

Supply—Secretary of State

and he has said as recently as last November 29 precisely what I have stated concerning freedom of debate. In *Hansard*, on page 5268 for November 29, 1963, Mr. Pickersgill said this:

"So far as I am concerned, no one in the government has made any such allegation. Certainly, I have not, and I want to make that very clear. I have not made any such allegation at any time about the opposition. I think there has been a reasonable measure of co-operation."

And again, Mr. Pickersgill, on the same page of *Hansard* for November 29, said this:

"Perhaps the honourable gentleman will remember—and here perhaps I am breaking the rules myself by referring to the debate on redistribution the other day—that I am one of those who think there ought to be debate in parliament, and I do not regard debate as obstruction. I have not said and I have not thought that, taken by and large in this session of parliament, particularly since we met in September, there has been anything I would be inclined to describe as obstruction."

Even in Whitehorse, there have been references—and I can recall them appearing in one particular newspaper published in Whitehorse—that I have been rising to my feet too often in parliament. The particular newspaper if it can be called such to which I refer has certainly not been one of my ardent supporters and it seems rather puzzling to me that the editor of that newspaper would not want in fairness to his readers to publish statements such as that which I have just quoted by Mr. Pickersgill—not only supporting full and free debate in the House of Commons but also, frankly stating that there has been no obstruction by the opposition during this session.

I have also been criticized recently for saying too much in the House of Commons—for rising to my feet too often. Well, it seems to me that I would not be discharging my responsibilities to the people of the Yukon as their elected member of parliament, if I did not just as often as I possibly could rise and state the views of Yukoners, not only on those matters affecting our life in the Yukon, but also, on all those matters which affect our lives as Canadians generally. I do not believe that the people of the Yukon want a silent Sam sitting in parliament, saying nothing—doing nothing. It is time that the voice of the Yukon is heard and this the view that I have adopted ever since being elected your member in 1957. I have spoken just as often as I could and it is my intention to continue to express the views of the people of the Yukon with force and with frequency. There is, of course, the old adage that "the squeaking wheel gets the oil".

The most recent speech of any length which I have made in the house concerned the announcement by the Minister of National Defence with regard to the cut-backs being made in defence spending. I expressed views on the policy of the government with regard to national defence generally, and with regard to the cut-backs as they affect the Yukon specifically. I refer, of course, to the proposed changeover of the responsibility for the maintenance of the Alaska highway from the Department of National Defence to the Department of Public Works. I have stated before and I say again that, in the long run, I believe that this changeover will result in not only a more stable economy for the Yukon, but in time will result in the enlargement of our economy and in the growth of new businesses, which will grow up in order to serve the many requirements that the Department of Public Works will demand. D.P.W. will not be operating like the army has in the past in the maintenance operation with all sorts of various branches and divisions supporting

the main task of highway maintenance, such branches and divisions being staffed and operated by the army. D.P.W. will be farming out many phases of the maintenance operation, thus causing the growth of new industries and businesses in the Yukon. This is a good thing but it will take time. The initial economic shock of losing the army pay roll will have to be absorbed, and there is no doubt in my mind that this can be done, even though certain hardships will be experienced until D.P.W. has the opportunity of infusing new capital into the economy of the Yukon by farming out their various requirements for goods and services in the maintenance operation.

Another matter to which I referred was the all weather maintenance of the Haines road which you know is to be done on an experimental basis this winter. I have said before and I do so again that it would be my hope that the experiment proves to be economic and that the feasibility of continuous all weather maintenance will become a reality. I am, however, disappointed that Canadian dollars are being paid to the government of Alaska for the maintenance of a Canadian road by the use of the United States equipment and labour. I have felt that Canadian dollars would more properly be spent in relieving the chronically heavy Canadian unemployment and in utilizing Canadian equipment. The argument is that it would cost more if we were to direct our efforts to this end, but surely it would be better to spend a few thousand dollars extra if we can put more Canadians to work, using Canadian equipment. However, the maintenance is on an experimental basis for this winter only and perhaps the government will have a change of heart and policy by using Canadian labour and equipment for next winter's operations. Certainly, that is what I am working toward and I have no fear that I will eventually be successful.

I have been extremely active in two committees in the House of Commons. These are the standing committees on privileges and elections, and on mines, forests and waters. The standing committee on privileges and elections is now considering amendments to the Canada Elections Act and the Canadian forces voting regulations. There have been several major changes which will be recommended by the committee to the House of Commons and I expect there will be full debate on all of these changes. The mines, forests and waters committee is now considering the two bills of the House of Commons which proposed the division of the Northwest Territories into two separate units. The western portion of the division would be called the MacKenzie territory and the eastern portion would be called the Nunassiat territory. The purpose is stated to be that each of the territories would advance more rapidly toward self-government and it would improve administration of the Northwest Territories. These committees have not yet completed their work, but I expect they will do before the session ends.

There has been more interesting debate in the house in connection with patronage. Just yesterday it was suggested by Mr. Fisher, a member of the New Democratic party, that the House of Commons should refer the whole matter of the Post Office Department patronage to the committee on privileges, for the purpose of investigating the many, many charges that have been laid since the new Postmaster General took over—that patronage is running wild in his department.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: I hear hon. members say oh, oh, but I can find many worse expressions