

the federal government of the day tabled a bill to divide the Northwest Territories but it did not get passed.

[*Translation*]

The people of the central, eastern and high Arctic have always felt isolated from the western part of the Northwest Territories. There are very real differences between east and west that can only be appreciated by the people who live there.

As I mentioned earlier, the Northwest Territories is one-third of the land mass of Canada. If one looks at a map of Canada, east of the border with the Yukon and south of the 60th parallel, five provinces fit under the same area covered by the Northwest Territories. The difficulties and complexities involved in administering one-third of Canada as one single jurisdiction are enormous. Variety, differences, and distance characterize the existing Northwest Territories.

The Indian and Inuit peoples of the Northwest Territories are different peoples. Their histories, cultures and languages are different. The Dene homeland, Denendeh, is in the western Arctic, whereas the Inuit of Nunavut live in the east and along the coasts. The geography is different between east and west, the wildlife is different and the lifestyles are different. As a result of these many differences, there has always been a strong push by the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories for governments that are closer and more responsive to them and for governments that respect and reflect their cultures.

[*English*]

Numerous proposals for division and political development have been put forward over the years by Inuit, Dene and non-aboriginal people. The existing government of the Northwest Territories has been involved in many of these efforts. The people of the NWT have also been fully involved.

On April 14, 1982, 56 per cent of NWT voters in the territorial plebiscite supported division. In May 1992 NWT voters supported the boundary line for division, which is reflected in this bill. It is the land claim boundary line.

I want Canadians to get a good understanding of how far away the seat of the existing territorial government is from the people in the eastern Arctic.

### *Government Orders*

• (1400)

Currently, if people live in the Baffin region, say in Broughton Island or Pangnirtung they live north of Montreal, Quebec but their territorial capital is in Yellowknife, north of Edmonton, Alberta. No other Canadian citizen has to deal with a capital city that is the equivalent of four or five provinces away.

With the establishment of the Nunavut territory we hope to establish a capital and a government that are closer to the people.

That is just part of the hope of Nunavut. There is much more promise here but there is also much challenge.

[*Translation*]

I want now to turn my attention to the substance of this bill. This bill provides a framework for the establishment of the Nunavut territory. Much hard work is yet to come.

Under this bill, Nunavut will not be created tomorrow. The government of Nunavut will be established over time, gradually taking over powers, programs and services at a pace it is to determine itself. In 1999 the first legislative assembly of the new Nunavut territory will be elected. Assumption of the full range of territorial powers is not foreseen until the year 2008.

Initially, the Nunavut government will look very much like the existing Governments of the Northwest Territories and Yukon. It will have an elected legislative assembly, a cabinet and a territorial court.

[*English*]

The government of Nunavut will be a public government, open to the participation of all residents, Inuit and non-Inuit. The legislative assembly will be elected by all residents. So it is not aboriginal self-government in the sense of a government exclusively for and by aboriginal peoples.

Bill C-132 contains five parts, 79 clauses, and three schedules. Seventy-six other acts of Parliament are amended as a consequence of this bill.

Part I of the bill deals with the establishment and government of Nunavut. It covers matters such as the seat of government, the commissioner of Nunavut, the executive council of Nunavut, the legislature of Nunavut, legislative powers and judicial powers.