



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 149 • NUMBER 65

TLA'AMIN FINAL AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading of Bill C-34

Speech by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Tuesday, June 3, 2014

THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 3, 2014

TLA'AMIN FINAL AGREEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Raine, seconded by the Honourable Senator LeBreton, P.C., for the second reading of Bill C-34, An Act to give effect to the Tla'amin Final Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill C-34. Unfortunately, I wasn't here for the comments by the Honourable Senator Raine, but I have read them and concur with all of her comments. I found her speech to be very enlightening.

We support this bill for a number of reasons. I would like to review the benefits that will come from the Tla'amin Final Agreement.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal rights and title. However, in the absence of a treaty, there is uncertainty as to the nature, scope and content of those rights. Because there are very few historic treaties in British Columbia, the vast majority of the province's land base is subject to outstanding Aboriginal claims and to rights, titles and resources. This has led to disruptions and discouraged economic activity, capital investment and business opportunities.

The Tla'amin Nation was one of the first nations to step forward and enter into the treaty process. Negotiation is the preferred method for settling claims. Negotiations lead to resolutions that balance the rights of all Canadians. This approach deals with Aboriginal concerns based on openness, transparency and collaboration, reducing uncertainty, litigation and conflict for everyone.

With this proactive approach, a final agreement rewards all Canadians with an equitable and honourable society. Canada believes that the Tla'amin Final Agreement is fair and equitable, as do I, and that it respects the existing rights of third parties.

• (1700)

A fundamental goal of a treaty is to achieve certainty. This means the ownership and use of lands and resources will be clear for all parties and will create opportunities for the First Nation and will result in predictability for continued development and growth in the province.

The Tla'amin Final Agreement will bring certainty with respect to all of the Tla'amin Nation's Aboriginal rights, including title, and resolve its claims to its traditional territory — approximately 609,000 hectares. This settlement clarifies land and resource ownership, thereby helping to create a positive and stable investment climate in this region. This certainly will bring stability and economic benefits for the Tla'amin Nation, government, industry and all Canadians.

The final agreement provides the Tla'amin Nation with land, resources, self-government and other rights. These authorities and resources will help the Tla'amin Nation to take control over its affairs, build a sustainable economy, create jobs for its citizens, enhance living standards for all its citizens and contribute to the regional economy.

The Tla'amin Nation will be responsible for its own governance, and the final agreement provides that the Tla'amin Nation will bear an increasing proportion of its operating costs as it develops its economy and generates new sources of revenue.

I hope this agreement goes to committee and returns quickly to this place.