

*Northwest Territories Act*

voting members. I would ask the minister to consider this suggestion.

**Mr. Orange:** Mr. Chairman, in the arguments advanced regarding the principle of a fully elected council—I think all of us in this house are in complete agreement. There are two points, however, that I think should be brought out at this time with regard to changing the section as it now stands. The first is that the council of the Northwest Territories has a legislative life which expires on March 31 next year. Second, the Carrothers commission is studying the form of government in the Northwest Territories and will be presenting their recommendations to the government of Canada some time this fall. I suggest that for these two reasons any change now would be premature.

With reference to earlier statements that the council has been intimidated by its appointed members in making recommendations and agreeing to the concept contained within this bill, I am afraid I must take objection to these statements. In my experience with the Northwest Territories council, which goes back to 1955, I have yet to see a situation where the elected members of council were voting in opposition to the appointed members. Whenever there has been division, the division has been between a group of elected and appointed members in opposition to a group of elected and appointed members.

These are the two points I wish to make, Mr. Chairman. First, that the council still has 10 months of its life remaining; and second, that the Carrothers commission will be presenting their views and the views of the people of the Northwest Territories on the form of government for the area. Therefore, as was said last night, the amendments before us are housekeeping only to extend the franchise to those people in the eastern Arctic who do not now have it. I believe we will possibly be looking at major revisions of the Northwest Territories Act next year or this fall, which I am hopeful will incorporate the principles enumerated by various hon. members who spoke earlier.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Mr. Chairman, last evening at the second reading stage I expressed my support for the amendment that has been proposed by the hon. member for Yukon. General disappointment was expressed last night by all who spoke at the second reading stage, and the hon. member for Northwest Territories has used the expression again, because the legislation before us is merely a

housekeeping bill and does not change in any respect the form of government for the Northwest Territories. I think in the proposal made by the hon. member for Yukon we have an opportunity of adding at least a morsel of substance to a bill that is otherwise housekeeping, or we might even call it window dressing.

The hon. member for Northwest Territories has indicated that an amendment of this kind to the bill before us might be premature. I should like to suggest, as I said last night, that the time is long past due when the Northwest Territories council should be an entirely elected body. I remember that when I first assumed responsibility for the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources I was amazed to find that all the appointed representatives were senior civil servants. In other words the method of appointing members to the council smacked entirely of the old colonial concept that the administration in the Northwest Territories should be kept in the hands of the civil servants. As I recall, the representatives at that time were the deputy minister of national defence, the commissioner of the R.C.M.P., the head of the Indian affairs branch, and similar appointments of that kind, so that it was an entirely non-representative group from that standpoint.

There has been a gradual movement since that time, which is a fairly recent period of Canadian history, in the direction of completely representative government and emancipation from the close control and dominance of Ottawa. These appointments were made for the purpose the minister has indicated, to supply some expertise to the deliberations of the Northwest Territories council through the appointed members. I am sure we all agree, in the light of what has already been said during this debate, that we no longer need to depend on expertise supplied by appointees from without the territory. There has been such a marked leap forward in the economic development of the north—and this applies to the western Arctic as well as the eastern Arctic—that we can get all the skills with reference to public affairs, all the knowledge in governmental affairs, from our own people in the area north of the 60th parallel.

I would say, too, that this applies to the indigenous people in the north. We have seen the appointment of Mr. Ogpik, who represents the Eskimo people, and from my contact with the representatives of the Indian people