

*Yukon and Territorial Lands Acts*

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the minister, as I try to do on most occasions. Had I only listened to him I might have been half way convinced that this piece of legislation is the most dramatic move made by any government since the turn of the century. But I have read the bill and so did not come to that conclusion. I am always amazed at the great political production the minister can make out of the presentation of so little. He indicated that because an election is pending in August of this year—the term of office expires then—this House should move quickly to pass this legislation.

The minister has said that the bill does not contain anything additional to what he proclaimed in November of last year when he was in Yellowknife and Whitehorse, so I cannot help wondering why he has delayed its presentation. Why did he not bring this piece of legislation into Parliament earlier? Why did he not say two, three or four months ago, "Here are the proposals we are making. We are making them now because we recognize that the term of office expires in August and we want to do things in a proper, full and democratic way."

It does not say much for the minister's perception of democracy for him to have delayed the introduction of the bill. I can see no reason why it was not brought in earlier. If he had that conception last November and has not altered his mind since, why does he come along now and say to Parliament, "I want you to move quickly because urgency is involved. I want you to rubber-stamp my opinions and take no cognizance of what the people in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon feel about this legislation"? I cannot accept that as being the power way to legislate. In the first place it is unethical for the minister and for the government to, in effect, ask Parliament to impose a set of rules and regulations upon a political institution in this country when we at least give lip service to the concept of democracy. I think this should be rejected by the people in the territories; it should be rejected by the elected members of those councils as being an undemocratic act.

**Mr. Nielsen:** It is.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** I would give no credence whatever to what the appointed members on the council say, because I do not think that people appointed to a legislative body should have the right to express views about democratic institutions. They did not arrive there by the democratic process and

have no democratic responsibility to the people over whom they have legislative authority. We cannot in conscience accept the declaration of the minister that all we have to do is give this bill quick passage, rush it through committee, pass it into law and get it proclaimed because there is an exigency involved in the expiration of office in August of this year. The minister and the government are responsible for the delay in bringing this legislation into the House.

I hope that one of two things happen when this bill goes before committee. Firstly, I hope the committee has the opportunity to proceed to the areas involved in order to consult with the people there about the additions and changes suggested, inasmuch as the government has failed to do this. Secondly, I think the committee should meet the elected representatives and anybody else who is willing to come from the Yukon or the Northwest Territories to make representations. Neither the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development nor this Parliament should simply pass measures presented by the minister without the opportunity to reflect upon the considerations, the concern and views of the people who will be affected by the bill. Parliament and the committee should have time to reflect upon proposed changes. The House should not give its endorsement to the position advanced by the minister, or to the bill before us, until this is done. It is true we will have to vote on the bill at some time, but that should not carry with it the concept of endorsing the provisions of the bill in principle or in any of its details.

On the matter of self-government, or government that is responsible to the people, I quote what the minister said on November 12, 1969, in Whitehorse. He said the same thing elsewhere, and I think it is indicative of the narrow position in which he has placed himself or has been placed by the government. I quote from page 3 of his printed remarks, as follows:

In the first place, I believe—and I have said this before—that at the time and for the foreseeable future the granting of provincial status to the Yukon is not a realistic alternative.

● (4:20 p.m.)

That carries with it the implication that the minister has only two ideas about self-government, one being provincial status and the other colonial status. The minister wishes to carry on the concept of colonial status and does not support provincial status so far as the Yukon and Northwest Territories are con-