

Government Orders

term in opposition we went to the western Arctic where we visited the various local communities.

Until one goes there one cannot imagine what is going on. Because they are out of sight they are out of mind in our agenda in the House. The issues and concerns are as important to them as our concerns in our communities, in our big cities or in our rural areas.

The bill is about giving Yukon the ability or the instrument to start generating some of its own economic activity. Members know that everyone in the north supports the bill. It is not as if the bill will put in the hands of people in the north, whether they be governments or businesses, the ability to do whatever they want. As I read the bill there are a couple of very specific points I want to mention. They have to do with the environment and are found in clause 47 which talks about terms and conditions. I would like to read it into the record:

On application made by a Yukon First Nation that does not reach an agreement with the minister in respect of terms and conditions for the exercise by any person, on the settlement land of the Yukon First Nation, of a right of access described in section 2 of schedule II that are additional to any application, terms and conditions—

There are conditions. Clause 48 reads:

Unless the Yukon First Nation and the minister agree otherwise, terms and conditions may not be established pursuant to an order made under section 47 for a purpose other than

- (a) protecting the environment;
- (b) protecting fish or wildlife or their habitat;
- (c) reducing conflicts between the exercise of that right and the traditional or cultural uses of settlement land by the Yukon First Nation or a Yukon Indian person; or,
- (d) protecting the use and peaceful enjoyment of land used for communities or residences.

● (1615)

This bill has very specific reference to ensuring that the environmental concerns in the north which we all care about are addressed. Any transactions taking place there have to fall within the concerns specified in the act.

I hope all members will support this bill. As we focus on our own economic activity and our own cities, let us not forget there are many Canadians in the north who are hoping that with this bill we can give them the instrument to develop their own economic activity in a whole range of sectors, from mining to tourism. With this bill we will give them the stability to make those decisions.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Broadview—Greenwood talked about many different issues.

With regard to the surface rights board although it is designed to operate solely within the Yukon with two sets of representatives designated by the Yukon Indians as well as by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the whole concept of the board is that it will be paid for from federal funds. This is a particularly obnoxious part of the bill.

If we want to give this board long term stability and something that is locally responsive, then I firmly believe we need to ensure those groups that are benefiting from the existence of the board are the ones who are paying for it. I would not mind having a response to that comment.

Additionally, when we talk about northern communities, it is very important to recognize that Whitehorse is a very modern community. It contains 90 per cent of the population of the Yukon. There are 25,000 people, a modern airport, modern highways, modern housing. It has many more facilities than equivalent or smaller sized communities in my province of British Columbia. When I was in Whitehorse this summer I had a tremendous golf game. We cannot treat these communities and these areas as somehow being subject to a whole different set of rules than communities south of 60, certainly not in the case of the Yukon. That is my belief.

There was also a statement that everybody in the Yukon supports this bill. As we know, this bill flows from Bill C-33 and Bill C-34 that went through the House earlier this year. The member for Broadview—Greenwood knows very well how the Reform caucus felt about those bills. Bill C-55 is required as companion legislation in order to implement Bills C-33 and 34, even though they have already received royal assent.

At the time of considering Bills C-33 and C-34 we were given that very same statement that everybody in the Yukon supported those two bills. As a matter of fact everybody in the Yukon did not support those bills but certainly the filtered message we received in Ottawa was that everybody in the Yukon supported those two bills.

● (1620)

Given that Bills C-33 and C-34 have already received royal assent and we are currently looking only at Bill C-55, the degree of support in the Yukon is to just get on with business. It is a much higher degree of support. I am the first one to admit that is the case, but I did not want to holus-bolus let that remark slip by without making a comment on it.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by addressing the remarks about the support for the bill. I did not mean to suggest that every single person was behind the bill holus-bolus but generally speaking I think people are in favour of it. That is what I was trying to communicate.