

*Northwest Territories Act*

committee that the council of the Northwest Territories, including the four elected members, passed a resolution asking specifically for what is provided in the clause we are considering.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Laing:** It was unanimous. All members, whether elected or appointed, specifically voted in this way. This weighed with us, as did the representations which have been made for a number of years. Statements have been made in the florid language of the hon. member for Yukon who has a tremendous capacity for adjectival alliteration. He talked about terrible colonialistic conditions, as he described them. We found out last night that there is no such word as "colonialistic". It is "colonial".

The hon. member for Skeena, who admits he has never been in the territories—

**Mr. Howard:** I did not "admit" it. I stated it.

**Mr. Laing:**—and who was at some pains to tell us he had reservations about speaking on a subject with which he was not familiar, has spoken a great deal since.

**Mr. Howard:** If the minister wishes to quote me, let him be truthful and do it properly instead of misquoting me to suit his own purpose.

**Mr. Laing:** I think I am doing so 100 per cent—

**Mr. Howard:** You are not. You are distorting it.

**Mr. Laing:**—in accord with what the hon. member said last night.

**Mr. Howard:** You are not.

**Mr. Laing:** I want to tell him and other members of the committee that there is a tremendous amount of self-government in the area today. And there is freedom, if you describe freedom in terms of the old relationship of "the King and your uncle". There is probably more freedom in that part of Canada than in any other. I was astonished to see some of the regulations which exist as a result of representations made by the Eskimo people. When I first went to Frobisher I was astonished to find that if anyone required a bottle of Scotch whiskey he had to put in his order on a certain date and did not acquire the whiskey until a month later. They have improved things since. They first got delivery

[Mr. Laing.]

down to four days, I believe, and I understand that now the delay is no more than 48 hours. But people still have to wait 48 hours for delivery after putting in an order. You know, Mr. Chairman, they may have something there. They are probably wiser than we are.

At any rate, there is this kind of domestic, civic regulation reflecting civic administration all over the Northwest Territories. Far from this general claim that we are making rigid rules and regulations in Ottawa and imposing them on the people of the territories, I believe that in many instances the opposite is true.

**Mr. Barnett:** Mr. Chairman, I admit that my own attitude so far as this bill is concerned has been largely one of willingness to sit, listen and learn, and I am sure it is one which is shared by many members of the committee. The minister has spoken about the endorsement by the territorial council of the proposal in the bill. I wonder whether the council, while it was considering the proposition set out in clause 5 in connection with the proposed new section 19 which the minister himself described as housekeeping, considered the other major change in principle affecting the nature of the government of the territories. Comment was made earlier about the desirability of having expert advice from certain people appointed by the federal government and it occurs to me that given some modification of the proposed new section 19A the present appointed members of the council could in effect be associated with the commissioner as advisors.

The hon. member for Peace River, dealing with the constitutional implications, referred to the relationship of the United States cabinet to the president of that country. These thoughts have been passing through my mind during the course of this discussion and I would ask the minister whether or not the territorial council considered the modification of the new section 19A embodied in clause 5 of the bill when they took their present position with respect to the proposal contained in clause 1.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Nielsen:** No. I am not letting the minister's remarks pass without comment. When I opened this debate yesterday and again today I said that the matters involved here, being matters of far reaching principle, should be discussed in the complete absence of any partisanship.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.