

As the Minister is aware, a large part of that function is now centralized there; the recording of mineral claims in Whitehorse, for instance. Lands, of course, are still administered here; northern gas is still administered here, and so on. I wonder if the Minister would perhaps give his views on what his long-range thinking is in this connection?

Hon. Mr. LAING: I would think that our present position and our present attitude towards the resources that lie there would regard us eventually as a custodian for the resources for the benefit of the people within those areas. In other words, I have been called the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, and I have had people in various parts of Canada ask me where those national resources are. We are fully aware that the resources within the provinces are the responsibility of the provinces in which they lie, and the provinces are very jealous of these resources, understandably so, because they rely upon them for their economy. But in the Northwest Territories and in the Yukon, unmistakably, the resources are the resources of the national government held, I hope, in some measure of competent trust for the people who are there now and will eventually constitute a form of government different from that which exists today, but there is the timing on these things, and so on.

Our view is that the primary interest, our main concern, is to get development now. Mr. Nielsen knows that the council as present constituted there has not got the revenue to do this job. I have said—and I do not think that the people, the residents were very happy when I reminded them—that they were a deficit area. We are putting a great amount of taxpayers' money of southern Canada into those areas every year—we have been doing it for a great number of years—but we have every confidence we are going to get it all back. When the resources are developed, the investment is taken there, there is a base then for the people to enjoy the income from the development of those resources. But we are at the discovery stage, not at the realization stage, at the present time.

Mr. NIELSEN: Specifically, if I might just ask one more question on this. The federal government in its wisdom has seen fit, for instance, to decentralize the administration function with respect to the recording of mineral claims, all of the administration with respect to the processing of the registration of mineral claims, and so on, in the Yukon. Now, the land in the Yukon—207,000 square miles of it—has already been discovered. Communications are responsible for unreasonable delays in the obtaining of interest in land in the Yukon. The Minister is aware of the very grave problem this presents in respect of someone who wishes to obtain title to or interest in the land, without these delays. In some cases they have taken, as he knows, two and three months to obtain a 50 foot by 100 foot lot, of all this area.

Mr. LAING: Is that all?

Mr. NIELSEN: Well, it has been my experience.

Mr. LAING: I was told nine months.

Mr. NIELSEN: I was being conservative.

The feeling is that if the administration function were taken from Ottawa, to use a well-worn phrase, 4,000 miles away from the sites of the land, and