

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

from them, there is too much for us to handle, and much too much to be devoted entirely to the Yukon. But isn't that what our federal system is all about?

The minister stated in his speech or, if I may call it, his white paper:

I am convinced that disposing of these alternatives—

These included the alternative of giving the Yukon to B.C., or extending the boundaries of the provinces northward to the Arctic Sea, or joining us with the Mackenzie or other parts of the provinces. He rejected all of these alternatives, and for that part of his policy I applaud him, as we all do the people in the Yukon. That is one nice thing I have to say about his remarks. But I continue with the quotation:

I am convinced that disposing of these alternatives clears the way, simply and effectively, for the consideration of needed reforms that will give you a greater measure of territorial self-government—

I say that is unadulterated balderdash. The minister also says that one of the prime difficulties is bringing the executive and legislative arms of government closer together. This white paper, the minister's remarks, and the telegram which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) sent to members of the Yukon Council yesterday inviting their delegation to Ottawa to discuss these matters with him, all create the impression that the greatest difficulty we are encountering in the Yukon is getting the executive and legislative arms together. The impression is left that the executive is an elected executive. This is simply not so.

The so-called executive in the Yukon is the Commissioner and his two assistants. They are civil servants, and they are not really an executive. They are administrators, and they administer on the instructions of the minister. When the minister speaks of an executive in this white paper, let us call it what it is. Let us substitute the correct term for executive in his statement, and it then states that the difficulty is in getting the legislative arm of the government in closer tune with the civil servants. That is what is intended, and that is what is meant. That is precisely what this devious device would have accomplished if the minister's wishes had been accepted in setting up this committee.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the hon. member. He has just said that the civil servants act under the direction of the minister. Does he not agree that the minister is an elected representative, and has

he such a low opinion of the federal representative elected in the Yukon?

Mr. Nielsen: I certainly do not. The minister will have noted that I have not said any unkind things about him in this House since he first sat on the treasury benches, nor have I done so in my riding. I will continue that course until I have cause to do otherwise. But surely this is what is preventing the minister from granting the legitimate desires of the Yukon. We think he is a great guy. We think he is rather too nice. But what is wrong with people who are elected from among themselves deciding what should be in the curricula of their schools? Why should we have the minister telling us that? The answer is abundantly clear. He would not want his children, no matter where they live, to be told by someone living in Ottawa what they were going to be taught.

It is wrong to have that power residing in the minister. This argument is very compelling and I am sure he must agree with me. He says he wants to strengthen the links between the so-called executive and the legislature. What he means is that he wants to strengthen and entrench the powers of the civil servants over the elected representatives of the people. That is what would be accomplished if this executive committee were set up. The majority of three would be civil servants.

But what is worse, the one elected member of the council invited to sit with these three civil servants would be given responsibility for a department or departments of the territorial government, but the rider is that would be subject to the control of the Commissioner. In plain words, that means subject to the control of the minister, and while we have every confidence in him we do not think that is responsible government.

There is only one body to whom an elected representative should be responsible, and that is the people who voted for him. It is not the civil service. Surely, that is the soundest principle. With great respect for the minister's abilities, capacities and integrity, it is not to him that the elected representative should be responsible. We want to have a word in deciding our own destinies. We want to play a part in making the decisions ourselves. That is our right. It is the right of free people everywhere. It is the right of every Canadian, and if we are to believe the words of the Prime Minister at the constitutional conference last February, it is a right that cannot be withheld from us any longer.