

• (8:50 p.m.)

Any lesson that can be learned from history in this regard should have been learned as a result of our experience with our Indian populations. Our conduct toward these people up until recent times has reflected a paternalism of the worst sort, and an attitude that the native people knew nothing while the people in Ottawa knew everything. We should, by the experiences we have had in our dealings with native Indian people, be learning that paternalism is not the answer, that paternalism only serves the ego of him who governs, and does not, except in an extremely limited way, serve the interests of the people who are governed.

The essence of our democratic structure is self-government. This is fundamental to the social, economic and political well-being and progress of any people. I do not think the expected report of Professor Carrothers will run counter to our basic concept of freedoms in this nation, and if it does it should be discarded. I know Professor Carrothers and have sat on a couple of boards with him in dealing with other matters, and as an individual I have come to appreciate and like him. I am sure that his report will underline and substantiate what we all know about the fundamental rights and freedoms of people, namely that these things are their business. Therefore I do not think that we should wait too expectantly for the report of Professor Carrothers except perhaps in so far as details are concerned.

The basics and fundamentals of our rights and freedoms are part of our development; they are part of our constitutional structure; they are part of our respect one person for another. These things cannot be pushed to one side by the report of any commission, and I do not think that in this instance they will be. Our objective must be self-government, as Lincoln put it, of, by and for the people—the people, here, being those in the Northwest Territories.

Under our constitution, almost 100 years old now, we developed the principle of different levels of government, one being federal and the other provincial; one equal with the other in so far as their exclusive right over jurisdiction was concerned. Out of this we have developed an admiration and respect for the rights of provinces to legislate in the fields exclusively set aside to them by the constitution. The provinces respect the exclusive jurisdictions carved out in the British

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North America Act and allocated to the federal parliament. Where there has been a desire to alter those exclusive jurisdictions or come to agreement about them, it has been done by mutual consent and an amendment to the constitution to alter the original provisions. This parliament did that not too long ago with respect to survivors' benefits. We did it some years ago with respect to unemployment insurance.

I submit that this division of jurisdiction and responsibility for political and economic rights and freedoms of people is ingrained so much as part of our constitutional and governmental structure that herein lies the answer to what should occur within the territories. A number of people in the territories who have looked at this matter seriously—I may be in error in coming to this conclusion—think that even though provincial status is their objective, perhaps to achieve it today or overnight would be premature and injurious in the long run. I understand that this view is taken because of the relatively small population, the vast distances between places and communities, the limited financial base of the area, part of which stems from the limited population and part from the heretofore failure to explore, develop and exploit the natural resources of the area.

If it is the considered opinion of all who know the situation intimately, particularly the people in the area affected, that the status of a province now would be premature and injurious, I suggest that the federal government should take the lead, without waiting for the report of Dean Carrothers, in the promotion of, let us call it a territorial-dominion constitutional conference. I believe that if representatives of the federal government and the territories were to sit down and go over the jurisdictional questions involved we might be able to delineate within our constitution an intermediate step between the situation that prevails now and the status of a province, an intermediate step which would provide self-government to the territories to the fullest possible degree and the removal or elimination of federal government involvement, at least in so far as political freedoms are concerned.

I think that such an amendment to the British North America Act could be accomplished without much difficulty. I toss these out as thoughts of my own and not as any firm proposition as to what should be the division of constitutional jurisdiction. But it