

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

To add insult to a shaky knowledge of history, the minister said the Yukon could not aspire to provincial status for years because the territory "did not pay its way". This is a strange argument coming from the member of a government which recently approved a \$500 million plan to salvage the province of Prince Edward Island. Does Prince Edward Island pay its way? Does Newfoundland pay its way? For that matter, does Quebec pay its way? The minister claimed the Yukon cost \$32 annually per capita but returns only \$12. He neglected to say, however, that the principal taxpayers of the territory, the mining and exploration companies, pay taxes outside the Yukon. There is sound reason to believe that if the taxes and revenue from such things as oil and gas leases were devoted directly to Yukon needs, the territory could carry itself.

Speaking of his proposal that one elected member of the Yukon council be allowed to sit with the Territorial Commissioner and his two assistants on the proposed executive committee, the minister suggested that future extension of responsibility would depend upon the experience of the operation of this committee. One Yukon resident, with some justification, termed this veiled blackmail. Future extension of responsibility for their own affairs and toward full self-government would be tied to the performance and good behaviour of the tame committee member forced to work in harness with three permanent officials.

The Carruthers report of a few years ago made recommendations for increased territorial independence and the growth of self-government. Commenting on this report in its November 13 issue, the *Globe and Mail* observed of the minister's answer:

That answer is a poor compromise that offers very little change from the status quo.

The people of the Yukon asked Ottawa for blood and they were given a stone. The only power the council now has is to reject the annual budget. This is a considerable weapon and has been used time and time again throughout Canada's history. For years prior to the troubles of 1837 the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada refused to vote the Civil List until given some say in the disposal of taxes so raised. This use of popular approval of the proposed expenditure of public moneys is a familiar tactic in the story of colonial development, particularly in North America. It has proved to be a potent weapon in the past and could be again.

[Mr. Ritchie.]

I would suggest that the Prime Minister has been wise in superseding his minister in the matter of relations between Ottawa and the Yukon. I think he would be wiser were he to appoint a new minister and transfer the present incumbent to a less sensitive portfolio. Whatever virtues the minister may have brought to his office, they have obviously been swamped by Ottawa officialdom. This is all the more tragic because the minister is of a province and generation which claims to abhor colonialism above all else. Yet, to judge from the most recent "Thoughts of Chairman Chrétien", he would have been perfectly at home in the British Colonial Office of the late 19th century.

It is time for a realistic appraisal of the future of the Yukon and the aspiration of that territory's citizens to full Canadian Citizenship. Now that he has personally taken over the problem, let us hope that the chief architect of the just society finds himself able to add another roof to the national structure in order to accommodate the people north of 60 degrees latitude. In this respect I heartily endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Yukon.

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very useful that we have had an opportunity to debate the subject of northern affairs in this House today. I believe the matter of northern development, northern government and the future of the north is one which concerns all Canadians. After all, Canada is a northern nation. Much of our future lies in the north. While we can take pride in some of our accomplishments to date, we can very easily see that much more remains to be done. In particular we can see that much remains to be done when we compare some of our accomplishments with those of other northern nations. I hope the minister will take part in this debate shortly. I believe I am the eighth speaker in the debate and as yet we have not had an enunciation of the minister's views on the subject of the debate.

Mr. Forrestall: He was about to get up to speak and you would not let him.

Mr. Burton: I am sorry; I did not notice that he was about to get to his feet. As Canadians we feel free to condemn nations in other parts of the world for carrying on the practices of colonial administration. We often feel free to do a little tongue-clucking because of minority groups in other countries which do not have equal opportunities and equal rights. We have situations and problems