

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

same time that the members of the council themselves, as individuals, had unanimously stated that they did not want provincial status at this time.

Mr. Honey: Then could I ask my hon. friend whether that decision was taken unanimously subsequent to this resolution?

Mr. Nielsen: No; it was their position prior to and subsequent to the resolution, and at the time the minister was there.

Mr. Honey: As I have already said, the hon. member is a very skilled advocate and he is arguing a case that was overstated by the Territorial Council. I think he said this morning that he had authority to argue it, and I think he did a good job. But at the same time he is arguing a situation that was overstated, and he is now bringing it back—I am pleased he is doing this—to a more reasonable and rational position.

The hon. member's case this morning was not far removed from the position of the government as stated last week by the minister when he visited Whitehorse. For the balance of the time remaining to me I would first of all reiterate and place on the record the position of the government as enunciated by the minister. I have put on the record the position of the Territorial Council. I repeat that I think my hon. friend in his speech this morning moved substantially from that position. I am very pleased he did. I now want to compare the position that he took this morning with the position of the government as enunciated by the minister.

I refer at this point to the speech of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development before the Yukon Territorial Council on November 12. The minister first dealt with the matter of constitutional development and had this to say:

It is becoming apparent to me that in considering constitutional development in the north we must keep two major objectives in mind. The first objective is to protect and further the legitimate interests of the Canadian people in developments in the north—in its economic development and particularly resource development and the potentially immense wealth that may result from this; in the economic and social condition of all residents of the north, as fellow Canadians, and particularly the indigenous peoples; in the development and maintenance of transportation, communication and all of the many social institutions that together form the necessary base for economic development and for further advances in social development; in that continued sovereignty over the Canadian north—on the continent and beyond it—that has been established by our presence and administration there; and in the role of the north in Canadian continental defence.

The second objective, closely linked to the first, is to accommodate the desire of many in the north for a greater measure of self-government, and to do this within Canadian democratic traditions, institutions and values.

Mr. Nielsen: That should have been the first, not the second.

Mr. Honey: Perhaps it makes a difference, but in any event I want to put it on the record. This is the position of the government, and as I say, I do not think it is too much different from the position argued by the hon. member this morning. The minister then went on to ask for support, co-operation and consultation, having spoken of the measures of success that had been attained by the people of the Yukon, the civil service of the Territory and administration in the Yukon. The minister stated that these were matters that certainly weighed in favour of the argument for greater autonomy for the Territory.

Mr. Nielsen: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Honey: Yes.

Mr. Nielsen: If they had not been successful, surely the minister would have fired them. Thank goodness he does have confidence in these people.

Mr. Honey: As I have said, these were the things that impressed the minister in the movement for more autonomy in the Yukon. Having referred to these things, he went on to say:

● (3:30 p.m.)

Yet despite this real measure of success there are clearly limits to the extent to which full responsible government can be vested in the people of the Yukon at this time. With the government of Canada you recognize, I am certain, that in a territory as large as the four Maritime provinces combined, of a physical rigour and hardship that poses a special challenge to government, and with a resident population of still fewer than 18,000 you cannot hope to provide from local revenues alone a level of public services that will maintain the social, economic and cultural development of all territorial residents at a level commensurate with the normal expectation of Canadian people generally. The heavy dependence on federal subsidies and on outside capital for resource development, and the uncertain revenue anticipated in return, moreover, places the responsibility for economic development beyond the competence of the people of the Yukon, working alone. For the current fiscal year, the total expenditures by the federal government and the government of the Yukon Territory on provincial-type programs will be in the order of \$32 million. This compares with Territorial and other provincial-type revenues, including resource revenues of \$12 million.