

Government Orders

Enhanced aboriginal involvement in environmental management is also provided for. Such arrangements, however, recognize that government has an overriding obligation to ensure resource conservation, to protect the interests of all users, to respect international agreements and to manage renewable resources within its jurisdiction.

If an aboriginal group's traditional activities have extended to offshore areas, their claim settlement may include offshore wildlife harvesting rights.

The House should be aware that in its efforts to clarify the rights of aboriginal people the federal government does not intend to diminish the rights of others. Public and third party interests will be respected in the negotiation of claim settlements and if affected they will be dealt with equitably.

I hope my colleagues appreciate the long and complex process that has brought us to second reading of Bill C-16. I urge members to support the bill. Its passage will benefit all Canadians as well as help First Nations become strong and prosperous. I hope all bands associated with the Sahtu Tribal Council will have a happy and prosperous future as a result of this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member's speech, and I wish he would expand on the five stages and the process around what is referred to in English as a comprehensive agreement. The first two stages the hon. member mentioned were initial negotiations, when issues are identified for discussion, and substantive negotiations to identify all aspects of the issues, the entire process being financed by the federal government.

Earlier in my speech, I said that, to justify raising the Indian Affairs budget, perhaps the government would like to give us a preview of its plans for further negotiations. Could the hon. member tell us whether the Liberal government plans to increase the level and number of negotiations of the kind we are discussing today, which would partly justify maintaining and even increasing the Indian Affairs budget?

I would also appreciate it if he would share with us his views on the involvement of the provincial governments in these agreements, although I am aware that today we have the involvement of the government of the Northwest Territories, which is not quite a provincial government. I would appreciate it if he would explain how he sees the involvement of the provincial governments in the negotiations around land claims.

[*English*]

Mr. Adams: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his interest and his questions. I listened with great interest to his remarks.

I made it clear that the government was very keen to move forward with claims settlements. I am afraid I cannot comment on the details of the budget. Unlike the hon. member this is not one of my specialty areas. However I would be glad to find out the relationship between our plans to speed up negotiations and the budget, if he so wishes.

With regard to the question of involvement of the provinces, in my speech I specifically mentioned that the case of the Northwest Territories was quite special. In that area the federal government still has a great deal of control. Nevertheless, despite that, the federal government involved the NWT government in these negotiations because it was the proper thing to do.

As I also pointed out, if that is proper in the case of the NWT government, where I suppose it could be argued that the federal government need not have involved that level of government, it is even more true in the case of the provinces. The federal government will involve the provinces in equivalent negotiations in the future.

• (1335)

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the presentation and I have a couple of questions for the member.

The member outlined two different types of land claims in Canada and how they are dealt with. He explained that the particular agreement falls under the comprehensive land claim policy which states that under the comprehensive land claim agreement entitlement to lands not dealt with under treaty fall in this category.

In my opinion this particular land area is clearly dealt with under treaty 11. Also in my opinion the Government of Canada has fulfilled its obligation under treaty 11 in every way possible. How is this particular land claim justified under that particular area?

Mr. Adams: Madam Speaker, although I have an opinion on the status of treaty 11 and the outcomes which have not appeared from that treaty, in this case I would like to take the question under advisement.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the legal base that the hon. member laid out. I thank him for placing that on the record. I am sure it will be the subject of consultation and examination.

Would the member give the House a view on the question of the fee simple aspect of this agreement? Does the member concur that fee simple transfer on such a broad basis as is undergone in this agreement goes beyond any legal precedent we have seen in Canada?

Mr. Adams: Madam Speaker, I have to say I am not familiar with all the legal precedents, but it does seem to me that one of the bases of these claims negotiations is that there are groups of people who have variously occupied very large areas. It seems to