

support of as many as possible of those who live in the region. As I say, this will take time but it is our view that it should take as little time as possible. We shall address ourselves to that aspect as well.

As hon. members know, Mr. Drury did not recommend any specific model of government for the territories of the future. This must be developed in co-operation with the territorial government, other territorial organizations and interested residents. I repeat that a solid and lasting framework is more likely to be achieved if due consideration is given to all points of view. This process is now in train. The hon. member has my assurance on behalf of the minister that he is pursuing this process as quickly as possible with a view to accommodating the real concern expressed today by the hon. member for Western Arctic. Our difference is not one of substance. We disagree with the vehicle by which he seeks to achieve his objective. For that reason we shall oppose the motion he has put down, though we do not question the sincerity of his clearly stated concerns for the future.

**Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiak):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am quite pleased to be speaking today on this motion put forward by the hon. member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson). It is one with which I think the people of the north in general would not agree.

It is a very small group in the Western Arctic which actually supports the hon. member's motion. As a matter of fact, most of the contents of the report we are discussing were devised by the bureaucracies of Yellowknife and Ottawa. On many occasions the native people in the Northwest Territories refused to speak with Mr. Drury when he approached them about writing his proposal. I myself had the experience of meeting with Mr. Drury on a couple of occasions when he asked me questions about my ideas about political change in the Northwest Territories. He rejected my views. He rejected outright ideas proposed by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Dene Nation of the Western Arctic and others. These included recent permanent residents of the territories.

● (1740)

I would like to comment on the Drury report by posing three questions which we feel are important in discussing the report. The three questions are: why was Mr. Drury appointed in the first place, what are the principal features of his report, and what should be done with his report. I have already stated what should be done with his report but, in all fairness, I shall delve into the matter of the history of his appointment and why he would choose to take the course of action which he proposes.

I would like to look initially at the first question. When Mr. Drury was appointed, it was at a time when the future of the Northwest Territories and its peoples were causing considerable consternation in Ottawa and in Yellowknife. The Berger inquiry had been revealing to southern Canadians what many people in the north had known for years, that in many ways the Northwest Territories more closely resembled a colony of

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the south than an integral part of the Canadian political framework. I believe the hon. member for Western Arctic on that.

The popular sentiments expressed before Judge Berger were being stated to the federal government at the time by leaders of the Dene Nation and leaders of the Inuit. Both Dene and Inuit had rejected Ottawa's interpretation of land claims negotiations as a process by which the federal government assumed clear title over the areas of traditional use by aboriginal peoples in exchange for small strips of land and money—in other words, beads, trinkets, blankets, and what have you, were indexed for inflation.

The aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories had stated clearly that land claims negotiations could not be pursued to successful completion if they started on the premise that negotiations constituted some kind of giant real estate transaction. Northern natives wanted to accomplish what had not been attempted up to that point, an accommodation between the needs and aspirations of northern peoples and the concerns of the federal government—a government mandated to speak for Canadian citizens as a whole.

I should like to be quite honest and say that statements made by many native citizens before Justice Berger and the ideas articulated by the leaders elected to head representative native associations scared many people, particularly in Yellowknife and some in Ottawa. The newly heard native leaders were perceived as a threat to the status quo, a status quo which may have satisfied Ottawa and the Yellowknife bureaucracy, but which was less than satisfactory to the people whom it governed. Thus, in late 1977, the federal government faced the problem of what to do about land claims negotiations when the native peoples involved insisted on talking about political development as well as ownership of the land and resources. I might add that most people in Canada enjoy the freedom of being able to talk about political change, a freedom which would have been denied to native people if the Drury report were implemented, at least in the Northwest Territories.

The federal government tried to resolve this problem with the appointment of Mr. Drury as special representative for constitutional development in the Northwest Territories, thereby deferring questions of political development until the completion of the report. At the same time, Dene and Inuit leaders were informed that matters of political structures brought up during land claims negotiations would be, in the words of the personnel employed at the office of native claims, a "non-starter".

This 1977 policy has resulted in a three-year impasse in negotiations between the federal government and the Inuit Tapirisat and between the federal government and the Dene Nation in the Western Arctic. It is apparent that land claims negotiations in the north have been delayed by the Drury process. With this in mind, I would like to review the major features of the Drury report.

The report contains a wide range of recommendations with respect to the discharge of government services in the Northwest Territories. Many of the recommendations, particularly