

have seen nothing as depressing as the Innuit Monthly which I get almost every month. This is not the only document that I read—

Mr. Nielsen: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Orlikow: Certainly.

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member has said that he does not believe the two territories are ready for provincial status now. As the leader of his party properly pointed out to me a moment ago, there was a non-confidence motion on that very issue on May 12, 1970 when his party voted in support of what he says now he is not supporting. I wonder if he has changed his mind in the meantime?

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, that motion did not call for provincial status immediately. I do not think it did but I have not got it in front of me. I do not say, and I did not say, that I do not believe in eventual provincial status for the territory I have not said that, and I will not say it today. I have said, and I will content myself with that, that I do not believe either territory is ready for provincial status yet. Let me say, however, that I do not believe in feudalism. It did not work in Europe centuries ago and will not work in the Northwest Territories or the Yukon today.

When a commissioner visits a community in the Northwest Territories and meets with the residents—I will give the minister an illustration and I can document this—who say to him they need 25 or 35 new houses to look after the unfilled needs for housing in the community, and when the Commissioner can say to them right then and there that they cannot have 25 or 35 houses but can have five or ten, then I say that no person, a commissioner or any other, should have that kind of power. It could be, in any kind of system, that the number of houses needed in any year would be much greater than would be possible under the allocation for housing. It seems to me wrong that a commissioner, by himself, should be able to say to any community, this is what you can have. Surely, in any community in which the needs of the residents are taken into account, the commissioner should have to consult—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, it was agreed that the hon. member was to be the last speaker. Perhaps, with unanimous consent, we could pass second reading right now.

Mr. Barnett: On the point raised by the hon. minister, I understand from the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) that he could conclude his remarks in about four or five minutes. If there is a disposition of the House to allow him to finish, I believe he would be the last speaker from this corner of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. Hon. members have heard the suggestion of the hon. minister and the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett). Perhaps we might hear another suggestion.

Yukon and Northwest Territories

● (1700)

Mr. Stackhouse: Mr. Speaker, a private member's motion is to be dealt with at five o'clock and I know that several hon. members want to speak on it. I do not think the private member's hour should be shortened more than necessary. I think we would all agree to taking the vote now. However, on behalf of those who want to debate the private member's motion, I suggest that we should reach private members' business as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should not see the clock and, at six o'clock, extend private members' hour, to make up for the time taken by the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Am I to understand that it is agreed that private members' hour is to be extended after six o'clock by an amount equivalent to that taken by the hon. member?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is it also agreed that we shall not see the clock at this time, in order to allow the hon. member for Winnipeg North to complete his remarks, and that we shall then proceed to private members' business?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I will not take very much longer. The point I am trying to make, which I could illustrate with many examples if I had the time, is that the present system, under which the commissioner makes unilateral decisions in the field of education, the environment, the use of resources and any other field, is wrong. That is the system under which the people of the Northwest Territories and of the Yukon live with at present. That system I consider to be wrong in principle, as under it we do not utilize the knowledge and experience of the people living in the Territories. It is a system from which we should move as quickly as possible.

I said a few moments ago that I am not convinced that the time has come for giving provincial status to the Territories. I am not at all convinced that they should make their own decisions, as the provinces now do. On the other hand, they will never reach that point if we do not allow some movement in that direction. We must allow them at some time to make meaningful decisions on matters which affect them. I suggest to the minister that he is proposing such a small step forward as will have little if any effect.

Although we support this bill, I urge the minister to give serious consideration to further clarifying the question of governmental decision making in the territories. He can do that either by further legislation or order in council. He can decide which is required and which is necessary, so that territorial councils will be more than figure heads. Such action will enable the councils to make decisions, and will mean that they have more than the patina of authority for democratic decision making. Although they would not have the right to say to the commissioners of each of the territories that they want to spend more