

*Constitution Amendment, 1987*

Those were the words of a different Prime Minister, a different Government, but the same scenario.

In 1981 also the former Member from the Yukon, a member of the government Party now, put forth a motion during the constitutional debate of 1981 that the territories should deal only with the federal Government as had all other areas in Canada when they came into Confederation regarding potential provincehood. I would like to quote that former Member's comments. He said that for over half a century the dream of provincial status has been the lodestone of northern hopes. It has been central to the vision of the North which sees the development of Yukon and the Northwest Territories as the best and brightest hope for Canada's future. When the Prime Minister accepted the inclusion of two clauses in the April Accord relating to the extension of existing provinces into the territories, and notwithstanding any other law or practice in relation to the establishment of new provinces, he dealt a crushing blow to the hopes and aspirations of thousands of Canadian citizens resident above 60. He gave away what was not his to give away, the rights and privileges of Canadians of northern Canada above 60.

The mover of that motion was so eloquent that he convinced the members of his Party to vote for that motion. The Liberal Government at the time, of course, voted against that motion. I am proud to say that the New Democratic Party is the only Party that has remained consistent on this issue, as you will see, Madam Speaker, when you read Addendum B of the report of the constitutional committee. At that time, we supported the report on that motion regarding the territories. We support it now, and we will be proposing it.

In June of 1987 the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) proposed a similar motion. We do not see at all the same consistency in either the current Opposition, or the current Government. So six years later we have a flip-flop. I suppose all one can say is that *plus cela change, plus c'est pareil*.

I would now like to say a few words about this one-third of Canada. The North, when viewed from the outside, is often seen as a vast wilderness, largely uninhabited, romantic, with some interesting and perhaps exotic aboriginal residents, and tourists who come to see the last frontier. To be sure, the population is not large, which is very much the attraction of the North. In constitutional terms, it is true that we are not asking for provincehood now. But we do want those rights to be assured for the future.

It is equally true that since the early 1900s the directions of all federal governments have been based on the assumption that the Territories will at some time in the future become provinces. In the presentations of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories to the committee, they made fairly strong points about this. I would like to quote a couple of examples that those presenters made to the committee. In 1922, the constitutional expert, Mr. E. Kennedy wrote in a leading law text of the day:

• (1630)

It is true that the Dominion of Canada which was created by proclamation on July 1, 1867, consisted of only four provinces, but a little vision might have seen that the Canada in the British North America Act allowing territorial extension was at least pregnant with magnificent possibilities.

In 1958, Alvin Hamilton, the then Minister of Northern affairs and National Resources, stated in the House of Commons in relation to proposed amendments to the Northern Territories Act and the Yukon Act:

I think the House will recognize that our responsibilities with regard to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories take us into the field of provincial and municipal government. These amendments forward steps in the administration and growth of our new parts of Canada towards provincial status.

The Hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) stated in this House on June 8, 1987:

I do not think anyone can challenge the fact that my Party and this Government have taken a leadership role in respect to ensuring that, as quickly as possible, we move forward in this area of the Territories controlling their destiny and attaining provincial status.

On September 29, 1987, the Minister made a very moving statement. He said that the Constitution is a document of the people. No one would disagree, but we ask: "Of all the people?" Is it all the people except 75,000? And we leave that question.

The Legislatures and Government of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon today are not glorified municipal institutions. They legislate in respect of municipal matters, business, health, education and justice. Some of the legislatures, to quote the Government Leader of the Yukon, exercise their authorities over an area as large as India. The Government leaders and Ministers of the Territories have also participated in meetings of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers. They were invited to participate in the First Ministers' meetings on aboriginal rights. However, they were not consulted, not invited and not signatories to the document which will set the future of citizens living above the 60th parallel. This is the only area in Canada where citizens were not represented by their elected leaders.

The report of the constitutional committee submitted this month states that some unnamed provinces were: "extremely jealous of the trappings of provincehood of the Territories". Therefore, one can only conclude that it was not by oversight but by calculation that the appointment of Senators and Supreme Court judges was reserved only for provinces. At the same time, with this attitude, we feel that our fears that the unanimity clause will preclude future provincehood are well-founded, and therein lies the concern of the North with the unanimity provision.

It is for this reason that my Party, in putting forth Addendum B, highlights those areas to ensure that aboriginal people will be recognized, that the North will take its rightful place, that women's rights will assuredly remain entrenched and that the rights of visible minorities will be similarly protected through a process of Charter review. I say to you, Madam