

Because of the time I have available to me—I see it is only another five minutes or so—I will make a rather quick run through of the other matters which I would like to bring to the attention of the House. Mr. Drury proposes—and this is one of the more important items for us as federal politicians—some rather sweeping reorganizations within the federal government. He thinks a minister of federal-provincial territorial relations should be appointed. In fact there was a minister of federal-provincial relations sometime ago. He no longer exists and another one has not been appointed. Instead of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, that minister at the federal level should be responsible for the administration of the Northwest Territories Act. He should be the person to whom the commissioner of the territories should report in the interim.

● (1720)

He thinks the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development should divest himself of the northern development side of his portfolio, become the minister for native peoples and be the spokesman in cabinet for the native peoples of Canada, and that those things now done by that department in the north should be transferred to the legitimate branch of government which takes them over. Of course some could be transferred to the government of the territories. There are other things such as the administration of oil, gas and minerals. Would it not be logical if that were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources? Is it not logical that the responsibility for major public works projects should be transferred to the Department of Public Works? Is that not what it is there for? Similarly, would it not be logical for environmental matters, agricultural matters, etc.?

I should like to refer to the transfer of those areas of responsibility presently under the jurisdiction of the federal government which, in all honesty and all right, should be transferred to the territorial government. I am referring to areas of provincial nature such as forests, the environment, agricultural matters, inland fisheries and justice. We should have our own attorney general instead of being dependent upon the Attorney General of Canada (Mr. Chrétien). Also, there are labour matters, certain remaining health matters, matters dealing with territorial waters and housing. These things could be easily and justly transferred. Mr. Drury touched on the problems relating to education and housing in the north.

Another very important matter is the transfer of land and resources. If we in that part of the country do not control our own land and resources, we never will have those revenues with which to finance provincial status. As an interim measure the administration of the land, if not the ownership of it, could be transferred. We could devise a system of resource revenue sharing whereby as an interim measure, again, we would be prepared to put a cap on those revenues accruing to the people of the territories. After that cap has been reached, then the

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revenues could be shared on a 50-50, 75-25 or “you name it” basis with federal authorities.

These land items are extremely important. The executive arm of the government of the territories must be made more workable. The situation is that the present commissioner is the chairman of the so-called cabinet and a federal civil servant. This situation just does not work. As an interim measure the commissioner must become a federal agent, not a departmental employee. His position must evolve into that of lieutenant-governor. The executive council of the territorial governments must evolve into full provincial-type cabinets.

There are a number of very important financial recommendations which Mr. Drury made, but in 60 seconds I cannot get through many of them. The main idea is that the territory should negotiate with the federal government very much the same as a province does in matters of financing. They should not have operating and capital grants. They should take part in the equalization payment system and the revenue stabilization program. These are some of the very, very important recommendations made in this report. Mr. Drury has done a good job. He is showing us the way. Now, let us have the fortitude to carry out some of his recommendations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roger Simmons (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak to Motion No. 15 in the name of the hon. member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) which reads in part:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of implementing the recommendations contained in the report—

That refers to the Drury report. The hon. member ought to ask himself whether he really does any justice to the cause he espoused in the House this afternoon.

Given his stated concerns on this particular matter, concerns which I share with him and I believe are shared by every member of the House, I am rather surprised that in stating those concerns he chose to use this particular vehicle to have his concerns implemented. If the House were to adopt this particular motion, it seems to me it would in some respects fly in the face of the very authority he quotes, the Drury report. Contrary to what the member suggested, I am sure in good faith in the last few minutes, the report acknowledged that there was no consensus on the substance or process of change. That was one finding the hon. member did not mention this afternoon, that is, that there was a lack of consensus on the very subject we are talking about. A lot of good ideas came from the report, as well as a lot of good suggestions and concrete recommendations which I will come to in a few moments. But I believe the first thing which needs to be said is that the hon. member for Western Arctic may well be defeating his own purpose if he persists in getting the kind of decision from the House he advocated this afternoon.