

*Yukon and N.W.T. Government*

He said also:

It is my hope that by the time of Canada's centennial in 1967 the Yukon and Mackenzie will have gone a long way—if not all the way—toward self-government.

That was over a decade ago. In keeping with that expressed philosophy, the then government in 1958 did something positive about achieving that objective. I hear from some quarters that nothing was done. Let us examine the record for a moment.

The number of members on the council of the Yukon was increased from five to seven, and a blueprint was devised at that time which would lead to adding an additional member to the council with each progressive increase in the population. There was set up by legislation an advisory committee on finance. It was selected from among the elected representatives sitting on the council and consisted of three members.

This advisory committee on finance was to consult with the Commissioner. In fact, the legislative amendment to the Yukon Act at that time made it obligatory for the Commissioner to consult with the advisory committee on finance before he brought in a budget.

Another notable change was that the Commissioner, for the first time in history, was selected from among the people in the Yukon and was not a civil servant from Ottawa.

Then, also, there was a Court of Appeal set up for the Yukon so that we need not travel cap in hand to the province of British Columbia to take our appeals to their judiciary system. In addition, the franchise in the Northwest Territories was extended to the Keewatin and Franklin districts where hundreds of Canadians had been denied the vote for many, many years—in fact, since 1867. These are some of the reforms that were brought about and others would have followed had the government of that day continued.

What is the record since the change of government in 1963? All the amendments I can recall having seen was that sop of increased indemnities to the members of the councils of both territories. There was an increase in the number on the Council in the Northwest Territories, but it was really insignificant.

I want to make it clear from the outset that what the members of the Yukon council desire is not provincial status. There is no way their requests can be misconstrued and distorted to the extent that one can say they are seeking provincial status. In a moment I

[Mr. Nielsen.]

will read into the record a resolution passed by that Council, and which has been passed in successive years.

I want to make another distinction. Members of the Indian Affairs and Northern Development Committee who travelled to the Yukon last year heard the councillors themselves assure them, as members of Parliament, that this idea that there was a separate territorial government in the Yukon as distinct from the federal government was a fiction. This is wrong and a distortion of the truth. For a minister of the Crown, and for civil servants both here and in the Yukon, to deliberately attempt to create the image that there is a distinct form of territorial government is wrong; there is not, neither in the Yukon nor in the Northwest Territories.

The Commissioner in the Yukon and the Commissioner in the Northwest Territories are appointed civil servants who take their instructions from the minister and do exactly what the minister tells them to do; nothing more and nothing less. It is wrong for the minister to say that he has to abide by the decisions of the Commissioner of either territory. This is creating a false impression.

What is it that the council of the Yukon desires? As far back as ten years ago the strongest political party in the Yukon at that time, the Progressive Conservative Party, advocated a progressive evolution toward responsible government. That philosophy was embodied in a resolution which was passed by the Yukon territorial council, the last one on January 23, 1968, and it reads as follows:

Whereas the history of our nation serves as our proudest reminder of high endeavour and steadfast recognition of the great principles of Democracy; and

Whereas this Council desires to affirm its belief that the growth and full measure of the Canadian Nation cannot be achieved until the Seal of Democracy is set upon all corners of our land; and

Whereas to delay and frustrate the emergence of full partnership for any of our lands and peoples is alien to the principles which this Nation holds dear; and

Whereas this Council is desirous of accepting those principles of constitutional development that will result in the introduction of a responsible system of government to the Yukon territory; and

Whereas the wishes of the Members of the Yukon Legislative Council should be embodied in any planned constitutional changes;

Be it resolved that: The Commissioner be requested to forward to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for his submission to the Government of Canada on behalf of the council of the Yukon territory the accompanying resolution: