

*Adjournment Debate*

● (2200)

**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION***[English]*

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

**FEDERAL LANDS—YUKON—DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN LOTS  
WITHOUT TENDER**

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, since the rules changed in 1972, I believe it was, when this late show was first invented, this is the first time I have risen to take advantage of it. I do so because of a matter which is very important to Yukoners.

I telephoned the office of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) and informed him that I would be raising this matter tonight. But I suppose he had other pressing matters to deal with and he did not consider the land question in the Yukon of sufficient importance in relation to his other responsibilities. I see the hon. member for Timmins-Chapleau (Mr. Chénier) in his seat, though. He is probably here tonight to read the written response to what is anticipated will be my presentation.

The constitution is of importance to Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, in terms of government reform. Fuel prices are very important in the north. High taxes and high interest rates are extremely important in that high cost area, as are high food prices. High unemployment and native land claims, too, are important. Environmental concerns and the aspect of the Alaska highway natural gas pipeline are also very high on the priority list of important items in the Yukon, as are the functions of the Northern Canada Power Commission. Transportation and mining development are also of great importance. But I cannot think of a more important issue in all of my years in the Yukon than the availability of land. Of the 207,036 square miles of Yukon, the territorial government has jurisdiction over some 367 of those. All of the rest are federal.

I would like to break down this problem into two compartments, and it is important to do so. If it were not for the land freeze which the federal government imposed until the settlement of native claims in Yukon, an individual—and I am emphasizing that word, individual—would be entitled to apply for permission to purchase a plot of land, whether it be a small plot in the municipality or a larger plot in the countryside. That application would be initiated by the individual and dealt with by the government.

If the member for Timmins-Chapleau is to answer my question, will he at least pay attention to my submission, which he is to respond to?

**Mr. Chénier:** I always do.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I will compartmentalize the one problem of an individual. Again, in all of my time in Yukon, which is going

on 30 years now, I know of no instance where there has been a federal disposition of multiple lots of land which has not been—I know of no such disposition. If there had been one, I would be extremely surprised if it were not publicly advertised and all Yukoners given an opportunity to apply.

The recent case which gives rise to these questions concern six lots of federal land available in the Cowley Lake area and seven other lots along the Carcross Road which became available for disposition. That is 13 lots in all. They were snapped up by individuals who seemed to have some kind of inside information. One of those individuals was the chief administrator of lands in Yukon whose application was right there on top, among others from prominent individuals in the community. There was no public advertising and no request for public tenders.

At that stage I raised the matter in the House. Since that time there have been meetings between the territorial government officials and the federal government officials in Yukon to determine how to resolve the matter. Territorial government policy is to advertise such dispositions publicly and to give every Yukoner an equal opportunity to apply for those multiple land dispositions. The outcome of that meeting has not yet been decided but I was informed today that the federal position now is that everything is in a holding pattern and that there will be no disposition of those 13 lots. The whole matter is under review and until such time as a policy is developed, there will be no disposition. That is some progress, and with that position I agree.

● (2205)

There are two possible solutions to this particular problem. First, the federal government could advertise those lots as being available for sale, which would give every Yukoner an equal opportunity to apply for them. The other and more preferable solution is that the federal government could transfer those lots to the Yukon government which, in turn, would dispose of them. I know that it is the standing, invariable policy of the Yukon government to publicly advertise multiple lot dispositions for sale so that everyone is given an equal opportunity.

I suggest that in the future the disposition of federal lands of multiple disposition be publicly advertised so that every resident of the Yukon may be given an equal opportunity to acquire those lands. I make the final distinction; we are not speaking about an individual application, as difficult as that is to get through, but about several lots belonging to the federal government and put up for sale by the federal government. In such instances it is the obligation of the government to follow its own guidelines for the disposition of public lands set out by the Treasury Board and to call for public tenders, which means advertising and giving an equal opportunity to all to obtain those lands.

**Mr. Ray Chénier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, for the past two or three years there has been controversy in the Yukon concerning the policies and operations of the Depart-