

*Northwest Territories*

the ones regarding the transfer to local government of as many functions as can be effectively handled at that level, are commendable. We admit that. The report's concentration on the nitty-gritty of government services, however, is at the same time its chief strength and its chief weakness. While the report contains many comments and conclusions about the need to build on existing experience and success with its local self-government, these comments and conclusions would be equally germane to any outcome of the debate on division.

The tone and substance of the report is based on Mr. Drury's acknowledged premise that the manner in which government programs are administered is more important to the people of the north than the nature of the political structure. This premise is totally at odds with reality. It is at odds with the events which have taken place in the north during the last few years, and it is at odds with the position of the Dene and Inuit organizations which speak for the majority of the residents of the Northwest Territories. It is at odds with the position endorsed by the aid to legislative council of the Northwest Territories and at odds with the statements made by members of the ninth legislative council of the Northwest Territories in seeking to formulate a consensus position on political change. It is at odds with the pronouncements of all candidates for the riding of Nunatsiak and Western Arctic during the last federal election campaign, and that includes the hon. member for Western Arctic.

People in the north have disagreed, sometimes bitterly, about the proper direction of political change and the kind of political structures which should be set in place, but seldom has there been disagreement on the fact that the political questions framed in the north go far beyond tinkering with the provision of government services. In his report, Mr. Drury recognizes that the question of division is a serious one. Nevertheless, he recommends that wide-ranging powers, including full or partial control over Crown lands and resources, should be transferred to Yellowknife. Following this, he suggested that a debate should be initiated in the north to determine whether powers should have been transferred to Yellowknife and whether the Northwest Territories should have been divided. We believe that this is a case of putting the sled before the dogteam.

The report suggests that the people living north of the tree-line should suspend their age-old commitment to a new political unit called Nunavut, watching passively while the Yellowknife bureaucracy is strengthened, and then question the appropriateness of this bureaucracy. The implementation of this report would be totally unacceptable to the people of Nunavut.

Some years ago the Government of Canada committed itself to the settlement of native claims through a process of negotiation with the office of native land claims in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. All aspects of claims, political, economical and cultural, must be considered in those negotiations, as well as many other aspects, such as equity participation on development, and so on. The federal government's appointment of a special representative for its

constitutional development, Mr. Drury, in 1977 bypassed this legitimate process by demanding that the political aspects of claims be channelled through his office and not through these legitimate negotiations. This was, and still is, unacceptable to the Inuit and certainly to the Dene of the Western Arctic.

At the time, this move was somewhat discouraging. However, since then the present Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) has made substantial progress in negotiating the framework for negotiations through which land claims and political development will be settled in the Northwest Territories. This is in direct contradiction to the advisability of implementing the recommendations of the Drury report, and this is the process which we will continue.

I believe I speak for the New Democratic Party when I say that the implementation of the Drury report would result in denying the constitutional right of those peoples to determine their own political future. Therefore, we must oppose the motion of the hon. member for Western Arctic.

**Mr. Ian Watson (Châteauguay):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak today on a subject which has been of interest to me for a long time. I want to speak against the motion of the hon. member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson). The suggestion that we should now, immediately, without further ado, implement the report prepared by Mr. Drury is, to say the least, premature. There are some good things in Mr. Drury's report, some things with which I agree and some with which I do not agree.

**Mr. Yurko:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am sure that the hon. member would not want to mislead the House. The motion does not say that the report should be implemented at this time or any other time. The motion very specifically says:

—consider the advisability of implementing—

How can a government possibly go against considering the advisability of implementing its own report? The motion says nothing about implementing the report at this time, just about considering it. I am sure that the hon. member would not want to mislead the House.

● (1750)

**Mr. Watson:** I will speak against the advisability of implementing the report, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of points which are consistently made when this topic is discussed in the House of Commons and which I feel should be dealt with.

The hon. member for the Western Arctic, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), and occasionally others in the party opposite, referred to the state of colonialism that exists in the north. The hon. member for Western Arctic was a little more moderate—I believe he said quasi colonialism.

The leader of the Conservative party in the Yukon, Mr. Pearson, who for a short period was designated by the former minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as premier, used the term first-class and second-class citizen. Yukoners apparently are not first class citizens, and the same