

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

the bureaucracy, whether they live in Ottawa or Yellowknife, are really competent to settle all the problems of the north.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being one o'clock I now leave the chair until 2 p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, we are today looking into a motion brought forward by the Official Opposition, involving problems related to the Northwest and Yukon territories, with which I am not quite in agreement. Although it is vague, I feel the motion deserves our attention.

In the Northwest Territories, as in any of the ten Canadian provinces, there are problems related to finance and development, due to very low population density.

In fact, expanses as large as the Northwest Territories and the Yukon contain respectively 32,000 and 16,000 inhabitants only. It is therefore obvious that any mining or other development program, as well as the building of roads and the installation of modern facilities, involves substantial costs that should be spread in proportion to the population.

From the figures quoted by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien), on his recent trip to Whitehorse and Yellowknife, we realize that in 1969, for instance, the Canadian government spent in the Yukon a net amount of \$2,250 per capita, and \$2,281 in the Northwest Territories.

Those amounts may seem astronomical, but taking into account the size of the territories and the distances between towns and Indian or Eskimo posts, such expenses are explainable.

Is it absolutely necessary to push on mining prospecting to that extent, since the southern regions are now being developed and there are still natural resources which have not yet been worked.

There is, for example, a rather important iron ore deposit near Val-d'Or, a town which is quite well organized and which is served by a railway, a road system and one of the

[Mr. Orlikow.]

nicest airports in Quebec. It also enjoys power and telephone services, hospitals, stores, in one word, all the facilities of a modern city.

Something should be done to get industrialists interested in mining in this region before they spend huge amounts to develop territories difficult of access, where people must be brought and cities built. In my opinion, it would be more profitable to develop the mines in the vicinity of organized centers.

For minerals, which are the main natural resources in these territories, the markets seem to be excellent, but foreign capital is necessary to exploit them.

At Whitehorse and Dawson City I noticed that to exploit its mines the Yukon has to rely mainly on Japanese capital. Canadian capital is undoubtedly lacking. American investors are reluctant, maybe because they are far away. However, since Japan needs copper and iron so much, it is ready to invest in Canada. In fact, the Japanese are interested in bringing into their country ore to be processed there and then put on the international market. That is how our ore comes back to us as manufactured goods.

Since we want to develop our natural resources—which is desirable—we should find a way to process on the spot as much ore as possible so as to create a great many jobs in Canada.

I know of a law passed recently in Ontario, under which in that province, at least as concerns provincial jurisdiction, all natural resources must be processed, whenever possible, on the spot where they are exploited. This legislation is therefore designed to benefit some areas substantially, including that part of Ontario located close to northern Quebec. I feel that such legislation ought to be enacted by the federal government.

I do not intend to elaborate on the problems of northern Canada and the Northwest Territories this afternoon. I know that other hon. members are better informed than I am of the conditions and problems particular to that area. I shall rather limit myself to listening to them and providing them with an opportunity to express their opinions and ideas.

● (2:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. R. J. Orange (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, on entering this debate I should like to say that my first