

*Northwest Territories Act*

to a lower level and take that power away, because that is what the bill does. If there is any sincere belief at all that there is to be a gradual, step by step transference of legislative and executive powers to the legislatures in the north, you cannot start by taking away those powers. It is simply inconsistent to do so.

If I could, sir, I would move an amendment which would have the effect of deleting the new section 19A in clause 5 of the bill. I do not believe I would be within the rules in doing so. I will, however, bow to your ruling in the matter, sir.

• (1:20 p.m.)

If it were deleted we would be left with the situation as it now stands in the Northwest Territories Act with the power remaining in the commissioner and council to introduce money bills.

There is one last point I want to make in support of my argument. The commissioner and council in the Northwest Territories have the power now to impose taxes on residents within the boundaries of the Northwest Territories and they have the concomitant power to introduce legislation which would have the effect of an expenditure of moneys by the government in respect of the taxes so raised. By adopting this amendment you are leaving the power in the hands of the commissioner and council to impose taxes, but you are taking away from the commissioner and council the power to spend the revenue that they raise by taxes.

**Mr. Barnett:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps I might be bold enough to interpose myself for a moment or two as a non-partisan mediator between the arguments advanced on the one hand by the hon. member for Yukon and by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources on the other. As the house knows, I supported the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Yukon which, had it been carried, would have made the council a completely elected body so far as its members other than the commissioner were concerned. I suggested that if it carried it might be possible to have the present appointed members act as advisors to the commissioner. I may say, Mr. Chairman, that I did so in part at least with the proposals contained in clause 5 in mind.

One of the things which strikes me is that the result of the proposals contained in clause 1 and clause 5 is in effect to create a separation between the executive and the

legislative parts of the council or at least to move in the direction of such a separation as we understand it in this assembly. I have had some experience as a member of a municipal council. It is my understanding that such councils combine both the executive and the legislative functions in one body and have the authority both to initiate and legislate in respect of money matters.

I am sure that all of us in this house will agree that it is desirable that the executive of the territorial council should as soon as feasible be responsible to the legislative body in the same way as the executive is in this parliament. However, if one accepts the figures given by the minister as to the proportion of federal funds, in the consolidated fund of the territory, I believe that for the time being at least there is some validity to the proposition that through the responsibility of the commissioner to the executive some responsibility should fall upon the members of this house generally who are responsible for levying the taxes upon citizens in other parts of Canada which provide that proportion of the funds. In other words, it does seem to me that in this practical situation and for the time being at least it is in accordance with the principles of democracy that the 85 per cent of the funds provided by the rest of the people of Canada should in some measure be controlled by us who are responsible to the rest of the people of Canada.

I believe it was clear from the remarks of the member for Yukon—I would be disappointed in him if he had not done so—that he was pleading a strong and vigorous case for the early inauguration of complete autonomy. I think this was certainly part of his responsibility as the spokesman in this house for that area of the country. I am not suggesting that the arguments he has advanced are improper. On the other hand, in spite of our lack of knowledge and our ignorance of the area represented by him and the member for Northwest Territories, I think members from other parts of the country have some responsibility to attempt to weigh the various pros and cons of the particular proposals before us at this time.

As I read the provisions of clause 5, while it is perfectly true, as the member for Yukon suggests, that the power to initiate proposals involving the raising of funds or the spending of funds lies in the hands of the appointed commissioner, even though it does not go as far as the member for Yukon and I would