

*Yukon Minerals Act*

staked annually has risen from an average of 2,000 to an average of 20,000, with a peak of 44,000 in 1968. The value of mineral production has increased from \$25 million annually to \$125 million for the same period.

Another feature of this bill is to require the approval of the Governor in Council for the export of any mineral or ore from the territory. In so far as currently producing mines are concerned, we will, of course, take steps to accommodate existing sales contracts. Future export approvals will be reviewed on an individual basis; the intent being not to inhibit mineral development and the sales of minerals abroad, but to encourage additional processing within the territory where feasible and to encourage attendant secondary industries. The building of smelting facilities in the Yukon would undoubtedly help the economy by creating employment for perhaps several hundreds of people and at the same time provide additional revenue for both governments.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that there are provisions in the bill for the Governor in Council to establish regulations to bring into effect the purposes and provisions of the act. Section 102 of the bill details the circumstances under which regulations may be made and you will note that these are mainly administrative or having to do with fees and rentals. While such regulations will be mainly administrative, I am aware that the industry wishes to be consulted before they are introduced and I am not opposed to this process of consultation, or indeed, to the inclusion in the bill of suitable provision for this.

I might add that it is the intention of the government when these regulations are promulgated, to raise fees associated with leases and to increase lease rentals to a level approximating those in other jurisdictions. These adjustments will not be onerous and will affect only companies. It is not intended, at this time, to increase those fees for recording claims that would affect the individual prospector.

Conservation in Canada's northern territories, Mr. Speaker, is a matter of importance to all Canadians. The government's and my own department's response to this problem is well known and has received widespread support; the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act, the Northern Inland Waters Act, the amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the reports of the MacKenzie Delta task force on conservation, the close inspection of seismic operations and the development of land-use and wildlife research programs. To enable the government to protect and control the use of the surface of territorial lands within the Yukon, provisions have been made in the bill to make prospecting for minerals, or any work on a mining claim for which a surface lease has not yet been obtained, subject to regulations intended to preserve the delicate ecology of northern Canada. These regulations will be made available in a few weeks. Provision has also been made to facilitate the withdrawal of land from staking for various public purposes as these may be deemed advisable for the public good.

With regard to the regulations I have just outlined, these, of course, will apply to other industries and other

[Mr. Chrétien.]

facets of activities in the north. The mining industry has expressed concern that such regulations might inhibit development of the Yukon. I would like to assure members that discussions with industry have already taken place and I have every expectation that the regulations in their final form will protect the environment, but will not hamper mineral exploration and development unnecessarily.

Mining in the Yukon is moving ahead at an accelerated pace after stagnating for many years. The late sixties were very good years for the Yukon. The value of mineral production increased from \$13 million in 1962 to nearly \$38 million in 1969 and to an estimated \$80 million in 1970. The decade of seventies appears to be even more promising. Mineral production has trebled in the past two years and is expected to double its present value in the next two.

I am excited by the prospects which now exist in the Yukon. I am excited at the prospects for all the north; and the Yukon especially stands at a new take-off point. This has come about as a result of favourable markets, of the incentives provided for the industry and to no small extent as a result of the government's program of providing infrastructure and special assistance in the north. Transportation facilities, townsites, hydro electric power and direct aids have all had their place in resource development in the Yukon.

The government stands ready to assist in the future as it has in the past. We are accelerating the construction of the Dempster Highway and now plan its completion in 1974. This new road will open many attractive areas of the Yukon for development. We are also studying alternative routes for connecting the Yukon to the continental railway system. Road and rail transportation mean growth of the kind so necessary in the north. They make it possible to develop resource based industries which are needed to provide the amenities of life which everyone expects today.

This newly revised act will bring the regulation of mining up to date and will modernize the legal structure on which mining claims are based. The proposed changes will materially assist mineral development in the Yukon and they will provide for a more realistic return to the public. The bill will have far reaching consequences for the Yukon. I have asked, therefore, the chairman of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development to consider holding hearings in the territory. I believe northern residents should be heard. They must have a voice in what affects their future. They must also be directly involved, and given that opportunity to be involved, in what is happening in their part of the country.

• (2:30 p.m.)

Since first reading was given to this bill on November 9, 1970, I have received several representations from the Yukon's mining industry, from territorial residents and from other concerned people. This bill is not perfect and I do not say that it must remain precisely and exactly as drafted. When representations are based on new informa-