

*Northwest Territories Act*

the realization of these objectives. Unhappily there has been hesitation during the past few years.

We had some bills before this house, in 1964 I think it was, which contemplated political progress in the territories. At that time the government hoped to proceed to a division of the territories into two separate political entities. It is significant that the government and parliament did not proceed at that time because those bills were referred to the Standing Committee on Northern Affairs and National Resources, and as a result of the discussion it was discovered that the sentiments of the government and of parliament were out of tune with the desires of the representatives of the territories. I found that our discussions in the parliamentary committee were most enlightening. We were able to meet face to face with the actual spokesmen from the north, most of them showing the same colourful characteristics as are demonstrated by northern spokesmen in this chamber. It is significant that while the Northwest Territories council itself had recommended this particular solution to the problem of political development in the north, the spokesmen from the north disputed the recommendations of the council. This of course arose from the fact that the dominating influence on the council at that time lay with the appointed representatives rather than with the elected representatives.

**Mr. Orange:** Does the hon. gentleman not recall the vote on the part of the elected members regarding the splitting of the territories at the council session in Cape Dorset in 1962, when a decision was made on this matter?

**Mr. Dinsdale:** That is exactly what I am saying. The recommendation came out of the Northwest Territories council and, as I thought I was intimating, it was only when that recommendation was brought before a parliamentary committee, and we heard from the spokesmen of the north, that we found the recommendations of the Northwest Territories council to be inconsonant with those of the spokesmen of the people of the north. I thought I was making that point.

**Mr. Orange:** One question. My recollection is that spokesmen for the north, on the recommendation of the sitting member for the Northwest Territories, put forward their

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

views, and that if the sitting had been continued there would have been other spokesmen from the north expressing different views. I am not arguing now the merits of the case for the division of the territories.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Nor am I. I am making the point that the council at that time seemed to be not altogether representative of the genuine feelings of the north and I am suggesting that this would be because the elected representatives were not the predominant influence on the council.

It is for this reason that I heartily endorse the sentiments of my hon. friend from the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) who has suggested that the time has come to make the Northwest Territories council entirely elective. I think the time is past due. The north has moved forward much more quickly than anyone—

**Mr. Orange:** You had the chance.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** The hon. member for the Northwest Territories says I had the chance. Well, we were moving in this direction in 1963 but for the past three years there has been no progress in this regard. I must say I have not had the chance for the past three years—almost four years.

I must observe that this non-partisan atmosphere has certainly degenerated recently. I am not defending anything here. I repeat: We have difficulty in this House of Commons in getting the pulse of the north and, in case the hon. member for the Northwest Territories still misunderstands, my point is that the progress of economic development there has been much greater than could have been anticipated and, unfortunately, it has left us behind in our political development.

I can quote the hon. member directly in this regard. He himself says that this is nothing but a housekeeping bill which does nothing to respond to the great desire of northerners for more autonomy and a greater degree of self government. A commission has been appointed to look into the question of autonomy and self-government in the north. My hon. friend from Yukon has already dealt with the subject. The commission is to report in September and nothing will happen in terms of granting greater self-government until this government takes action. It is therefore not making a direct contribution toward the solution of the problem we have all recognized here tonight.

I am making these preliminary remarks because I feel it would be in the best interests of political development in the north if