

Government Organization

need only remind the house again, to prove that this is the very fortunate case, that in one year from 1964 to 1965, as a result of the building of the Pine Point Railway, the production of metals in the Northwest Territories rose from \$17 million to \$74 million. In the current year it is going to exceed \$100 million. I predict it will go on to many hundreds of millions of dollars because of the development that is taking place there.

The people who reside there are hopeful of creating something other than the type of government they enjoy at the present time. They can look forward to the development of what the Prime Minister referred to hopefully the other day as one or more provinces in an area where the resources are conserved and developed for their advantage.

● (3:40 p.m.)

In order to improve the living standards of the Eskimo and Indian people in the north it is necessary to relate these native people to the resources which lie there. The hon. member has made an unconvincing case. I am sure he would not have attempted it in this house had he made a visit to the territories or been in touch with members of his own party who have responsibilities there.

With regard to offshore rights, let me say that we have in Canada at the present time about 1,400,000 cubic miles of sedimentary rock. Not all sedimentary rock contains oil but all oil comes from sedimentary rock.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Laing: More than one million cubic miles of this rock is in the high Arctic islands entirely apart from the Northwest Territories compared with 135,000 cubic miles to be found in Alberta which is today our great source of oil.

So we are extremely enthusiastic about the development of the north and I as minister have to relate the ambitions, the hopes and the plans of the people who live there to conditions as they exist today. The population in the north wishes its resources to be maintained in order that the people may be able to develop the type of government they want. It will therefore be necessary to refuse to accept this amendment at this time.

Mr. Fulton: The minister has rejected the amendment and advanced an argument in support of its rejection apparently without having read the terms of the proposal. I cannot believe that a colleague of mine in this house from British Columbia would be so

incapable of understanding an amendment unless he had failed to read it. I can only suppose that he did not read it and that he is stubbornly determined to oppose it simply because it comes forward as a constructive suggestion from the official opposition.

I was glad to find the hon. gentleman paying tribute to the work started by the Conservative government in connection with the Pine Point Railway. It is unusual to find members opposite saying anything good about the government which preceded their own.

Mr. Benson: There is little that can be said.

Mr. Fulton: Had the minister paused to reflect he would have realized that members of a government which took such an interest in developing the north would scarcely fail to recognize the importance of developing the administrative integrity of the resources in that area.

I should also like to inform the minister, in order to keep the record straight, that I visited the territories on two occasions during the time I had some responsibility in that area in connection with the R.C.M.P. and the administration of justice. I took advantage of that opportunity to talk to the people there and became acquainted with their ambitions and their views. I realize how important it is to the development of their plans that we should maintain the administrative integrity of those resources in the area. I should also like to assure the minister that I have discussed this question with my hon. friends in this party including, of course, the hon. member for Yukon. Unlike the situation in the hon. gentleman's own party, there is no internal dissension within our ranks.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fulton: We are not divided by the kind of dissension which makes it impossible for members of the government opposite to introduce some of their most important pieces of legislation, the kind of dissension which holds up the Bank Act.

I have indeed discussed this question with my hon. friends of this party including the hon. member for Yukon. The essential point, and one which the minister has failed to appreciate, is that the amendment I have presented in no way lessens the administrative responsibility of the minister of Indian affairs and northern development in relation to resources within the territories. It changes in no way the provisions of section 17 of the