

Northwest Territories Act

going to represent them in the making of the laws? What right has anyone from outside of the Northwest Territories to vote on the imposition of taxes of a territorial nature on the people who live there? What logical reason, quite apart from democratic principles, is there for saying that appointed members from elsewhere in Canada should have the right to impose taxes on people in a jurisdiction in which those members do not even live? It would be like appointing members to the Quebec or British Columbia legislatures from some other area of Canada and giving them the right to impose taxes upon the residents of those provinces. It is not only undemocratic but an invidious, colonial, archaic hangover. I am sure that the minister agrees with these principles.

● (12:20 p.m.)

A word now about the Carrothers commission. Again I emphasize that the men serving on that commission, able men doing a job to which I am sure they are sincerely and wholly dedicated, will undoubtedly provide a report which will prove extremely useful not only to members of the House of Commons but also to those in the Northwest Territories who have the responsibility for planning for their own future. But the argument that we must wait for the commission to report before considering any amendment to the Northwest Territories Act does not hold water, because if the reasons advanced by the minister are valid why are we increasing the council to 12 members? The Carrothers commission may come back and recommend that there be only 10. What then? The Carrothers commission may come back and say that there will not be five members appointed but three. What then?

So if the minister wishes to use the Carrothers commission as an argument, then I suggest it follows logically that he must not touch the section at all or increase the council at all or disturb the proportion of representation on the council. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I suggest to hon. members that his argument does not hold water.

The minister did not answer the hon. member for Skeena who asked whether it was the intention of the government to introduce, as the hon. member for Northwest Territories intimated was the case, major revisions to the Northwest Territories Act this fall or next year. As the hon. member for Skeena said, this would put a different light on the matter if that were the intention of the government,

but I very much doubt that it is. However, the minister should clarify that point.

I too wish to add words of praise for the contribution that Commissioner Sivertz made with respect not only to the Northwest Territories but during his long service in the department of northern affairs. I enthusiastically endorse the genuine compliments which have been paid Commissioner Sivertz who is retiring from the civil service in the near future. I am very gratified, as I am sure all members are, that his services will remain available to the government.

Because of the fact, Mr. Chairman, that the arguments advanced by the other side do not, in my submission, follow logically, and because they are not in keeping with the fundamental rights and freedoms which must exist in any free society purporting to embrace democratic principles, we in this party cannot accept the amendment proposed by the bill. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Peace River, that:

Clause 1 of Bill C-146 be amended by deleting all of the words following the word "Territories" in the first line of section "8 (1)" thereof and by adding in substitution therefor immediately following the word "Territories" aforesaid the following:

"which shall be composed of 12 members elected to represent such electoral districts in the Territories as are named and described by the Commissioner in Council".

That wording, for the information of members of the committee, is exactly the same word for word as section 9 of the Yukon Act which makes provision for a wholly elected council such as we have had in the Yukon for many years. I submit it is time that the Northwest Territories should have the same privilege so that the people can elect their own representatives, make their own laws, impose their own taxes, indeed, look after their own affairs as they are entitled to do, with the fiscal restrictions which are inherent in local and federal legislation.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, apart from the reference the minister made to Mr. Sivertz, which I submit was really not germane to the question I asked him, the minister proceeded to subject us to nothing more than an unctuous lecture on how members of parliament should act and on whether we were in order or not in order. He refused to answer my question, basing his reasoning upon the arguments advanced by the former member for Northwest Territories, Mr. Rhéaume.

It becomes a little silly when the minister, groping for reasons to support his case, has to revert to what some previous government did