

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

I do not intend to take up any more time, Mr. Speaker. I simply make this plea to members of the House, and in particular to members who sit on the treasury benches, that they heed the reasonable requests of the people of the Yukon and the reasonable requests of the people of the Northwest Territories. They are not asking for the impossible. They are asking for a gradual separation from civil service control.

● (12:30 p.m.)

They are asking for the gradual evolution of the decision making process from the bureaucrats to the elected representatives of the people. The people of the Yukon did not elect the minister; they elected me to come here and make this kind of plea to the minister. They elected seven members of the council and they do not want them just to be rubber stamps on federal decisions; they want to make their own decisions. They are not irresponsible people; they are not going to throw money out of the window or dump it into the Yukon River or raise their indemnities to three times what they are getting now. They are responsible, intelligent individuals with the capacity to make fiscal decisions, such as those made by municipalities or school boards or like bodies.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying that as I listened to the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) who commenced this debate, I was struck by what I consider the very important differences between the situation in the Yukon and that in the Northwest Territories resulting from the tremendous geographical differences between the two areas and the tremendous differences in the living conditions of the indigenous Indian and Eskimo people and the white people. It seems to me that these facts must be kept in mind in discussing the problems of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

If I understood the speeches made by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories, it seemed to me that there were two important points to be considered. One was his approach to the problems of self-government. He praised the Carrothers Commission and its recommendations but it seemed to me, as I tried to analyze how he intended to implement these recommendations, that 100 years from today the Canadian Parliament would still be discussing just when these recommendations

[Mr. Nielsen.]

should be implemented. That is the rate at which the minister seems to want to move.

I have to agree with the hon. member for the Yukon who said a few minutes ago that in effect the minister's policy leaves a tremendous amount of the power of decision-making and implementation to the bureaucracy, the civil servants, and not to the people of the territory nor the minister.

Mr. Nielsen: Oh, no.

Mr. Orlikow: As the Carrothers Commission recommended, a part of the administration has been transferred to Yellowknife. This has had some good and some bad effects. In some cases the decision-making process has been slowed down because Yellowknife has to consult Ottawa. The Commissioner has to get approval from the minister, the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister and so on.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the hon. member will allow me a question at this point, while I can see the way he is directing his remarks. I should like him to explain to the House of Commons why the people of Churchill would rather be under the federal administration of the Territories than under the N.D.P. administration of the Manitoba government?

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, if the minister wants to participate on a very partisan basis I am prepared to do that when we have the time, but not in the 20 minutes that I have now. If the minister is seriously suggesting that the government of Manitoba, which took over on July 15 this year, could have begun to solve the most elementary problems of Churchill, then I have even less respect for the minister's common sense and judgment than I thought I had. The minister should know that if the federal government would get off its butt and do a simple thing like extending the shipping season at Churchill, a great many of that town's problems would be solved. That is something for which the present N.D.P. government nor the former Conservative government of Manitoba cannot be blamed.

It seemed to me that the most important aspect of the problem of the indigenous people of the Northwest Territories, the Eskimos and the Indians, was completely ignored by the minister in his speeches in the north, to which I have referred. The minister has spoken frequently and with pride about the tremendous increase in federal government expenditures to improve the lot of the native people in the far north. A great deal