

advantage of an excellent preparatory background, for his service to the north. Also speaking tonight have been the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), and the present hon. member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange).

I enter this debate, Mr. Speaker, for two reasons. This happens to be an historic day in northern development. Ninety six years ago today, Mr. Speaker, the great leap forward in northern development took place when the province of Manitoba became the first province to be formed out of the huge western territory that was known generally as the Northwest Territories. Great celebrations are taking place in Manitoba today to mark that occasion. There are observances in every school. You may be sure that the young people of Manitoba will be made completely aware of the fact that development in Canada, ever since the earliest days, has been in constant progression outward into the Northwest Territories.

I speak also, Mr. Speaker, as a former minister of the crown responsible for northern development. I agree with my successor, the present Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, that there have been recent developments in the Northwest Territories, as well as in the Yukon territory, that are greater than could have been anticipated when the new outward thrust got under way in this country, some ten years ago.

It is a rather sad commentary on our record as a pioneering nation to recall that following the establishment of the province of Manitoba in 1870, there was no further development towards provincial status for the Northwest Territories until 1905. In that year the province of Saskatchewan and Alberta joined confederation, with complete autonomy. Looking back at the history of that period, we find that the famous debate on the autonomy bill took some four years, before finally being approved by the house in 1905. I do not think the present bill is going to be before the house for that long period of time.

Actually, as the hon. member for the Northwest Territories was intimated, this is a housekeeping bill and it does very little to advance the march toward autonomy and provincial status that has been the subject of discussion, both within the territories and outside, to an increasing extent during the past few years.

#### *Northwest Territories Act*

I am afraid that the rate of political development has not kept pace with the rate of economic development that was referred to by the minister. He referred to the Pine Point railway project which, of course, is exhibit A so far as the territories are concerned. This parliament approved of that measure, not necessarily with unanimity, as I recall, only five years ago. The colleagues of the present Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources looked at the economic potential of the Pine Point railway development with what might be called a jaundiced eye.

That railway is the great communications link which has made possible the remarkable economic development in the lower Great Slave lake area during the past two years. Communications are basic to economic development. It is for this reason that the government to which I belonged proposed, as a major plank in its northern development program, filling in the gaps in our communications system as quickly as possible.

It is only six or seven years ago that the present Prime Minister referred to this upsurge in communications and to this enthusiasm for communications as a case of jumping from igloo to igloo. That attitude no longer prevails. The government has accepted the philosophy and the enthusiasm of the former Conservative administration for northern development.

● (9:40 p.m.)

It is unfortunate that the political development has not kept pace with the recent economic development. A few years ago it was contemplated that by 1962, both the Yukon territory and the Northwest Territories would be taking substantial and joint steps in the direction of greater autonomy. In fact it was hoped that the political evolution would bring both these areas close to provincial status by 1967.

I will not review the history. Other speakers have mentioned it tonight—the extension of the franchise, the desire to give greater autonomy in the legislative sense in these territories, the desire to remove the seat of government from Ottawa to the territories, as far as that part of the north is concerned. These were all a part of the grand strategy.

The hon. member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange) has himself referred to the vociferous demand from northerners themselves for increasing control of their own affairs, and it is unfortunate we were not able to proceed to a greater extent toward