

*The Senate*

Canadians including those living above the sixtieth parallel.

I urge the hon. member for Northwest Territories to reconsider his position because I do not think the views expressed by him tonight are in any way shared by his constituents.

**Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) speak in favour of the bill to establish members in the Senate representing the Northwest Territories and the Yukon territory in the Parliament of Canada, I began to feel that the hon. member was preaching for a call. I wonder what makes this member so interested in creating two appointed positions in that archaic institution which has no real justification in respect of actions, policies and responsibilities of parliament. Surely when the hon. member for Yukon preaches for a call to the other place, as he has tonight, this government made up of Grits ought to consider withdrawing its bill. Surely the Indian and Eskimo people, as well as citizens who have left my area and other parts of the country, in a sense to take part in an adventure in the north, have the right to expect elected representatives in this parliament under our democratic system, rather than some kind of paternalistic appointment to the other place. What a preposterous suggestion!

The province of Saskatchewan has known the kind of discriminatory action that has taken place in the context of national policy since it became a province, yet surely it should expect six representatives in the other place to give them the logical representation about which the hon. member for Yukon has spoken tonight. Who are these representatives? I suggest they are a bunch of dodding fools who sit in the other place and collect pay cheques. They sit there regardless of their background and never represent the interests of Saskatchewan unless they do so in respect of some select corporate interest in that province.

**An hon. Member:** Senator Argue will not like you.

**Mr. Knight:** The hon. member for Yukon can make his appeal for a call to the other place but I suggest to him that, in terms of his action in this chamber, he is a relatively active member and I would hate to see him go to heaven so early.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I don't think I will ever make it there.

**Mr. Knight:** The question of redistribution was eloquently introduced to the committee on privileges and elections by the government House leader. The principle outlined by that hon. gentleman gives us the framework within which we can assure representation of rural and geographic areas whether they be of the magnitude of the constituency of the hon. member for Northwest Territories or of the magnitude of the constituency of Assiniboia. The people in those areas have the right to representation in parliament, particularly in this House where the decisions are made. This is the kind of representation they must have in order that their views can be expressed in this place and, perhaps more importantly, in order that their representative can communicate with them.

[Mr. Nielsen.]

I suggest that if we send a man to the other place, we might as well be sending him to Florida. As a matter of fact, some of them spend three or four months a year there anyway. We might as well be sending a man to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

**An hon. Member:** That is an unfortunate analogy.

**Mr. Knight:** I make that suggestion because this in no way gives representation to the people of the north. As a young man I used to listen to speeches made by the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) when he came to our community. I am quite prepared to admit that I used to sit in the back rows and listen to him speak about his vision of the north. Maybe in the context of that time he was ahead of us in that regard, because now as we enter the latter part of the 1970s and the early 1980s we are in a period when a vision of the north is quite applicable. The people of these areas expect to have the kind of representation that can speak out and protect their interests. They do not want representing them people who have no legislative power. They want people who are in this House of Commons.

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Mr. Speaker, the Senate is defunct and will continue to be defunct even if the hon. member for Yukon should be in it. The people of the north, like the people of the west, the maritimes or smaller regions of this country, expect representation by voice in this House of Commons so that their representatives could be recalled should they disagree with the policies they espouse. Further, the hon. member said that there is a rumour that this Liberal government—surely he has been watching this Liberal government for a long time—might consider shooting the commissioners off to the Senate. I am sure the people of the Northwest Territories and the people of the Yukon are not interested in having a government, I do not care what kind of government or what party, with the power to pick two men who may be entirely unpopular in the hon. member's area and appoint them to the other place.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Knight:** If the hon. member wishes to ask a question later, I will certainly accept it. I believe there is a rumour that a certain individual has been going around parliament suggesting on behalf of the Liberal Party that the hon. member might be appointed to the other place. It is a possibility. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) espouses opinions like a Tory, but she also espouses the position of being some kind of progressive, or at least she leaves that impression, and then comes here tonight and in an utterly impossible turnabout position takes regressive action, after this afternoon supporting the idea of an elected council, and supports the idea of appointed senators from the Northwest Territories. The hon. member, in her progressiveness, suddenly found out she is not only progressive but conservative at the same time.

**Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Indeed I am.