

earlier on behalf of the Yellowknife board of trade. I travelled throughout the territories during my five years in law practice there, and there is hardly a settlement that I have not visited on one or on many occasions.

If it will assist the committee to weigh my words, I will add that my firm acts as solicitors for many and diverse interests throughout the Northwest Territories, be they small or large, both lonely and seemingly insignificant individuals and substantial corporations. We are in touch therefore with a wide cross section of public opinion in that country. We have the almost unique distinction, together with the survey parties and the politicians, of being a small group who travel right around the country and visit pretty well every settlement. During my years of travel there I have seen tremendous changes take place. Venturing a personal opinion I may say that most of it is beneficial; it has been a remarkable change, not just a physical change, not just a matter of buildings, but a change in the attitude of the people, the people who live there. It seems to me that the north is waking up to its potentialities and that Canada, from my contacts with the south, is likewise waking up to what we must do to develop that country and put it to work.

Bills C-83 and C-84 spring, I suggest, from this recognition that this is a time for a change, a change of a kind which will assist the development, both economic and political, and from that aspect the bills are to be welcomed. The north, it seems to me, has never had such a wonderful opportunity to speak up and be heard—and I say that with all due respect for our territorial council of recent years—because your committee and this house are now giving us in the north the very thing we have most desired: a chance to have a real say in our own affairs.

It is therefore with a personal sense of gratitude and respect for the historic nature of the occasion that I appear here today.

West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Limited is a leading example of artistic, social, industrial and commercial progress among the Eskimos. It is honoured by the patronage of His Excellency the Governor General, owes its start to the pioneering work of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, particularly to the Hon. Senator Molson of the guild, and its success is widely acclaimed, being due to many more than I can name, though these would be headed by Mr. and Mrs. James Houston who have lived there for years and played a very important part in its development, and the present officers led by Pingwartok, supported by such eminent artists as Oshaweetok, the master craftsman who was primarily responsible for fashioning the territorial mace and for the beautiful ivory and stone figure presented to Her Majesty the Queen in 1961, not to forget the generous assistance of officials of the federal department, particularly the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, which has done a great deal to launch the co-operative—it is now independent of the department and it appears to be destined for continued success.

The co-operative has been followed by a number of others. The whole movement, of which West Baffin Co-operative Limited is the leading exponent, I venture to suggest, has done more for the Eskimo people these last few years than anything else to maintain their strong sense of identity, of worth and of dignity as individual persons and as a people; one of the original and most distinctive people of Canada.

The co-operative combines in itself the attributes of a municipal council, a chamber of commerce and an adult education association, a trade union and a major corporate employer. It is the major social force in the community, barring perhaps the churches and the government.

It is therefore with gratitude and a sense of high purpose that I convey the thanks of the people to this parliament for this opportunity to appear, and more than that for the federal franchise which was granted to them in 1962.