

counsel of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. That has long since been abandoned. The big players now are Energy, Fisheries and Oceans, Environment, Transport, and so on.

I wish to ask the Minister whether any thinking is going on among his policy makers that eventually we can wind down northern development with its 800 person years. I know that in the last four years the Government has been attempting to find ways to reduce the deficit. I continue to be puzzled as to exactly what these people do except research so extensively the polar bear that I am sure there is not a polar bear's toenail that has not been looked at. Surely to goodness this is a big price to pay for so much research. I think it could be done easier in other ways.

Would the Minister share with the committee what is his thinking about the future of this government department?

Mr. McKnight: The question that the Hon. Member puts is a question that I observed when I was given the responsibility of northern development. The history, which is known to the Hon. Member, going back to 1966 and the creation of the department of northern development has had ups and downs.

I can say that in the department of northern development and the Indian services side of the Northwest Territories and Yukon, we do find that we have a duplication. It is not my intention to make changes at this time.

The role of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, other than some of the esoteric research referred to by the Member, has been that of being involved in the devolution process. I think the Member will understand that it is easier to devolve services and be very supportive of that when they involve other departments rather than when they involve one's own. That being a fact of life is an important role for the department at this time.

We have been involved in the transfer of forestry, we have been involved in the transfers of health, and in that way reducing the federal presence and allowing the people who reside there to have the responsibilities for which they are certainly capable and should have.

The only other point on the energy side is that we are having discussions about a northern accord. The role of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in the issuance and the onshore energy side is a paramount role, and it is one that will allow us to have discussions and continue discussions with both the Yukon and NWT as to the strengthening of the role of the people and legislative assemblies of those territories in controlling that important aspect.

I do not wish the Hon. Member to think that we want to stay there any longer than necessary. But I do believe that the Department, as it is described and as its mandate was originally intended, allows us to be active in the important role of devolution with the Governments of the two territories.

Eldorado Nuclear Limited

Ms. McLaughlin: I would like to follow that issue up a little in that it also refers to NCPC, as the Minister is well aware. With the land claims negotiations continuing, there is much discussion about the devolution of programs separate from that process. Many of the aboriginal groups feel that no devolution should take place, and others feel that it should take place with consultation. In areas like the Northwest Power Commission, was there any consultation with aboriginal groups outside of the NWT, because I know that was the main negotiator?

Mr. McKnight: There were discussions between the Government of the Yukon and CYI before that transfer took place. There were discussions with the Government of the Northwest Territories before the transfer took place.

I believe that if the legislative Governments of both territories wish to become involved in the devolution and receive the responsibility that it is up to those legislators to have discussions with their electorate as to the appropriateness. In NWT, particularly in the transfer of forestry, there was an agreement by the Dene/Métis to have that transferred. Other transfers such as discussions on a northern accord in the NWT have led to discussions with the Inuit and the Dene.

Clauses 2 to 23 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.

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● (1640)

ELDORADO NUCLEAR LIMITED REORGANIZATION AND DIVESTITURE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Tuesday, April 12, consideration of the motion of Mrs. McDougall that Bill C-121, an Act to authorize the reorganization and divestiture of Eldorado Nuclear Limited and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. Benjamin (p. 14369).

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to resume debate on Bill C-121, an Act to authorize the reorganization and divestiture of Eldorado Nuclear Limited, as well as a number of other initiatives. Of course the issue we are addressing in the Bill is the whole issue of privatization, the turning over of certain Crown corporations to private investors. I want to say very clearly that this is becoming a trend.

Specifically we are discussing today an amendment which would see Bill C-121 set aside for six months to enable the