

*The Constitution*

lar struggle of westerners to gain control of their own resources from Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal Exchanges, the growth of the Wheat Pool in particular and their struggle to gain popular control of the marketing of their products. That process, that struggle—and it is a very recent struggle in western Canada—to gain control of our means of livelihood, our resources, is very much a central part of our culture. I hope you will forgive me for being skeptical but we do not feel that this government appreciates this attitude, this gut feeling in Western Canada. Unless we have concrete evidence very soon from the government that jurisdiction over ownership and resource taxation rights, which until recent years and judgments we always believed was ours, is to be recognized by the government by the acceptance of a clear amendment to their patriation resolution, then we simply cannot agree to support the motion or consider the resolution.

I want to also reject the notion—widespread, apparently, on the other side—that we in the west are greedy and want, either as members or as provincial governments, to keep all our riches, old or new, to ourselves. That has been and remains untrue. A former British Columbia premier made an offer some years ago in relation to natural gas and petroleum resources that if the federal government would guarantee the public development of those resources for the benefit of all the people of Canada then British Columbia would be prepared to share those resources with all Canadians. I understand similar offers were also made by the government of Saskatchewan. There were no takers, but the offers were made. The west, or at least a portion of it has been willing, and is willing, to put Canada first in the interests of all Canadians. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not greed.

What is the federal interest and what is the federal government's record in resources? In the absence of a clear and open commitment by the federal government as to its intent on this matter, within the context of their resolution, one is left to assume they intend to intrude even further in the traditional provincial domain. In view of the past Liberal record we must seriously question the motives behind any such move.

Until the early 1970s there was little expressed interest, not to mention interference, with western resources on the part of the federal government. It was not until the western provincial governments took decisive action to maximize the return on those resources to their people through royalties, direct ownership, marketing agencies and other means that the federal government and the federal courts moved to intervene levying, in effect, double taxation or other penalties which caused great anxiety and difficulty for both the governments and industries involved. It seemed that as long as the private sector was the major winner the feds never acted. But as soon as the people and their provincial governments moved to secure their fair share, the federal government intervened. Maybe it was accidental—we are generous—but it was enough to make us very wary as to some of the motivations which lay behind those central government actions. If the federal government ever wants support for a greater role in economic development they had better start to improve their track record and credibility in that regard.

There are more than a few, especially in western Canada, who hold the view that Canada was created because the CPR needed a country to pay for their railway to resources and the Hudson's Bay Company needed a country and taxpayers to pay the cost of policing their territory. Whether that is an accurate reflection of our origins or not, successive Canadian governments have certainly continued to act as if it were in fact very close to the truth. That is the picture many of us have and federal government actions in recent years have tended to add credibility to what was originally a rather humorous version of the origins of Canada.

Something else has taken place over the years which make us wonder what the constitutional fuss is all about. I think the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) referred to it in a slightly different way a few moments ago. It has to do with why the federal government has again deemed it necessary to move in on the resource field over the last few years.

I want to talk about taxation for a minute. Since the Second World War the direct taxation field has been less and less of a burden on the corporate sector. Federal governments—mostly Liberal—have retreated through political pressure, it would appear, from the field of direct taxation, particularly of the corporate sector.

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The level of resource taxation by the provinces, in their field, has not retreated at the same time. Consequently, we see the federal government denying itself, through its own timidity perhaps, access to revenues in its traditional sector while the provinces have not been so encumbered. It has thus found itself in this financial squeeze and obviously it has to find a way out. It would appear that it is not prepared to turn on the corporate sector and return it to its appropriate and historical level of taxation in Canada, so it must find another way.

My friends to my right, during their brief tenure in office, attempted to find yet another way out. They did not go after the provinces but decided, instead of raising taxes, to raise prices as a means of hiding the situation. In the meantime they would look for another way without causing a major tax revolt by searching different routes to see if moneys were available to allow our governments to carry on.

It appears, for whatever the political reasons, that the federal government does not dare to restore corporation taxes. Therefore, it has chosen to move in the field of resources. How it intends to work things out, I do not know, but I do understand that ministers over there are in a bind. We think it is extremely unfair to attack provincial administration and sources of funding in order to escape the rather obvious answers to their own timidity over the years.

I referred some time ago to the play "Paper Wheat". There is a section of that play which refers to the expansion of the Canadian west. It says that it goes on, and on and on and on and on.

**Mr. Nielsen:** And on.