

Government Orders

• (1045)

And the division bells having rung:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the chief government Whip to defer the vote until a later time.

[Translation]

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the recorded division on the question now before the House stands deferred until the ordinary time of daily adjournment on Monday, when the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

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[English]

SASKATCHEWAN TREATY LAND ENTITLEMENT ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that Bill C-104, an act respecting an agreement regarding treaty land entitlement in Saskatchewan entered into on September 22, 1992 among Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada, Her Majesty the Queen in right of Saskatchewan and the Keeseekoose, Muskowekwan, Ochapowace, Okanese, Piapot, Star Blanket, Yellowquill, Beady's & Okemasis, Flying Dust, Little Pine, Moosomin, Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head, Muskeg Lake, One Arrow, Pelican Lake, Red Pheasant, Saulteaux, Sweetgrass, Thunderchild, Witchehan Lake, Canoe Lake and English River bands, and respecting an agreement regarding treaty land entitlement in Saskatchewan entered into on September 23, 1992 among Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada, Her Majesty the Queen in right of Saskatchewan and the Nekaneet band, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to address the House on Bill C-104, the Saskatchewan treaty land entitlement act.

This bill will provide for the implementation of two historic agreements signed on September 22 and September 23, 1992. The first is the Saskatchewan treaty land entitlement framework agreement and the second

is the Nekaneet treaty land entitlement settlement agreement.

Together these agreements will bring to an end more than 100 years of uncertainty, frustration and missed opportunities for 27 First Nations bands in the province of Saskatchewan. The legislation before the House today is technical in nature. It essentially provides a legislative framework for implementing certain elements of the treaty land entitlement agreements.

However the historic, social and economic significance of Bill C-104 must not be underestimated. I want to use my time today to put that significance in a proper perspective.

This is truly a major achievement for the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan but it is most important for the 27 remaining bands in the province of Saskatchewan which have had the shortfall in their treaty land entitlement validated and accepted by the two governments but never fulfilled. It now falls to us, through this legislation, to complete those undertakings made in solemn treaties many decades ago.

Hon. members may recall that more than two years ago, on September 24, 1990, the Prime Minister stood in this House and outlined an ambitious program to create a new relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. A principal element of this native agenda was a commitment to accelerate the settlement of specific and comprehensive land claims and treaty land entitlements.

Over the past 24 months remarkable progress has been made toward achieving this important goal. Among other things, this government has introduced a new initiative to ensure that specific claims are dealt with more quickly and equitably.

The results speak for themselves. Dozens of specific claims have now been settled using the new process and many more are being actively negotiated. Under that initiative the government proceeded to establish a specific claims commission to provide, independent of the prerogatives of the government, of my department and the Department of Justice, a means of independently reviewing specific claims under an independent commission to determine if all measures of fairness were being applied.