

*Northwest Territories Power Commission*

have more positive results, the general problem of development in northern Canada.

In a statement to the royal commission on Canada's economic prospects the subject is summed up very nicely. In referring to the matter of the development of Canada's northland, the writer of this note used the following words; he was comparing the extent of development in northern Canada to similar development in the northern regions of the U.S.S.R.:

Canada has not done as much. This is not a reflection of discredit. Our population is much less; we have had an enormous work of development in the south; and our belief in private initiative and freedom of enterprise has caused us to refrain from the policies of government direction and control that have determined the lives and work of people in the Soviet union. We must, however, be fully alive to the importance of our northern frontier and of the resources—many known and many as yet unknown—that lie within it. It is not necessary, nor, it is submitted, is it at all desirable, for us to wait inertly for economic forces alone to set the terms and the pace of our action. Entirely in line with sound economic progress, a great deal can be done by national policy to hasten and extend our northward development. In a region as vast as the Canadian north, with problems of distance and climate, developments cannot occur with the speed they do in smaller countries or in the southern part of Canada. If we are going to want and to need the resources of our northland in 10 or 20 years, the time to begin the work of getting them is now.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that quotation sums up very precisely the attitude this parliament should take toward the development of that northern part of Canada. Now, the bill we have before us—

**Mr. Lesage:** May I just ask a question of the hon. member? Was he quoting from the submission by the commissioner of the Northwest Territories to the Gordon commission?

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Yes, the Northwest Territories submission.

**Mr. Lesage:** By the commissioner of the Northwest Territories, who is also the deputy minister of the Department of Northern Affairs?

**Mr. Dinsdale:** That is correct. Basic to the type of development outlined in this report is the development of our power resources. If we are going to be able to exploit the rich resources of the north it means that power must be available. From time to time in this house we have discussions as to whether power should be developed by public or private endeavour. Certainly, so far as the northern power potential is concerned, it would seem to be the responsibility of the national government to take the initiative in this regard. Only when we have power available can we

expect the private investor to become interested in the northern part of Canada.

I could go on ad infinitum to place on record the tremendous power resources that are available there. I noticed in a report on this matter in the external affairs bulletin for December of last year, the Yukon river alone has the staggering waterpower potential of 4.5 million horsepower, which is one quarter of the present developed capacity of all Canada. There certainly is, therefore, plenty of opportunity and scope for increased and vigorous action in this regard. In the long run the power, of course, will be used to develop the rich resources that have been stored in the Canadian shield. It is significant, Mr. Speaker, that most of the territory that we refer to as northern Canada is contained within the Canadian shield region, and this Canadian shield is one of the great mineral-bearing regions of North America.

Before you can develop your natural resources, one of the important problems that must be met is the population difficulty, which has been one of the major deterrents to development in all parts of Canada. We are a large geographic area. We have unbounded material resources; we have all the things that are necessary to make Canada a truly great industrial country. We lack one thing. This is a truism; it is almost a cliché these days. We lack adequate population resources. Lack of population is the great obstacle to Canadian development.

This is particularly true in northern Canada. While we have all the power and natural resources there, it seems to me that because of the transportation difficulties, it is going to be necessary to stimulate the settlement of that country and that, of course, will be interconnected with the development of power, and the development of power in turn will mean the development of our natural resources. The U.S.S.R. are away ahead of us in this respect. They have established several large cities in the northern part of that country. Admittedly they have a much longer history behind them.

This bill is at least a realization that we have to become much more active in the northern region of Canada than we have been in the past. So far as maintaining population is concerned, the argument is invariably put forward that climatic and soil conditions in what we refer to as northern Canada are not very suitable for supporting a large population; but as the result of recent geographical exploration and as a result of the increased interest in that territory we now know that there are 1½ million acres of arable land available for settlement. We also know that climatic conditions in large areas of northern