

comes to moving in the directions which he feels within himself are most beneficial to northern progress—moving in a direction which he feels will result in the north playing its full part and making the contribution that he, the hon. member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange), and I, know it can make to the over-all national economic fabric of the country—just as the west did when it was growing. But I say to the minister that he is moving backward when he takes away from the legislative power of the council the right to introduce money bills, and that is what he is doing under clause 19 of this bill.

Clause 19 of the existing Northwest Territories Act gives the council the right to introduce money measures, and naturally so. This should be the case and because the council itself imposes taxes on the people who live there it should have the right to pass laws disposing of the revenue derived from those taxes. I say that this should be so, notwithstanding the extend of the contribution made by the federal government. Yet this bill takes that right away. I draw this provision to the attention of hon. members and I know that the hon. member for Northwest Territories has sympathy with what I say.

That is precisely what the minister and the government are doing under clause 19 of the bill. It is transferring the right of the council itself to introduce money measures to the commissioner in council. In other words, if this bill passes, no member of the council will henceforth have the right to introduce a measure which affects in any way howsoever the consolidated revenue fund to be set up by this bill.

The only power that will be left to the legislative council will be the power to withhold passing supply. Members of the council will have every right to tax themselves but will have no right to spend any of the money. Surely, sir, this cannot be construed as moving in the direction of giving them more to say in their own affairs, or moving in the direction of autonomy, or of self-government. It is a retrograde step.

Why is this provision there? I shall suggest a reason, and would hope I am wrong. I believe it is there because the balance of power is shifting. Instead of there being five appointed members and four elected members, under this bill it becomes seven elected members and five appointed. Therefore the bill is saying that we cannot entrust to the responsibility of the majority—that is, the

Northwest Territories Act

elected members—the power to introduce money measures. That is the result of this bill. I hope I am wrong on this motivation.

Mr. Laing: Your batting average for wrong is high.

Mr. Nielsen: Does the minister suggest for a moment that what I have been saying this evening is wrong?

Mr. Laing: Of course it is wrong.

Mr. Nielsen: I would like the minister to point out where I am wrong.

Mr. Laing: They have more power now.

Mr. Nielsen: The minister says they have more power now. I cannot conceive that he really believes that. The power that the legislative council has now, before passage of this bill, is exactly the same with respect to the introduction of fiscal measures as that of any provincial legislature. The minister cannot gainsay me on that. What this bill will do is take that power away from the legislative council and place it in the hands of the commissioner in council.

The minister knows that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is appointed by the government of the day, by the governor in council. Therefore there will not be any money measure introduced into the Northwest Territories council unless it has the prior approval of the Commissioner, an appointee of the federal government. That statement is not wrong, it is precisely accurate.

● (8:40 p.m.)

If what I have suggested is wrong, Mr. Speaker, let the minister now say so. I suggest the principle is wrong in this regard, and for that reason this bill will not move the Territories progressively toward the time when they will have self-government. I suggest this is a step backwards and will take from the elected representatives of the people the rights they should enjoy. In fact, what the Commissioner and the council will be doing, and really it is the Commissioner, because a money matter cannot get to council unless it has passed him, is taxing without representation. We all know what happened in Boston many years ago as a result of the perpetuation of that idea. I am not suggesting that the same result will occur in the Northwest Territories, but the people there feel just as deeply about the situation as we do in the Yukon.