

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: Is item No. 8, in the name of the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty), allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Is item No. 11, in the name of the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean), allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Is item No. 12, in the name of the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo), allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Is item No. 14, in the name of the hon. member for Lévis (Mr. Guay), allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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[English]

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

RECOMMENDATIONS SUGGESTING CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the special representatives of the Prime Minister on constitutional development in the Northwest Territories.

He said: Madam Speaker, maybe I should wait a few minutes until all the assembled multitude depart. I see they are on their way out.

Mr. Taylor: In more ways than one.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): The steelworkers' friends.

Mr. Nickerson: The report of the Prime Minister's special representatives on constitutional development is this turquoise coloured report which has been circulated to all members of Parliament and widely circulated throughout the country. It is a particularly important document in that in the latter part of the twentieth century it surely must be apparent to Canadians that certain parts of this country are still subject to what we must call semi-colonial rule.

Canada is a federal country, but part of the population, those living in both the Yukon and Northwest Territories, are

Northwest Territories

deliberately excluded from this great confederation. The rights and privileges of citizenship which everyone else in Canada enjoys, and which in fact are taken for granted in the provinces, are not available to those who live in the northern part of Canada.

In the area from which I come and among the people I represent, these constitutional issues are probably the most burning ones we have. The constitutional issues in the north impinge on all the other issues with which we have to contend. How can you really talk about land claims and economic development proposals if you divorce them from the overriding constitutional ideas? Our situation is in one way comparable to and in another dissimilar from that in Quebec. In Quebec they are trying to get out of confederation; in the Northwest Territories we are trying to get into confederation.

Maybe I should delve a little into the history of how the Drury report came into being. About 12 years ago, 1967-68, the report of Mr. Dean Carrothers was made available. That was one of the first studies into constitutional issues in the territories. Some of the recommendations made by Mr. Carrothers, those concerning the wholly elected territorial legislature, development of a cabinet type system of government in its very earliest stages, were put into effect. The government of the territories was transferred from Ottawa, where it had been previously, at least in the war years, very much a committee of senior bureaucrats. It was transferred physically to the Northwest Territories.

Ten years later, and this in a time period recommended by Carrothers, people again started to look into the question. At that time the legislature did not want somebody else to come up and make yet another study. Therefore, the proposal at that time was to set up a negotiating committee, on the one hand comprised of members of the territorial legislature, those with executive positions, and on the other hand ministers of the federal Crown.

At that time the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) was minister of Indian affairs and northern development. Unfortunately that gentleman did not really understand the mandate given to him under the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Act. He did not know what he was supposed to do. He was in a daze. He really did not understand the issues. Because of his failures the matter was taken out of his hands by the Prime Minister of the day. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—I think originally just to prolong matters or to put them to one side—appointed the Hon. C. M. Drury as his special representative. I think we must be pleased that the Prime Minister did take that action because in the opinion of just about everyone in the Northwest Territories Mr. Drury did a very good job. He was one of the first people to come into the Northwest Territories on behalf of the federal government and really talk to the people there and find out what they want. His report reflects their views more