

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

1969. It is not necessary for me to deal at length with this subject because my Parliamentary Secretary managed to prove in a very adequate way and beyond the shadow of a doubt that this resolution is nothing but an official request for provincial status for the Yukon.

Mr. Nielsen: No, no.

Mr. Chrétien: That is the meaning of the text of the resolution read by the Parliamentary Secretary. It asks for all the powers of a provincial legislature: the legislative assembly and the executive control upon the whole administration within the territories.

They say publicly that they do not want provincial status, but this is what is being asked in substance. What makes the debate even more difficult for me is the fact that people give usually more importance to the form of the problems than to their substance, and in the present case, the council members ask very cleverly for provincial status while they know that the citizens of the Yukon do not want it since they do not dare to ask for it officially.

Mr. Nielsen: That is not true.

Mr. Chrétien: That is what I learned by reading the resolution.

The hon. member mentioned certain conversations which we had and I must admit that every time I said to the elected representatives of the Territorial Council that the difficulty of the problem came from the fact that they were asking in substance, but not formally, for provincial status, they always answered me with a smile rather than with a denial.

Mr. Speaker—

[*English*]

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit a question?

Mr. Chrétien: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dinsdale: Am I correct in interpreting the minister as having said the people of the Yukon do not want a greater degree of autonomy, responsible government, and that he bases his claim on the response to an open-line radio program in contrast with the official representations of the elected representatives on the council?

Mr. Chrétien: The hon. member should have listened to what I said, Mr. Speaker. I said the resolution called for the status of a

province without the name, but I said that is not the prime concern of the people of the Yukon. To give an example, I said that I was on the hot-line for an hour and nobody asked me one question about the constitutional development of the Yukon. I did not say they did not want more power.

Mr. Dinsdale: Does the council not speak for the people, the same as the elected representatives in this House speak for the people?

Mr. Chrétien: I could let you have your debate, but I just say it is not the prime concern of the people of the Yukon. The people of the Yukon do not want the federal government to move out of there because they know that we can work with the representatives to get a better development of the Yukon and a better atmosphere for economic growth in the Yukon.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit a further question?

Mr. Chrétien: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but it will be the last question because I would like to make my speech.

Mr. Nielsen: You can have all the rest of the time this afternoon as far as I am concerned. My question is this: Does the minister support the resolution of the Yukon Liberal Association which I read into the record during my remarks?

Mr. Chrétien: The resolution of the Liberal Party up there is something that I took into consideration. They expressed their view but we have not accepted it. We have not accepted all the views of Liberals across Canada, but the Liberals have great confidence in the judgment of this government and I do not think they will be disappointed.

Mr. Dinsdale: Does hon. James Richardson have the confidence—

Mr. Chrétien: If you want to be partisan, I too could be very partisan. We accept the view of everyone, and we are very proud to have the minister from Manitoba express his views. He is fighting the cause of the people in the west in a very able way, just as I am fighting the cause of my people. I do not always win; sometimes I have to abide by the views of the government. We are a very democratic party on this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege—