very effective in making his views known to the British Columbia government. The British Columbia government has responded.

While I am the representative of the Champagne Aishihik band in this House, I have always been extremely impressed and respectful of the ability of Chief Paul Birckel and the Champagne Aishihik band to very effectively represent themselves. Again I underline this is one of the four bands in the legislation that came before this House in the spring. I think it would have made the argument of the hon. member for Skeena much stronger had he supported the Champagne Aishihik band at that time.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week in this House the minister of Indian affairs indicated that the Reform caucus had never supported an aboriginal bill in this House. Last week we had already supported Bill C-36, the Split Lake Cree agreement in northern Manitoba. That went through third reading and we supported it at third reading last Friday.

The member for Yukon stereotyped our caucus in her speech and the member for Yukon would be the first one to complain if anyone else were to do any stereotyping. I would like the member for Yukon to answer to that.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, I think the people who were stereotyped here were the First Nations by the member who called them lazy children and their treatment being like a south sea island. I am greatly disappointed in the leader of the Reform Party who then promoted that member to the front benches.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway—Human Rights; the hon. member for Chambly—Customs Brokers; the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—VIA Rail; the hon. member for Kildersley—Lloydminster—Ethics.