

Government Orders

I realize the act states in the beginning that it is the chief commissioner plus four and there is quite a good dissertation on how the four are selected, including the chief. I do not quite understand how this fifth one came to be. In that relationship also in the term of office, I understand the chief commissioner is a three-year term of appointment and the others are for two-year terms. Does the hon. member know if there is any number of reappointments or consecutive terms, that type of thing?

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, yes the fifth commissioner who is of course the chair of the representatives, is chosen through consultation among the two governments and the First Nations who are part of the treaty process. It is done essentially by a consultative process and agreement in principle on an individual.

That was the case with Chuck Connaghan who served as the first chief commissioner and who set up the process. It was also the case for Alec Robertson who is currently the chief commissioner.

With reference to the period of time, I understand the member is correct. There is a set period of two years but reappointment is quite in order. If any of the organizations, be it either of the governments or the First Nations people, wish to reappoint one of their appointees, that is perfectly in order and would happen. It is also true that the chief commissioner can be reappointed, although I have to say that is my understanding rather than my firm knowledge. I will get absolutely accurate information for the hon. member.

It is important to make sure that in such an organization with five people in it we do not come to the end of the period of appointment and then start afresh with new commissioners. As the hon. member quite correctly pointed out in her question to the hon. member for Western Arctic, this is a difficult issue with respect to time. A continuity of personnel will be most important in making sure that we do not slide backward at any point in the process. I will get the actual terms dealing with the period of appointment for the hon. member.

• (1615)

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of Bill C-107 today.

In 1990 Price Waterhouse estimated, as the hon. member who just spoke indicated, that about \$1 billion of expenditures involving up to 1,500 jobs in the mining and forestry sector were likely to be affected if claims were not resolved. When we hear these numbers we must keep in mind that these are only two industry sectors and this study was over five years ago. In that report Price Waterhouse indicated that comprehensive land claims generate uncertainty for companies operating in British Columbia. I will get back to the factor of uncertainty.

Factors creating uncertainty include right of access to land and resources, possibility of production or shipment disruptions affecting reliability as suppliers, and possibility of unsatisfactory compensation if a company is affected by a land claim settlement.

Forestry and mining companies reported that they required a premium to invest in British Columbia rather than elsewhere because of the uncertainties related to comprehensive claims. Currently the premium is generally less than 1 per cent but it is expected to rise in the future. As indicated, the economic impact on the province of British Columbia is substantial.

The report goes on to indicate that uncertainty surrounding settlement of the land claims issue will ultimately have an impact on the provincial economy. It is estimated that almost \$1 billion of currently proposed mining and forestry industry investments could be affected by the non-settlement of comprehensive land claims, although land claims are generally not the only issue to be resolved before development can proceed.

The economic impacts of such delays or cancellations could be summarized as follows: \$50 million of capital expenditures could be lost each year; \$75 million of capital expenditures could be delayed resulting in both lost opportunities and continued operation of less than efficient plants; and some 100 jobs stand not to be created each year because of the economic uncertainty. Such loss of growth of primary industry jobs means that the service sector will also be impacted and grow more slowly. Using generally accepted employment multipliers this is equivalent to a further 200 jobs not created throughout the province each year which might otherwise materialize.

The report indicates based on the projects identified in the survey that ultimately some 1,500 permanent jobs could be impacted, together with related indirect and induced employment.

It is important to refer to particular parts of the report because of the details contained therein. It is important to look at different aspects. There is reference made to the mining industry. The situation is a bit different at the mining development stage. A number of the participants indicated that they expected difficulties from unsettled land claims. Together the projects the participants indicated they had problems with represent about \$680 million in capital expenditures.

Extrapolating the results and analysing expected impacts, Price Waterhouse estimated that the mining investment of about \$100 million a year was likely to be affected by uncertainties related to comprehensive land claims in British Columbia. This represents about 12 per cent of annual private and public capital investment in the British Columbia mining industry. Based on the survey results about half the projects affected were expected to experience delays of about three years. The other half were expected to be cancelled.