

argument, presumably, would apply to people living in the Northwest Territories. Let us examine this for a minute, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the forgiveness of the hon. member for the Western Arctic for my continual reference to the Yukon, but I use the Yukon argument because the Northwest Territories is perhaps a few years behind in constitutional development, but not too many years, so the arguments which apply to the Yukon may apply, two or three years ahead, to the Northwest Territories.

Let us look at the argument that people in those two territories are somehow second-class citizens and are being colonized by the rest of the country. The total population of the Yukon, 23,000, and of the Northwest Territories, 45,000, represents percentages of the Canadian total which do not stand up to comparisons between the situation when Manitoba entered confederation and the situation today, vis-à-vis the total population. The Yukon's percentage of the total population is less than one-tenth of 1 per cent of our total. When Manitoba entered confederation, I believe the province's percentage of the Canadian total was around 1 per cent, ten times higher. Yet the argument is made that the comparison with Manitoba, which had something like 25,000 people when it became a province, favours the immediate move for the Yukon, and later the Northwest Territories, toward provincial status. That is not the case; things have changed, Mr. Speaker.

When Manitoba entered confederation, her population was about to explode. That is not going to happen in the Yukon unless, of course, the kind of thing occurs that is being proposed by certain politicians there who would like an immediate move toward provincial status. In that case, a completely artificial situation would occur. In order to justify provincial status there would be an artificial stimulation of a population move into the Yukon.

This is where we come to the root of the quandary about development in the north. The people who want development per se are usually those with the most political clout who can make the most political noise. Through chambers of commerce and businessmen's associations, they are able to exercise pressure on politicians in the north for an immediate move toward provincial status. They are primarily interested in all the business activity that is anticipated if they could somehow achieve control via the provincehood vehicle.

That is a very dangerous concept indeed from the point of view of the native people. I think the hon. member who comes from the eastern Arctic expressed this in the hesitation he showed in embracing the idea of provincial status. In effect it would mean that with the province in full control of immigration and stimulating economic development in a way that would not necessarily make economic good sense but would bring people in to justify the apparatus being set up, native people would be overrun by a larger population coming in from the south. This is a demographic fear which is well based and well justified, in my view. This is probably the most basic reason why there should be no movement toward provincehood now in the Yukon or in the Northwest Territories.

### *Northwest Territories*

There are a host of other reasons why we should move slowly in the direction which, for a time last year, seemed to be toward creating a province within the next three years. The then prime minister indicated that he intended to create a province in the Yukon before the end of his first term in office. Fortunately for everyone in Canada, that did not happen. I say "fortunately" because when we are talking about the north we are talking about something which, in the minds of a lot of people in the country, helps tie Canada together.

There is a common heritage which we all share in the north. We share it on the land mass in the north and we share it on the offshore areas of the north. No one in this House would suggest that northerners should not have first call on the resources of the north, the extent of which we do not yet know. As far as I am concerned, they should have first call on them in order to assure themselves of a standard of living second to none. Beyond that, however, I think the rest of Canada should participate in whatever riches are found there.

Until now—and for the foreseeable future—the Canadian taxpayer has been footing a major portion of the bill. We pay 60 per cent of the public service costs in the Yukon and a higher percentage for the Northwest Territories. All Canadians have made these contributions and in fairness, over the long run, we should expect a return.

The path for constitutional evolution should not necessarily be provincehood, it seems to me. It may be provincehood, but we should not bind ourselves to that single objective.

From my experience and through talking to northerners over the years, I believe that the one idea that keeps coming back is, "Let's get rid of that federal red tape." I quite agree. If we could somehow rid the northerners of their impression that they are always tied up in federal tape, we could solve a lot of problems. I would point out as well that politicians in the two northern territories have become as adept as separatist politicians in Quebec at pointing out deficiencies in the federal government. In addition, they point out how in some instances, where there are perfectly normal, legitimate reasons for slowness in achieving results, the federal government is somehow totally to blame because of this insensitive, slow, lethargic public service which looks after relations between the people there and the government here in Ottawa. They point out distances and bring all these reasons together and point out that somehow the system is not working.

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We should be aiming for a solution in the north which could be used as a model for future constitutional developments in the rest of Canada. Let us keep our minds open. Fortunately, the report does not specify a single constitutional objective. I would hope that all members of this House could take a new look at just where we are heading in the north. I feel there are other solutions which will help the people in the north better than anything that has been proposed so far and yet will preserve this kind of cement which the common heritage represents for all of us as part of Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Order, please.