

Northwest Territories Act

The non-Indian and non-Eskimo population in the territories has a per capita personal cash income of somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$3,000, compared with approximately \$500 for the people who are native to the area. This is a shocking statistical state of affairs and is brought about partly by the blind paternalism on this and former governments.

I am one of those who believe that even though Dean Carrothers will submit his report shortly, that in so far as preparing the basis of constitutional self-government in the territories is concerned, we have no right to wait except for possibly the mechanics of doing it. Let me repeat this, that I am as sure as I am standing here that Professor Carrothers is not going to bring in a report which will undermine our fundamental concept of our desire for self-government. If he does, then that report should be discarded at once because this is running completely counter to everything which is ingrained in us about political freedoms. To wait for the Carrothers report is merely an extension of the old game of delay and procrastination. We have been delaying, as I said earlier, procrastinating and engaging in paternalism with respect to our native people for more than 100 years, if we go back beyond confederation.

It is just within the last year or two that we are beginning to get a glimmer of understanding of the problems in the territories. We are beginning to understand the damage which has been done to our native Indian population and the damage which it is doing to our concept of democracy itself. We should learn by our errors of the past and discontinue the concept of paternalism with which the Indians of the territories are concerned. I believe steps should be taken immediately to arrange for a federal territorial conference to see if we cannot move quickly toward the question of self-government for the people of that area, based upon mutual desire on their part, and mutual respect and desire on our part to provide it. On this basis I would be happy to vote for an amendment to the necessary statute law in the House of Commons relating to the rights and freedoms of these people in the territories. As it is, I am reluctant to do so because I believe it is wrong for the government body persistently to make decisions about what freedom should be extended to that group which is being governed.

• (9:10 p.m.)

Mr. R. J. Orange (Northwest Territories): I should like to open my remarks by complimenting the minister upon his introductory statement, particularly his reference to resource development in the Northwest Territories. I should like also to express my appreciation of the former ministers of northern affairs some of whom are still in the house and some of whom have left us. Each of these men, in his own way, has put aside political partisanship to give direction to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources in order that northern Canada would grow in a way that those of us who live there would like to see it grow. I was more than happy with the remarks of the minister when he said he was hopeful that hon. members of this house might have an opportunity to visit the north. He suggested that there was a right time of the year to do this. I suggest the best time would be in the months of January and February, when one sees the north as it really is.

Many of our northern people were excited when the minister predicted that possibly there would be a further extension of the railroad into southern Mackenzie. Transportation is our key for development. I know he was making a prediction in this connection, but those of us who live there are looking forward to this day.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). Regardless of our positions in the house, I think both of us, in our own way, have a deep interest in the affairs of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. I have the affection for the hon. member for Yukon because in 1961, as a result of his presentation in this house, the franchise was extended to the people of the eastern and central Arctic. It was in this area that on November 8 we obtained our majority. I am confident that tonight, as the member for the Northwest Territories, I speak on behalf of the people of that area who welcome the basic principle contained in this bill, that is the extension of the territorial franchise to the people who live there. This will give persons in the central and eastern Arctic an opportunity of expressing their views on territorial matters.

This bill will give to the Eskimo people and the people whom, with deference to the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard), we in the north call the people from the outside, a chance to participate in the territorial gov-