

both the Northwest Territories and in the Yukon. So have I, and I believe I am expressing their view when I say that what we have before us is certainly not what the Council in the Yukon asked the minister to produce. They certainly welcome, as I do, the increase in numbers, but no amount of increase in numbers can solve the problem. If the minister, in his legislation today, were to introduce a measure to increase the number on the Council, not from seven to 12, but from seven to 100, or, indeed, to the whole of the population of the two territories, it would still not solve the problem.

As the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) has said, the heart of the whole matter lies in the inability of the elected members of the councils, the representatives of the people, to have any effective say whatsoever in the decision-making process or in the spending of their money. I am sure the minister would understand the situation if I put it in simple terms by saying that a town council or a municipal council has more power than that which resides in the councils of the two northern territories. Municipal councils are free to impose taxes upon property situated within municipal boundaries. Once this revenue has been raised they have full authority to spend that money.

What is the situation in the two northern territories? The minister says to them: This is the amount of money I want you to raise this year in order to meet budget commitments prepared by my officials. You are to impose these taxes upon yourselves, but you will not have anything to say as to the direction in which the funds will be spent, except to deny supply. This is the situation as it exists today.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Just as it does here.

**Mr. Nielsen:** We tried that, as did the council which was led by Frederick Haultain in Manitoba in 1879 when that District of Assiniboia became a part of the now greatly extended Province of Manitoba. They refused supply, with the result that government employees had to go out and chop wood in order to earn enough to survive. We tried to use this weapon, the only weapon we had in the Yukon, by denying supply on a vote concerning the administration of justice. We were told by the minister's predecessor—a Liberal government was in office—that if this vote was not passed the Council would get no other moneys, even if it wished to vote them. What kind of attitude is that, in terms of responsible government? The council in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories is a rubber stamp, and this measure represents what the minister is pleased to called progress toward responsible government, to use the terms of the press release put out under his authority. The title was "Greater self-government for the Yukon and N.W.T.". The Minister knows that this is grossly misleading. All he has done has been to increase the numbers and play around in the territories with an experiment which has already failed in the Yukon.

It is true there have been significant changes in the Northwest Territories Act, changes which should have been made long ago. I refer, for instance, to the Commissioner sitting as Speaker of the Council. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Northwest Territories, this same Commissioner decided only last year that the elected

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representatives should be dismissed. He said: The Council is dissolved, and that's that. In other words, a government employee directly responsible to the minister possesses this exorbitant power over what is described by the minister as a representative form of government.

There is another reason why this creature, this executive committee, is unconstitutional. I would draw the attention of the minister to the sections of the Yukon Act which stipulate that the Governor-in-Council, in effect, the minister may appoint a Chief Executive Officer who shall administer the government of the territory under instructions given to him from time to time by the Governor in Council or the Minister. It is the same for the Northwest Territories. This is a mandatory obligation.

The minister is the person responsible for administering the government of the Yukon and of the Northwest Territories. The legislation gives him no power to delegate this authority, no power other than to appoint a Commissioner who will take instructions from him. It gives the minister no power to set up an executive committee for the purpose of further delegating this authority. This is a third constitutional argument in support of the proposition I advanced almost four years ago. If the minister thinks the concept of an executive council is a valid one, it should be built into the act.

**Mr. Chrétien:** There is no mention of the cabinet in any act.

**Mr. Nielsen:** All right, I was coming to that. What the minister has just said is precisely the manner in which the responsible form of government exists and functions in every province as well as at the federal level. It is the majority of elected representatives and their supporters who form the government. It is the leader of that majority who selects the cabinet. What is so wrong with extending the same kind of principle to the northern territories? That was impossible with five on the council as it was impossible with seven on the council, but when this legislation passes, there will be 12 on that council and the selection of wholly elected members to the executive council in the Northwest Territories could easily be made. What could be so wrong with carrying over the principle that now exists at the provincial and federal level, so that from these two councils a majority emerges. The leader of that majority then would be selected and would form the cabinet or executive committee of five wholly elected representatives? That is the way a democratic form of responsible government is supposed to operate as we know it, certainly in the free world.

● (1610)

Not only is the minister perpetuating a colonial system of government in the two territories by not going to the extent he should, but he is flying in the teeth of world policy, particularly in respect of all the emerging countries of the world. What he is saying to us in the Yukon, and what he is saying to our neighbours in the Northwest Territories is that we do not have the intelligence to look after our own affairs. He is saying that there are not men of ability, capacity and intelligence to govern themselves.

**An hon. Member:** How about women?