

I am also grateful to the House for the kindness in allowing me to delay my participation in this debate until after Question Period, but I feel I must extend an apology to those who are visiting us from the Inuit community for having to submit them to the debate that took place during Question Period. Hopefully we are now getting on to better things.

The Nunavut claim settlement and the creation of the territory of Nunavut is something of which all Canadians can be proud. It is something that all Canadians and this Parliament should be celebrating today. We should be recognizing it as a great event in the progress of Canada's Confederation and Canada's political development. This is the first political boundary change in Canada since the addition of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1949, I think it was. This is the first great change in the structure of Canada since that time.

I want to associate myself with the remarks of the member for Nunatsiak who congratulated all of those Inuit people who took part in the negotiations from the very beginning, initiating the proposal in the first place and pursuing the proposal over a 20-year period—a fifth of a century—with patience, persistence and persuasiveness until they reached this point where Nunavut is almost a reality, depending on the outcome of the debate in this House today and where the land claims settlement is finally to be ratified by the House of Commons. I would like to associate myself with that member in indicating that the Inuit people who have been involved in pursuing this issue and involved in the negotiations have done a terrific job.

I would also like to add something because it occurred, I suppose, right up until the last couple of days. The Inuit negotiators have always been understanding, open and willing to negotiate with those aboriginal groups on their borders who felt that there were conflicting claims within the Nunavut settlement area. They wanted to do what they could either to facilitate resolving those claims when the need was to approach the government or other parties, or when it was helpful to change the wording in the agreements themselves.

They were always willing to provide agreements that satisfied in particular the Denesuline from northern Saskatchewan and from northern Manitoba. They were

willing to provide them with assurance that this agreement and this legislation did not prejudice any treaty rights or any process to resolve their concerns about treaty rights north of 60 degrees.

The Inuit negotiators have always been open, understanding and willing to discuss with the people on their borders the methods for resolving the difficulties that they may have with the creation of Nunavut and also how those aboriginal groups can still retail their right of action to pursue their treaty rights.

• (1230)

I am not really feeling comfortable about doing this next part but I would also like to congratulate the government and the minister of Indian affairs for the role he has played in finally bringing this process after a fifth of a century to a conclusion. I think it is a happy conclusion for all concerned.

This is something that can go on the credit side of the ledger as far as this government is concerned. I am not willing to say that about a lot of the other things that the minister has done or neglects to do. However in this case I think one will find that the House almost universally accepts that in this case he has done a good thing.

He might have been prodded into it and in many cases persuaded and cajoled. In any case the government for the most part has responded in the right way. For that reason we see the creation today of the settlement of the Nunavut land claims settlements and also the creation of the new territory of Nunavut.

I do not want to be too positive about the minister in these discussions for reasons one may find out later. However we have some concerns about the legislation. They are concerns that result from leaks of polling that were done by a Decima poll which suggest that Canadians are concerned about the amount of money that is being given to the Inuit people under this legislation.

The newspaper reports on this issue have indicated that it could be anywhere from \$580 million 1989 Canadian dollars meaning something like \$1.14 billion discounted Canadian dollars over time. Really, if we analyse the situation closely then the wording of these agreements should actually reflect the truth of the matter.