

The Territories

of the Yukon Territorial Council and the Northwest Territorial Council requesting that the government apply those principles of constitutional and democratic development that will establish a fully representative and responsible system of government to the Yukon territory and the Northwest territories respectively.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that this resolution should be debated at this time, following on the heels of several days of meetings of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development considering the provisions of Bill C-13 to amend the Northern Canada Power Commission Act. I do not intend to refer to the evidence heard during the meetings of that committee and thus offend the rules. Things were said by representatives who travelled from both the Yukon and the Northwest territories which had a direct bearing on the resolution now before the House. It is not my intention to speak at length, in order that the resolution might come to a vote before the hour is out, though I think that is wishful thinking.

• (1700)

Never in my years here have I seen so many representatives travel from the north, from both territories, to appear before a standing committee of this House to make their views known. For some time the standing committee has been endeavouring to obtain authority to travel to the north in order to hear from the people. We are getting rather fed up, Mr. Speaker—I am sure members have discerned this impatience among northerners—at having constantly to traipse 4,000 miles here and then back, cap in hand, asking for audience with the “Great White Father”.

Similarly, we are fed up with the constant decisions being made here in Ottawa and applied in the territories and in the north by what we sometimes affectionately refer to as the “instant experts on the north”, those who travel from officialdom here, from their ivory towers, to the Yukon and the Northwest territories and return convinced they are fully aware of all the problems that beset those who live in the north. The Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development was extremely fortunate in being authorized by the House to travel to the Yukon in 1973. In December of that year, under the chairmanship of my hon. friend and colleague, by the constitution—the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Buchanan)—the committee did visit the Yukon and hold meetings at some length. At that time the subject matter of this resolution arose.

The members of the committee who attended the meeting in Whitehorse at that time were the following: the hon. member for Portage (Mr. Masniuk); the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin); the hon. member for Sainte-Marie (Mr. Dupont); the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier)—to whom I will be referring in a moment since he seemed to express the view of those who attended on his side—the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling); the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil); the hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming); the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald); the present minister, the hon. member for London (Mr. Buchanan); myself; the hon.

[Mr. Nielsen.]

member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle); the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale); the hon. member for Richelieu (Mr. Côté); the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr), the present chairman of the committee; the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Clark); the then hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett), who is not with us in this parliament; and last but not least, the estimable member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand), one-time parliamentary secretary to the minister of the day. We now have a new parliamentary secretary to the minister, the lovely lady from Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo), who has impressed me in committee not only with her logic but with her charm as well. I hope that when these proceedings are exposed to her she and those of her party on that committee will support what I have to say.

The resolution simply calls, as we have been calling for years, for the Government of Canada to introduce legislation in the House which would implement the resolutions which have been passed by the councils of the Yukon territory and the Northwest Territories; but I will leave this to my hon. friend who will be speaking on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

At the outset, may I say I regret very much that the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) cannot be with us today. Had he been here, I am sure he would have seconded this motion, as he did in committee when the motion was debated in Whitehorse. However, I am sure he will be well represented by the spokesman of his party. The most interesting part of the proceedings that took place in Whitehorse on that occasion, December 12, 1973, centred around the remarks made by the hon. member for Sherbrooke. If I might refer to part of what he said, as reported at page 140 of the committee proceedings for that date he said:

Since we arrived here we have seen all kinds of statistics concerning the park—

He is speaking of the national park.

—the wildlife and whatnot. Could you tell me approximately how many Yukoners would subscribe to the idea of becoming the eleventh province of Canada?

Mr. McKinnon, who was still a member of the Yukon legislative council, replied, “almost 95 per cent”. He then came back again with a further question, which was more a statement than a question. The hon. member for Sherbrooke said:

What surprises me is that the latest addition to Canada was in 1949, and they wanted to become a part of Canada and they fought the elections and referendums on that. You are a part of Canada and yet from what I can see you are not full-fledged Canadians.

That, of course, is our chief complaint: we are secondary citizens of this country. Although required to impose taxes upon ourselves at the behest of the minister, the governor in council and the government of the day, we are not given even the power of a municipal government in regard to expenditure of these moneys. At least in the case of a municipal government, the mayor and aldermen not only have the right to impose taxes, but when revenues are raised by these imposts they have the right to