

*Yukon Act*

They feel that if they are going to have the administrative responsibility in territorial public works they should have the power to control that area of jurisdiction in a fiscal way through their legislative body. As the minister knows, the northwest highway system, under half of which lies in the Yukon, is to be transferred from the federal Department of Public Works to the territorial government in 1967. This involves the transfer of many hundreds of employees to a territorial civil service that has existed for many years, as contrasted with the situation in the Northwest Territories, and yet though being asked to assume the jurisdiction for the administration of this huge undertaking there is no concomitant power to legislate in respect thereof. So, sir, the administration of the Yukon rests with the commissioner appointed by an order in council of the executive here in Ottawa. The Commissioner in Council has the powers I have outlined.

This House of Commons has the power—and I simply make this point in passing, not anticipating any argument to the contrary—to create provinces out of the existing Northwest Territories. I have said before, sir, and I say again in this house what I have said outside it, that the political problem of the growth from colony to province is analogous to the same problem confronting the nation as a whole with which we have been struggling for 150 years.

There are many who believe we have solved the problem on a national scale but we certainly have not done so with respect to the remaining territories of Canada. What are we in the Yukon, through the elected representatives of our people, asking for? We can look at the emerging nations of the world. We have seen the Congo obtain self-government. We have seen the problem in Rhodesia, which we condemn because of the political basis on which it rests; yet we deny in our own country the very things that we condemn in others.

Here are the elected representatives of the people of the Yukon asking for more say in their own affairs. They are not asking for the complete say. They are not asking for complete autonomy. Yet the government's attitude is: You cannot do this. But the government condemns that kind of approach on an international basis.

• (2:20 p.m.)

The case I make with respect to the Yukon is a much stronger one than that which has been presented with respect to the Northwest [Mr. Nielsen.]

Territories. It is stronger because of the fact that the Yukon has existed for almost 70 years as a separate entity. During those years it has gained a tremendous fund of experience and skill in the legislative function. It has gained a good deal of skill and experience with regard to the administrative requirements concerning the assumption of legislative control. Its economy is on the upsurge and is increasing each year; great things are in store. In addition, the wholly elected members of that council have made the specific request of the minister that, as the elected representatives of the Yukon representing the people of that territory, they be heard by the standing committee on northern affairs and national resources before this bill passes. Is that request going to be denied? Are we going to say that the Yukon territorial council can exist at the pleasure of the government of the day but we are not going to listen to anything they have to say, we do not want to hear them. I feel sure that is what we in effect are doing if we turn down their request.

So that there may be no doubt concerning the feelings of the people themselves who live in the Yukon on this question, as expressed by the members of the council elected by those people to represent them, I am going to place on the record a resolution which was passed last Friday, May 6. I commend it to the attention of hon. members. The wording of that resolution is as follows:

Resolved that the commissioner be requested to forward to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources for his earliest consideration the accompanying resolution of this council:

Resolved that the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources refer Bill C-146, an act to amend the Yukon Act, to the standing committee on northern affairs and national resources in the House of Commons to enable the council of the Yukon Territory to present the case for the amendments inherent in or consequential to or otherwise necessary to realize the philosophy implicit in the following changes now requested of the minister:

May I ask hon. members to remember that these are the wholly elected representatives of the people of the Yukon speaking.

(a) The council of the Yukon Territory to be known as the Yukon legislative assembly;

(b) The number of members of the Yukon legislative assembly to be increased to 15 and the term of the assembly to be increased to four years;

(c) The advisory committee on finance to be replaced by an executive committee of not less than five members with full executive powers in the following classes of subjects:—

(i) Education, health and welfare

(ii) Territorial resources including land