

*The Senate*

Alberta and Saskatchewan were created. The question of territorial representation in the other place has been raised from time to time in this chamber. Private members' bills were introduced in the House of Commons in 1960 and in 1962, in 1972 Bill C-126, and in 1973 Bill C-12, to provide one senator from each territory. So the matter is not before the House for the first time; it has been brought to the attention of the House in the form of private members' bills.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Many times.

**Mr. MacEachen:** The issue is clearcut and straightforward. It does not require any further explanation from me in speaking on second reading of the bill.

In conclusion, I might mention that the motion for second reading refers consideration of the bill to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I think, on reflection, that it might be better to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. It is a constitutional amendment and it might be more appropriate for that standing committee to deal with this bill. However, the motion that was put down does refer to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and for that reason I am suggesting that the House might agree, with consent, to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

● (2010)

**Mr. MacEachen:** I conclude by saying that the question of representation of the territories in the House of Commons is not touched on in this bill. That question can be, and will be, dealt with in the general consideration of the whole question of representation in the House of Commons which will be continued in the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. So I remind hon. members of the House that there is a separate opportunity for dealing with the question of the representation of the territories in this chamber. This bill deals with the Senate.

**Mr. Nielsen:** What other business is listed for consideration, if we should finish this bill?

**Mr. MacEachen:** I respond to that question by saying that if we deal with this bill, we will call the competition bill tonight.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Order, please. May I ask hon. members whether they agree to referring this bill to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, this must be a night of great satisfaction for the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). He is a veteran member of the House of Commons and throughout much of his tenure here he has had a private member's bill standing on the order paper in his name entitled "An act to amend the British North America Acts, 1867 to 1965". That is an amendment to provide for representation in the

[Mr. MacEachen.]

Senate of Canada for the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Tonight we are dealing with a government measure bearing exactly the same title and designed to accomplish exactly the same thing. It just goes to show that if you have tenacity, endurance, stamina and perseverance you can eventually persuade even Liberals to see the light.

We in this party welcome Bill C-11 and hope that it will have quick passage through all stages of debate. Just over a year ago, on February 20, to be exact, we debated this very matter when the private member's bill of the hon. member for Yukon was before the House. Although there was the customary tendency on the part of government members to talk the bill out at that time rather than referring it to committee, there was some indication even then on the part of hon. members opposite that they supported the measure in a limited way. For instance, the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand) spoke in favour of it but made his support of it conditional upon there being over-all Senate reform. As he put it at that time, "I do not feel it gets to the root of the problem of Senate reform." So he hesitated in supporting it. Further, the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan) said, when speaking about Senate representation from the northern territories, "This matter cannot be considered in isolation from other changes which should be made in respect of Senate representation."

There may be some justification for those views, Mr. Speaker, but better one small step at a time than no step at all. That is why I welcome the government's measure tonight. I know that this time the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo and the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville will give the bill their wholehearted support. If the government would only take the same approach to other problems, such as the high cost of living, it might be able to arrive at solutions step by step instead of remaining immobile. I am sure the government will appreciate that we in this party, as in the case of this bill and that of the hon. member for Yukon, will continue to suggest the route the government should take until such time as our party forms the government.

I hope this bill receives the unanimous support of all parties in the House of Commons so that we can indicate to Canadians living north of the sixtieth parallel that the Canadian parliament does not discriminate against northerners. It is fundamentally important for us to remember that the Parliament of Canada is composed of two chambers. In this House the Yukon and Northwest Territories have been accorded representation since 1903 and 1949 respectively. In the other place the territories have been denied representation. That has been a long-standing denial of justice and equality.

Some in this House advocate the abolition of the other place.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Hear, hear!

**Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Certainly, no one questions their right to put forward that proposition with whatever vigour they can muster. However, I would say to them that so long as there is another chamber which is part of the Canadian parliamentary system, the northern territories should not be denied access to it.