

Northwest Territories Act

members to what we are pleased to give lip service in calling this a democratically founded institution, namely, the legislative council of the Northwest Territories. I urge the minister to move such an amendment himself on behalf of the government, and if he is not prepared to do so then I shall.

• (11:40 a.m.)

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, those are also the views which we in this party have expressed from time to time about the appointment of people to legislative and governing bodies. It would seem to me that the reason the council at its recent meeting endorsed the proposal now before us was that at that meeting the elected members were in the minority. In speaking with one of the hon. gentleman of the council afterward I got the impression that the elected members of the council felt that at that time they could not get through a motion to entirely eliminate the appointed members from the council. They thought in this situation half a loaf was better than none at all, and that this would put the elected members in the majority on the council so that at some subsequent meeting of council they could take under advisement more fully the question of having the council wholly and entirely elected. It seems to me that this is reasonable thinking.

Incidentally, I noticed that last night when I asked why the government felt it necessary to have appointed members, the minister in reply said he was giving his own personal view in respect of why appointed members were necessary, and he did not explain what was the view of the government with regard to this matter. I submit the only reason the government desires to appoint people to the council is that this government is putting up a fair amount of money for the operation of the territories and they want to have at least some say in the manner in which that money will be spent.

I submit that the way to do this is not by appointing agents who sit on an elected body, but rather to have that body wholly elected unto itself and, although I do not know the machinery, as the hon. member for the Yukon said if it is desirous to have the advice of technicians and experts in respect of matters such as the expenditure of money and the question of whether some particular projects are more valuable than some other particular projects, the way to do this is by listening to advice given to the council from outside and not by listening to advice given to the council

by people who are there and who have an opportunity to vote on the advice they are giving.

I do not know whether at this time we should go through the process of trying to amend the clause which is before us, but as I am an outsider—as I classified myself last night—in respect of this matter it would be very presumptuous for me to suggest it, even though in conscience and in essence I think it is the correct thing to do. This is something which should be left to those who have an intimate involvement in this area, if it is something they desire. I do not wish to put the hon. member for the Northwest Territories on the spot, but I think he is the only person who can move this amendment.

Mr. Knowles: He has a pretty big spot.

Mr. Howard: Yes, he has a pretty large territory to represent. I should like to suggest that the minister or one of his colleagues might take the initiative in this regard and indicate that the government feel as we do about this; that is, that when we are talking about democratic government elected by, of, and for the people, we should spell that out in clear terms so that all the members on the council are elected by the people who are going to be governed by the members on that council.

Eventually, whether it be following the expected Carrothers report, or some time in between now and then, or some years from now—since we know the tendency of the government to delay and procrastinate on these things—some time there is going to be an elected council or elected government, if we want to mention another name, in the territories. It seems to me we should take the bit in our mouth now and recognize the essence of democracy by saying that so far as the territorial council is concerned it should be wholly elected. We should not wait for some time in the future when the pressures catch up to us and we might do things out of an increased demand by people rather than do them now in a spirit of common sense and leadership.

This is the type of leadership which I think the government should be giving in this matter; that is, to recognize that the system of hand picking agents to sit in with deliberative legislative bodies belongs to the period before the turn of the century, and certainly does not belong in this day and age. I urge the minister to stand up and say he agrees with this, and that one of his colleagues is