

Yukon and Territorial Lands Act

stripe as those sitting opposite who had the principle of divide and conquer. That is precisely what the motivation seems to be here. The minister can tell all of the council members "Look, you don't want to dissolve, do you?" or "You will dissolve, won't you?"

• (3:00 p.m.)

Surely, consultation, in what the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) so proudly called participatory democracy two years ago, has only one meaning. That meaning is to sit down with the elected representatives of the people and ask their opinion. That is precisely what the reprinted bill provided. It is precisely what this Parliament should provide if they have any understanding in depth of what participatory democracy means. We are fed up with being held under the thumb of "Louis Quatorze". That is what we have here, a colonial system that seems to be perpetuated despite what appeared to be some forward looking amendments.

The committee took hold of the amendments and, crossing party lines, approved them unanimously. Then the minister, I am sure with the advice of his bureaucrats in the ivory tower who are so pathologically reluctant to release power, confused the amendment by constricting and throttling any democracy the committee tried to infuse into the amendment in the first place.

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on this amendment to point out that if the minister really means that he intends to consult and take advice from his territorial council, he is not setting a very good example as far as the parliamentary committee is concerned. As the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) has pointed out, this is the very same situation as when the parliamentary committee made some suggestions. The minister not only consulted with them, but he received some amendments from them. After consultation, they were then in a position to recommend to the House what amendments would be suitable. In the same high-handed fashion that the minister dealt with the parliamentary committee he is now going to deal with the territorial council.

Mr. Nesbitt: Right according to form.

Mr. Aiken: If that is consultation, consultation has no meaning. The words that have been added to this amendment do not mean anything more than the original act meant. They mean nothing more than if the previously considered amendment by the hon. member for Yukon were accepted.

[Mr. Nielsen.]

As hon. members know, consultation is nothing more than a communication of intentions unless you really intend to make it something more realistic. There is no indication from the minister that in consultation he intends to do anything more than make a telephone call, write a letter or even sit and hear opinions. It still does not withdraw this club he has over the head of the territorial council, "If you do not go along with me then I will dissolve you". I do not think that is either participation in the government of the Yukon Territory or consultation in its proper form.

On various occasions consultation has been requested between the government and some other body so that there would be some advance notice of the government's intentions and objections could be raised. In the case of the council, the government has decided that consultation with the council is of no value whatever because they are the people being affected. Unless the government made a firm decision to dissolve the council, consultation would serve no purpose except for twisting the arms of the members of the council to come around to the viewpoint of the government on any given matter.

I made my point about self-government on a previous amendment. There is no point in leaving this residual power with the minister because by doing so the minister could wipe out the council and call a new election. If that power is left there, there will be no self-government.

Mr. Nowlan: I also wish to speak to the amendment of the hon. member for Yukon. It again illustrates the dilemma the minister is confronted with by trying to invoke an archaic, absolute power to dissolve a duly elected council by the stroke of a pen without any real terms of reference or consultation with those who have been duly elected by the people of the north.

As the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) pointed out, the people of the north are not reassured by the minister's interpretation of consultation, yet there was a unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development that there should be this power. I disagree that the power should even be there. The committee recommended that it should only be exercised after consultation with the council. There is an inference that there must be some type of consultation by the minister or Governor in Council with the council duly convened.