

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

reaction when the opposition motion appeared on the order paper was that there would be a great number of bitter words said in this chamber regarding statements of the minister about the growth of self government in the Yukon territory and in the Northwest Territories. When I read the motion, it became obvious to me that we might become embroiled in a meaningless discussion during this valuable time for us from the north, and those interested in Canada's north, to express our views. Having listened to the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), who is obviously the man who convinced his party that this was an important subject—for which I congratulate him—and having listened to other members regarding their feelings about the north, I hope and know the minister will take into account the constructive suggestions made to him today.

These suggestions have related to self-government and policies regarding social, political and economic development of the north. Just before entering the chamber I found an ad in an Ottawa newspaper, dated November 18 which may have caused a little doubt about the motives behind the opposition motion.

Mr. Nielsen: Read it, Bud; read it.

Mr. Orange: I intend to.

Mr. Nielsen: Read the one I sent you.

Mr. Orange: It reads:

Wanted. One member of Parliament. Willing to represent the Yukon Territorial Council in its moves to achieve responsible government. Apply to Don Taylor, Room 207, The Taku hotel, Whitehorse, Y.T.

I am wondering whether there is not something more than coincidence in this regard. I should point out also—

● (2:20 p.m.)

Mr. Nielsen: Read the one in your hand.

Mr. Orange: —that the gentleman I just named is a prominent Liberal in the Yukon. I might suggest that he feels the same way as the hon. member across the way with regard to self-government in the Yukon Territory. When the minister made the statement—I regret it was long overdue; we would have liked to have had it a year or a year and a half before—he said a number of significant things to the people in the Northwest Territories. He mentioned the addition of two elected members to the territorial council. I shall come back to that later. He stated that the

term of council would be increased from three years to four years. He left the council the option of reducing the voting age. He reduced the period for disallowance of legislation from two years to one year. He offered members the opportunity of setting their own indemnities. This is most important in relation to their responsibilities as elected members.

The minister set up a vehicle called a standing committee to be a committee of the territorial council to meet with the Commissioner to discuss the financial aspects of territorial operations. I regret that, in my opinion and in the opinion of the people in the Northwest Territories, the minister did not go as far as he should have gone. When he presents his legislation I would like to see a provision that the number of additional council members elected will be four rather than two. I serve notice to the minister now that when the legislation goes before a committee, if this provision is not contained in it, I intend to move an amendment in this regard.

Mr. Nielsen: Are you going to resign as parliamentary secretary, too?

Mr. Orange: In respect of the voting age, I believe it should be the responsibility of the council to make the decision. I do not think we, in this parliament, should say at what age people in the north should vote. I hope there will be provisions which would allow the Commissioners of both territories to borrow money without going through the tedious processes of the Treasury Board and the Department of Finance in Ottawa.

Mr. Nielsen: We have that power now.

Mr. Orange: We do not have it completely.

Mr. Nielsen: The Commissioner has the power now in the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Orange: The hon. member across the way says that in the Yukon Territory the Commissioner has that power. I hope the same situation will apply in the Northwest Territories. The most important power, however, is that the members of the council be able to participate meaningfully in government and have some say in the development of programs, policies and the spending of money.

At the moment, the council in the Northwest Territories basically is Her Majesty's loyal opposition to the Commissioner. In order to bring responsible government to the people in the north, this kind of philosophy must