

*Yukon and N.W.T. Government*

I do not want to take too much time of the House, but I do think that development of the north is the concern of all Canadians. A few years ago we decided we were concerned enough to spend some of the money raised in Canada on the development of this last frontier. We had no selfish intentions; we did this because we believed the Canadian north should be developed, not just for this generation but for generations to come. We must bear in mind that more money will be required in the years ahead. We must evolve policies and an infrastructure to assist the development of mines, resources and other related industries. What is more important is to make sure that the Canadian north does not become the private preserve of just the few; we must endeavour to ensure that all residents of the north, indeed all Canadians, will benefit from this development.

In closing I should like to say something that reflects the attitude of both the government and myself. Even if we have been a little negative in regard to constitutional development, we feel the time has not yet arrived in the Territories to take the next step of granting status as a province. This is due to the lack of population and financial resources that can be derived from all sources of income in the Territories. Having said that, my attitude is not one of blind opposition to progress, but of opposition to blind progress. I would ask the federal government, those in charge of northern resources and the Territorial government in the north, to work together with the people of the north and their representatives. This I stress very strongly.

It has often been said that the Northwest Territories and the Yukon have insufficient representation. I have disagreed many times with the hon. member for Yukon over many issues. He is the elected representative of the case for the Yukon in this democratic institution which is the House of Commons.

When people say that Yukoners are not democratically represented, they are expressing a very low opinion of the hon. member for Yukon. The same can be said for the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange) who also made some constructive remarks this afternoon. I do not accept all his suggestions, but up to now I have accepted many of his recommendations. He is the representative of the people in the Northwest Territories, and in this democratic institution he puts his case very ably to the administration. This is why we in this House today are spending all day debating, progressively and

[Mr. Chrétien.]

responsibly, the development of the resources of the north and also constitutional questions. Together with the people of the north we will be able to develop what will become in a few years the most exciting part of North America.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Mr. Speaker, before the minister resumes his seat I wonder whether I might ask him two questions. The Prime Minister indicated in a telegram to the Yukon Legislative Council that he and the minister would be pleased to receive in Ottawa either members or a delegation of members to discuss what we have been debating today. Having heard the minister, can he tell me whether any useful purpose would be served in a delegation of councillors visiting the Prime Minister and the minister, or is it possible that his enunciated policy might alter as a result of such meeting?

My second question is this: Since we have been discussing these matters in Yellowknife, in Whitehorse and all day today in the House, and since the government's policy has come out in specifics, will the minister not introduce early next week legislation that he can assure us will go to the standing committee as soon as possible in order that we can obtain the widest range of views?

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, to reply to the hon. member's first question, the councillors have asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to receive them. I agree that any discussion with the Prime Minister and myself would help the situation and clear up any confusion that might be in our minds. After all, we are not blind; we can look at our mistakes. However, we will stress our case to them as well. I think we should hear the arguments of both sides, not just of one side. The councillors are moving from their stand taken in the resolution adopted last year, which asked for provincial status without actually calling it such. We will discuss this with them if they come. We are always open minded. The legislation is not ready, but I hope it will be ready soon. This involves a matter of drafting, but we will refer it to the committee as quickly as possible. I will be delighted to appear before the committee and explain the government's stand on this matter.

• (4:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Nielsen:** I hope the minister—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am trying to be as generous as possible to the