

Private Members' Business

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the motion as moved by the minister. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being 2 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
BUSINESS – MOTIONS**

[English]

NORTHERN QUEBEC

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL CONSTITUENCY

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should introduce legislation to provide an additional constituency in Northern Quebec which would be identical to the territory covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975 and thereby provide better representation for the people of Northern Quebec and, in particular, for the Inuit, Cree and Naskapi citizens who are the majority in this area.

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of this motion is to provide a new constituency in the extreme north of Quebec where the great majority of the population is Cree, Inuit or Naskapi. The area for the constituency that I have in mind is the area which would be more or less similar to the area covered in the James Bay Agreement of 1975.

In 1975 a land claim settlement was arrived at with respect to the Cree and the Inuit living in the north of Quebec. It was followed a few years later by a companion agreement with respect to the Naskapi who live on the more eastern side of the same territory.

At the present time, these aboriginal people living in the north of Quebec are not properly represented. I am not saying that the individual members of Parliament who represent those constituencies are bad members of Parliament, but they do not truly reflect the people who live in the far north of Quebec.

Right now in this area there are two constituencies. One of the constituencies, Manicouagan, is on the eastern side of that territory and runs from the St. Lawrence River right up to Hudson Strait and includes the more southern communities—one can call them southern in respect of that area but they are quite north—of Sept-Îles, Port-Cartier, Baie Comeau, and so on.

The majority of the population in the Manicouagan riding is in the southern part of that constituency, near the St. Lawrence River. Consequently the control of the constituency is with those people who are traditional Quebecois people and not aboriginal people.

The other constituency, which is on the western side of the area, is the constituency of Abitibi. It includes the southern communities of Rouyn, Noranda, Val d'Or, and so on. These communities, as well, control what happens in that constituency of Abitibi, and the people in the far north have very little to say.

Rather than have two constituencies which run right up to Hudson Strait and which are divided by a line that runs north and south, I am suggesting that we cut off the northern part of Quebec with a line that would run east and west and form a new constituency which would more or less include the same territory as the territory of the James Bay Agreement. The Quebecois cities of Sept-Îles, Baie Comeau, Port Cartier, Rouyn, Noranda, Val d'Or, and so on, would be south of that constituency and would belong to properly composed traditional Quebec constituencies.

I am not proposing that we take away one of the constituencies now allocated to Quebec for this purpose. Right now Quebec has 75 seats. I am suggesting that we have a 76th seat to deal with this very special need and very special proposal. Of course such a constituency would have fewer than the average population of most constituencies in Canada. The population would be more or less 20,000 people north of that line. By the way, that line would run near the 52nd parallel.

I must point out that in a sense it would be equivalent to the new constituency of Labrador, which is now a single constituency. Since 1988 the constituency of Labrador does not contain any territory on the island of Newfoundland, and that is new since 1988. It was done for the same purposes as I am suggesting now for the north of Quebec, but the southern boundary of this new