

*Yukon and Territorial Lands Acts*

the territories. I felt it very important, and I still feel it essential, that the person who has the ultimate responsibility for initiating prosecutions under the Criminal Code remain responsible to Parliament or to a legislature, in other words, remain responsible to the elected representatives of the people in the jurisdiction in which he administers that criminal justice.

At this stage it is obvious that there is not in the territories a fully responsible government wherein a cabinet or an executive is responsible to a territorial council or a legislature. If a person in the territories were to institute criminal prosecution he would not be directly responsible by way of a want of confidence motion or by way of censure to either of the territorial councils as an Attorney General of a province is responsible to a legislature or as I am responsible to the Parliament of this country.

However, I did designate an assistant deputy minister with special responsibilities for the administration of justice in the north, reporting directly to the deputy minister and through him to me. We did appoint agents of the Attorney General of Canada, in his capacity as Attorney General of each of the territories, at Whitehorse and in Yellowknife. We did provide for the appointment of deputy judges to each of the territorial judges. We did broaden the support given to the magistrates by appointing deputy magistrates to each of the territories, who can be called in by the magistrate or by the judge to relieve an unduly heavy criminal load which may arise from time to time.

Short of these two reservations, namely, the appointment of the two territorial judges and the institution of criminal proceedings under the Criminal Code, the administration of justice will effectively be transferred by this bill to the people of the north. That includes, among other things, the appointment and payment of judicial officers, except judges of the territorial courts, the constitution of courts having civil as well as criminal jurisdiction, the provision and maintenance of the necessary personnel and physical plant for the efficient administration of justice and the functioning of the judicial system, and the provision of complete legal services to each of the commissioners, the territorial councils, and the several departments of territorial governments. All of that is being transferred in this bill to the territories.

• (5:10 p.m.)

As I said in my opening remarks, I believe that the provisions of the bill relating to the administration of justice will serve to bring the law closer to the people. I believe the administration of justice must reflect the local customs and aspirations and everyday lives of the people affected by that administration. I had the honour to serve for 2½ years as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and National Resources, now the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing). I remember that one of his favourite phrases was that government should be on the ground and remain close to the people. I believe that this bill reflects a growing movement toward responsible government in the territories.

I think that the impetus given to resource development, to education, health and housing and to the bringing of our native peoples into the mainstream of Canadian life within these territories—all of this achieved by the present and the previous government within the last seven years—is to the credit of the Canadian people. I am not saying that the process is by any means completed. I am not saying that the situation is entirely satisfactory. I think that the interest this Parliament has given to the issue of sovereignty in the north, to the issue of effective control over our northern territories and over our northern seas, the interest and the commitment of the Canadian people, represented in this Parliament in the legislation which the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development recently introduced, and the fact that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of this country in the short term he has been Prime Minister has already visited the north on three separate occasions, indicate a particular interest, a particular commitment of this government, on behalf of the Canadian people, toward those territories which, as my colleague said earlier, represent over 1,300,000 square miles, some 40 per cent of the Canadian land mass but more particularly toward those 40,000 people who live as Canadians north of 60.

I believe that this Parliament and the people of Canada consider our north to be a distinctive asset, something that distinguishes us from the United States, something that gives us a perspective entirely different from that of the United States, a perspective which is rather unique. If we look at the map of the world with the North Pole in the centre we get an entirely different perspective of the geographical reflection of the world. We see that Canada and the Soviet Union together