

Supply—Indian Affairs

would run for council if its size were increased and if greater responsibility by way of executive power were granted. I am sure he expected a negative answer. But he got a positive answer because there are people there ready to step forward if the minister would take the initiative and bring in the necessary amendments to the Yukon Act to allow for increased executive responsibility. There is no earthly reason why there should be such tremendous reluctance to give up the power, if that indeed be what would be given up. The mechanical departmental structure is set up and is operating smoothly as it has been for years. It will continue to operate smoothly when executive control is gradually transferred. There is no reason to expect that all the administrative skill which exists in the official structure in the Yukon will disappear if the minister decides to adopt an enlightened approach.

The same applies to the Northwest Territories. Instead of taking steps forward in the direction of reform the department is slipping backward; it is taking retrograde steps. I do not speak of mechanical improvements. I speak of reform in the democratic processes themselves.

The minister has appointed a new commissioner. I was happy to see this appointment made. It is one with which I have no quarrel at the moment, though I may have in the future. The man appointed was a Conservative, and the minister knew it. He is a man a good deal more likely to be loyal to the minister than some I have seen in the past few days, and there will be no departure from that loyalty with respect to this appointment. He will take his instructions and he will follow them through, and if he has any deep differences with the minister he will tell him and step down. The minister will find that his instructions will be carried out, and therein lies the quarrel I have with the whole system.

The minister, on the advice of his officials, pulls the strings and all the council does in Whitehorse is to sit as a rubber stamp agreeing with legislation prepared and drawn up in Ottawa, passed through the channels and laid on the council's table. No ideas are allowed; unless they are approved and ratified by Ottawa they will not see the light of day.

The whole system is completely repugnant to our way of life in this country. I hear members in this house from the province of Quebec talking about being somehow left out of things Canadian. We feel the same isolation. It is enhanced by the utter futility of having

our every move overseen by big brother here in Ottawa. All we have is the insipid machinery of passing motions in our council regretting something or other and suggesting that this or that should be done. But it never is done.

Now we are saddled with another white elephant. I am glad the minister has spoken up about this. I refer to the correction institution which is to be built in Whitehorse and will be the finest building in the Yukon Territory. I am not decrying the need for reform in the area of our penal institutions. God knows this is needed in the northern territories. But before we consider building the type of institution which will encourage people to go and live there, we must pause. The headline in the Whitehorse newspaper which reproduced the architect's drawing of this minimum security institution was: "Reserve Two With A View." The next time the minister is in Whitehorse I urge him to look at what is happening.

Mr. Laing: I am afraid.

Mr. Nielsen: I do not blame the minister for being afraid. I do not know what is being built in the Northwest Territories—

Mr. Orange: The same thing.

Mr. Nielsen: If it is anything like this one I am sure the whole population will be applying to get into one of the finest residences in the region. My point is that had there been more power to decide these things on the spot, had there been more power locally and more executive control, things like this would not have happened.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard): Order. The time allotted to the hon. member has expired.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman I shall not take the time of the committee for long but I cannot allow these interesting estimates to go through without making a few observations, asking the minister a few questions and putting forward a few suggestions.

First, I should like to congratulate the minister on his vigorous administration of this department with the support of his very competent and active officials. The hon. gentleman was born two generations after the member for Kootenay West but he has learned a lot from our generation in British Columbia. I know he comes from a pioneer family and that he understands many of the situations which arise in the department he