

*Northwest Territories Act*

**Mr. Nielsen:** I have been doing that. Members opposite laugh. Let them find one place in *Hansard* where I have injected anything other than a plea for the creation of representative and democratic institutions in the north without any reference to politics at all. I am not speaking as a member of the Conservative party now. I am speaking as a northerner.

**An hon. Member: Partisan.**

• (12:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Nielsen:** Partisan in the sense that I am a northerner, yes. How can we in the north feel we are Canadians if we are not given the same kind of rights as Canadians everywhere else are given? That is the plea that I am making for the people of the north today, and it will not do any good to call "question" impetuously and impassionedly because by doing so you are placing the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by democratic institutional government at the lowest possible level. Surely it is important enough for all members of the committee to approach this matter without humour, in all seriousness and without partisanship because politics are not involved here.

There is not one of us on either side of this chamber who will deny the validity of the principle that it is desirable to have representative institutions representing the rights of the people and that only that kind of institution should impose taxes on people. But that is not what we have in this bill. That is what the northern people want, notwithstanding what the minister may feel. His own party member, the hon. member for the Northwest Territories, will tell him that the people of the Northwest Territories want to be represented by a wholly elected representative body.

It does the minister no good to meet this kind of plea with pugnaciousness. The fundamental principle here is one which does not involve partisan politics. A vote against the principle of a wholly elected council is a vote against representative government. Members may shake their heads in exasperation, but that is a fact.

I ask the hon. member for Lotbinière, who seems to disagree with that statement, how he would feel if the province of Quebec had in its legislature appointed members from Alberta and Ontario having the power to tax him and other residents in that province? Is that the kind of principle that we recognize? I suggest it is not and I suggest there can be no answer to the argument.

The minister has stood in his place and accused members on this side of making non-factual statements. The statement I have made just now is a factual statement. Surely it must touch the hearts of all members who sit in this chamber. There can be no justification for someone outside a jurisdiction being appointed to a council and having the power to tax people within that jurisdiction.

**Mr. Laing:** I am quite certain, in the context of the argument which the hon. member is placing before us now, that he would want the committee to know accurately the extent to which moneys are voted by parliament for that particular area of Canada. We all have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Canada in reference to the amount of money spent there, which is about 85 per cent of the total expenditures in the territory.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I agree with that. I did not know the exact statistic. As the minister knows, I have written him a letter with respect to this kind of statistic in respect of the Yukon. It is helpful to have the figure but that does not alter the principle. Hon. members are just as responsible for seeing to it that federal grants, subsidies and contributions to all provinces and territories are properly spent.

I choose my words carefully because I do not want to inflame political passion, but we may find that on a per capita basis contributions to certain other areas of Canada are higher. However, that does not alter the fact that it is wrong in principle to have other than elected representatives of the people taxing the people. The fact of the matter is that the council has the power to impose taxes on the residents of the territory. If that be so, surely it should only be the elected representatives of the people, sitting on that council, who should exercise that power. It is wrong in principle to have outsiders appointed to the council given that power. That is the strongest argument I can think of against this situation, quite apart from all the other arguments in support of principles that have made this institution what it is and provincial institutions what they are.

Amendment (Mr. Nielsen) negatived: Yeas, 23; nays, 31.

**Mr. Nielsen:** There is one more point I would like to make on this clause. The existing Northwest Territories Act requires that the seat of the government of the territories shall be that prescribed by the governor in council from time to time. In other words, the