

Yukon Minerals Act

respect to a \$150 million development in Newfoundland-Labrador. If the promoters had been confronted with the prospect of the proposals in the white paper on taxation finding their way into legislation at the time they made their decision to go ahead, they would not have made that decision. Surely, the massive outcry of the people in the Yukon—the minister smiles, but surely the opinion of these people must mean something to him. Now, he nods in affirmation. If they do mean something then what they say to him is that they do not want this legislation. Surely the voice of the people has to mean something if we are to believe at all in this hocus-pocus of participatory democracy. It is either that, or against that massive outcry in opposition to this legislation the minister is saying to them fuddle-duddle.

Mr. Greene: Shame! Shame! Withdraw!

Mr. Nielsen: I said it.

Mr. Greene: Unparliamentary.

Mr. Nielsen: In my view this highflung phrase, this ostensible adherence to this principle of participatory democracy is just about worth the powder it takes to blow it to kingdom come. We in the Yukon are much too familiar with the antics of the ministers responsible for Yukon affairs, and the bureaucrats responsible for Yukon affairs, to have any faith in a phrase like "participatory democracy".

● (2:50 p.m.)

I may sound like a cynic but it is a very simple question with a very simple answer. If you have this kind of situation where virtually all the people of the Yukon say "We don't want it" and the minister says, "You are going to get it anyway, whether you like it or not", it is like a dose of castor oil. The minister must be interested in the philosophy of justice since law was his profession at one time. If he has any fairness in his heart at all, he will write into the bill a provision for appeal to the courts in every case where a major bureaucratic decision is involved. It is neither justice nor government by the people when bureaucrats make unappealable decisions, particularly where they affect title to mineral claims.

When the minister speaks again, I hope he will deal with some of these questions to the satisfaction of the people of the Yukon. I have mentioned four specific areas in which he and I both know that the people of the Yukon do not want any part of this measure. Unless he puts forward more than mere token admissions that changes will be introduced, and unless he can spell out that the wishes of the residents of the Yukon will be adhered to, then the voice of the people is pretty meaningless. Perhaps we were right all along when we said we were a mere colony subject to the whim of the Chief Governor of the Yukon, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and his Deputy Governor, Mr. Smith of the Yukon. In other words, there is validity in the phrase, and the minister might as well say it, "l'État c'est moi" est absolument correct.

[Mr. Nielsen.]

Mr. Grant Deachman (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I cannot let the bill before us go by without saying a few words on it. In its way, it is one of the most important bills that has come before this House in a long time. As has been pointed out by the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), its effect upon the territory of the Yukon will be as considerable as the effect of the new tax bill which we expect to see before the end of the current session.

I do not have the same pessimism as the hon. member for the Yukon about the ability of members of this House to write a good bill. I think it is within our capability to appreciate the problem and within the capability of the committee system to come to an understanding of some of the details and practicalities that must go into a bill to make it a good one.

Mr. Nielsen: You know all the companies that will go to B.C. from the Yukon.

Mr. Deachman: If I might be permitted to continue, the hon. member for the Yukon and I would not find ourselves too far apart, just as the Yukon and British Columbia are not that far apart.

Mr. Nielsen: Bennett would like us closer.

Mr. Deachman: First of all, I should like to draw attention to the great importance of the Yukon Territory. It is a part of the country that has to be seen to be believed, but not many members of this House of Commons have had that opportunity. If the problems of its mines are to be appreciated, if the infrastructure of the roads, the airstrips, the railways and communications are to be appreciated, then more members of this House should see the territory before this bill becomes law. With that in mind, I hope when the bill goes to committee, the committee will undertake to go to the Yukon and see some of the territory. I hope that an opportunity will be given to others in this House to accompany that committee and that all will then appreciate the importance of what is before us now.

In order to understand the question fully, I believe the committee should visit the city of Vancouver where the head offices of many of the western mining companies and associations are located. Then, members could speak to those who have been involved in the development of mining in northern British Columbia and the Yukon. Perhaps they could also visit Edmonton, which is the capital centre for mining in western Canada. I do not believe that we can fully appreciate whether the terms within this bill are valid to sustain the mining economy unless we first of all go through that exercise and understand the difficulties that these people encounter.

Those members charged with the responsibility of making a report from the Standing Committee should have an appreciation at first hand of what it is like to open up a low grade mine in a remote area of Canada such as the Yukon, to reduce the ore to concentrate and finally to get it out of the country and into the market at a price that is world competitive. If we do not understand this, and the vast capital cost required to build mines and