

The economy of the Yukon today is based mainly on mining and tourism. We have a very healthy mining industry on which the territory is heavily dependent for its economic growth. Vast stores of copper, asbestos, lead, zinc, silver, gold and iron produced half a billion dollars' worth of minerals during the past seven years. The second major industry, tourism, has grown over the years to the extent that within a recent 12-month period over 300,000 visitors to the Yukon spent an estimated \$25 million.

I now wish to discuss some of the major issues we are facing in the Yukon which the Senate will deal with at some point in the future. Other comments I make will be of a general nature, and it is hoped they will assist you in understanding the vast territory which is known as the Yukon.

The major issue facing the Yukon Territory today is settlement of land claims between the Government of Canada and the Indian people of the Yukon. At the outset, may I say that there must be a fair and just land claims settlement arrived at with the Indian people in the Yukon Territory before any real economic or political progress or change can be made.

The Yukon Territory consists of approximately 207,000 square miles of land which the Indian people used exclusively prior to the coming of the Europeans to this country. This land has never been given up by treaty, surrender or in any other manner by the Indian people.

It is my view that there can be no fair, just and lasting settlement in the Yukon unless it is done in such a way that it results in one government administering to the needs of both the Indian and non-Indian people. This is essential for the sake of efficiency, but even more importantly it is essential to ensure that the two groups will be working together rather than separately. The old method of establishing reserves and Indian governments under the Indian Act has proven unworkable. It breeds separatism, antagonism and conflict rather than unity, brotherhood and understanding.

I would be remiss in not making certain comments at this time about the role of the territorial government in settling land claims in the Yukon. The Yukon territorial government is involved in land claims to the extent that it is represented at the bargaining table and is allowed to present its views. The challenge facing the territorial government and its elected representatives is to realize that when a land claims settlement is made the governmental structures in the Yukon Territory, as they know them today, will no longer exist. When the elected representatives and territorial public servants clearly understand this—and I do not believe they fully understand at this time—they will have taken the first major step in settling the land claims.

The next step which must be taken by the Yukon territorial government is to recommend at the bargaining table alternate forms of government which will accommodate both groups in a partnership arrangement. In the meantime, however, I suggest the Yukon territorial government must make firm commitments to the Indian people to resolve some of the day-to-day problems which presently exist in the Indian communities.

This will play a dual role. First, many of the day-to-day problems of Indian people will be resolved prior to a land claims settlement—which may take some time—and, secondly, it will show the Indian people in a positive way that the Territorial Council, the members of which are all non-Indian, is prepared to deal with the Indian people in a responsible way and to attempt to work out a partnership arrangement with them. Unless this is done, there will be little trust and sympathy for a one-government system after land claims are settled. Indeed, there will be little chance for a settlement of any kind.

The Indian people should be congratulated for their efforts over the past seven or eight years. Only seven years ago there were no Indian organizations in the Yukon, not even at the band level in the communities. In this short period of time they have organized themselves, elected leaders, taken over some programs in their villages from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and prepared a position for settling their land claims in the Yukon and presented it to the Prime Minister. They have developed a network in the communities for the purpose of exchanging information about land claims negotiations, and they have commenced negotiations with the federal government to settle their outstanding claims.

Another significant initiative of Indian people in the Yukon Territory was their insistence that their land claim is an ancestral claim which involves both status and non-status Indians, and they have insisted on negotiating on that basis. This is contrary to the wishes of the National Indian Brotherhood, but over the years it has gained favour and support from several other Indian organizations, and it would appear that one day status and non-status Indian people will again be united. The Yukon Indian people can proudly take the credit for instigating that move.

As I have taken this opportunity to provide free advice to the territorial government, I would be remiss in not also making suggestions to the leaders of the Indian people. The Council for Yukon Indians must realize that the success of their land claims negotiations depends to a considerable degree on the support given to the proposed settlement by the general public in the Yukon Territory, and in Canada as a whole. In the last six months I have noticed a decrease in the support for the Council for Yukon Indians primarily because of the delays in arriving at an agreement in principle. This concerns me.

I would suggest that the Council for Yukon Indians not only be prepared to negotiate, and negotiate diligently toward a settlement, but also be seen to be doing this by advising the public on a regular basis about their activities, the cause of some of their problems, and by giving assurance that they are sincere about coming to a settlement in the very near future. This kind of information and assurance will go a long way to regaining the support which, I feel, has been lost in the last few months.

As senators, we will, I hope, in the very near future be debating a bill to change the Yukon Act and the Territorial Lands Act in order to incorporate into this legislation a