

Government Organization

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member for Kootenay East has interjected before. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking he said "Don't be so childish". This came from an expert on all things childish. He finds it so easy to change feet when he opens his mouth.

Speaking about divisions existing over there, I say that the minister should look within his own ranks and within his own heart because I know he does not like these changes. He felt very baldy about the responsibility for resources being forcibly taken away from him and given to someone else for whom some position had to be found. The resource responsibility in the minister's department was and is one of the most important. As I understand it, the position being taken on this side is that the administration of those resources should remain with him, and so it should, until such time as we can soften his hard heart and those of his colleagues in the government and get them to transfer the responsibility where it properly belongs. Until that time there can be no argument with the principle that he is acting in all respects like a provincial resource minister. He has the responsibility of controlling these resources until such time as that responsibility is transferred to properly constituted assemblies in the Yukon, Mackenzie and elsewhere in the north wherever provinces may be set up.

Mr. Laing: Would the hon. member speak to the member for Kamloops?

Mr. Nielsen: I have spoken to the member for Kamloops and I can find no division between the policy he has stated and the policy I am stating now.

Mr. Fulton: The trouble is, the minister cannot or will not read the amendment.

Mr. Nielsen: I am sure the minister can perceive it but with the propensity he has—and I do not attribute any motivation to him in this connection—of being unable to view things otherwise than in a political light it is sometimes difficult for him to see the unity which exists in constructive suggestions from this side of the house.

We in the north believe that the responsibility for resources should be under one minister instead of being divided in the way that is proposed.

An hon. Member: Which one?

Mr. Nielsen: I can think of a reason for the delineation of this arbitrary line

which strikes northward from the western boundary of Hudson bay, skirts around the southern edge of Baffin island, over to Resolution island and thence to the eastern boundary of Canada in the Arctic, excluding all the islands south of that line which would come under the jurisdiction of the new proposed department.

That territory is in the north and was hitherto administered by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The minister shakes his head negatively, but this is so. He had responsibility for this resource and now it is being taken from him and, as the Leader of the Opposition put it, with respect to the continental shelf and territorial waters resources one minister has responsibility for one portion of the Arctic ocean and another minister for another portion. It seems completely illogical, and indeed it is. There is no justification for it.

However, I am pleased to see the amendment that has been put forward by this side advocating that resources underlying the territorial waters of Canada and the continental shelf be placed under the jurisdiction of one minister. That does not impair in the slightest way the jurisdiction of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources over his existing responsibilities with regard to administration of resources in the north. That is his one important responsibility and one which we look forward to assuming in due course.

Mr. Laing: Mr. Chairman, will the hon. member answer a question? He is even more familiar than I with the geography of the high Arctic islands. I am sure he would admit that over half of the sedimentaries in the Arctic are covered by water.

Mr. Nielsen: I will agree immediately with the minister but I fail to see the relevance of the statement he has just made.

Mr. Laing: The relevance pertains to the fact that the hon. member for Yukon said he supports an amendment which would remove jurisdiction over those waters and the minerals under them from the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

Mr. Nielsen: Precisely; I was speaking with respect to waters above the continental shelf and resources underlying the territorial waters of Canada. This does not impair in the slightest the jurisdiction of the minister.

Mr. Laing: I want to make myself clear. It has been known to Canadians, not only in the