

Mr. NIELSEN: That is approximately 18 per cent. You must remember that all the Indian and Eskimo people in the Mackenzie district always have had the right to vote, just as any other Canadian citizen.

Mr. LANG: The point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that it is all very well to say that we have capable men who can be elected in the Mackenzie district who possess the ability to function as well as appointed members, but can we get them elected? Eighty-six per cent of our population in the Mackenzie district consists of natives. They are not going to elect men unless they know them very well. They are more likely to elect a man such as myself, or the other members here today, who have spent a long time in that area. The native does not always vote for an issue. There are many things he does not understand and he votes for the man in many cases. He will vote for a man he has known for a long time and who has treated him fairly and squarely. The native will go a long way to vote for such an individual. I think it will be a little difficult to elect an expert engineer who knows all about engineering but very little about the natives.

Mr. NIELSEN: Is it not right, Mr. Lang, that the eligible electors should decide who shall represent them rather than have these representatives appointed by the governor in council?

Mr. LANG: I think you have a point in regard to elected members and appointed members, so long as the elected members have the ability to represent the people.

Mr. NIELSEN: I am suggesting that the advice and assistance which is now available continue to be made available.

Mr. RHEAUME: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask a question in regard to the subject discussed by Mr. Nielsen. Every legislature in Canada, be it provincial or federal, has access to advice, but are the advisers allowed to vote? The elected members are answerable to the people but the advisers do not have a legislative function as such, and cannot pass laws.

In view of what I have said, assuming that the Northwest Territories council had access to technical and procedural advice, just as the House of Commons has, would the provisions contained in this bill meet with your approval?

Mr. LANG: Yes. I do not know how we in the Northwest district could afford to have such a council at the present time, but in light of the gradual evolution through which we are passing at the present time, perhaps in three years we might have six or seven elected members.

Mr. NIELSEN: Mr. Lang, surely the expense would not be increased at all, because these advisers are there now in the form of appointed members. If the council had five wholly elected members without any appointed members these advisers would still be there to give advice?

Mr. LANG: I do not think I have any objection to five elected members in that respect, but this is a matter that the council will have to decide.

Mr. RHEAUME: Mr. Lang, I suggest this is a matter for the federal house to decide. The federal house can, without the passage of Bill C-83, change the clause to read, there shall be five members on the council in the Mackenzie district and there shall be five constituencies. This is something that the federal house can do, if such a change were necessary.

Mr. LANG: I would like to give a little more study to this suggestion. Actually this has nothing to do with the present council. The next council will have to make a study in this regard. I should also like to study the Yukon council and compare it with our own.

Mr. NIELSEN: Perhaps we should arrange a mutual exchange.