

Mr. TURNER: On the same point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not want at this stage of the proceedings to argue on a particular point of order concerning the relevance of whether the islands off the coast of Hudson Bay and the north of west Quebec come within the purview of the present bill. I will confine my point of order to suggesting to you, sir, that the witness, in view of the fact that the matter has not appeared within the two bills and to the best of my knowledge has not been discussed by the Northwest Territories Council, would be quite entitled to refuse to answer the question.

Mr. GREGOIRE: If he does not answer the question, I will understand, but I maintain it is in order to go into that subject because the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources has stated in the House of Commons that we will be entitled to inquire into this matter in the committee. That is the reason why this committee has been established, to inquire into this question.

Mr. RHEAUME: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, it is surely in order for any member of this committee to ask any of the elected representatives what their reaction would be to other proposals even though Mr. Lang, as I am well aware, represents the Mackenzie delta constituency right now as one of the nine men on the council. Surely the committee members have the right to pose certain problems to him and ask him, as a resident of the north and one of the nine men on the council, what their reaction is. He has the right to refuse to comment, but I cannot accept the restriction that we cannot ask Mr. Lang what he thinks the reaction to a measure somewhere else in the Northwest Territories would be.

The CHAIRMAN: You may ask any question of the witness pertaining to his knowledge, but the question was: how do the people feel about it out there.

Mr. GREGOIRE: If you ask me what my constituency feels about nuclear arms or about any other matter, I will gladly answer. We are elected to know what the people feel, what they think and what they want.

The CHAIRMAN: We do not wish to delay these gentlemen longer than necessary. You have asked this question. Mr. Lang, do you wish to answer it?

Mr. LANG: I can answer it in part. The natives in my constituency have never given a thought to the islands off Quebec, and I do not think that the principle of those islands is involved in this division at all. It will however be involved in future years if we split this territory into two. We will then have the territory of Nunassiq in the east, and that is the one in which you are interested. This is a purely territorial division but 40 years hence, or whenever Nunassiq becomes a province, will be the time to raise that question, in my opinion, because Quebec, Ontario and Nunassiq will be three separate provinces and it will be possible to fully answer that question. At the present time I cannot see that it concerns us.

Mr. GREGOIRE: I think that when Nunassiq becomes a province it will be too late then to ask them to depart from what is now their territory. If you look at the map you will see that Nunassiq will surround completely Ontario and Quebec. It will be a province surrounding the other provinces. That is why I think now is the time for the federal government to look at all these problems and to settle them if possible.

Mr. LANG: Of course, Mr. Chairman, I would not be able to answer that particular question because I have not consulted my constituents about this particular situation. They are totally unaware that such a problem exists. As far as I am concerned myself it was only a year ago that I became aware of this particular problem. I read some of your discussions in *Hansard*. However, my constituents are not aware of this. I feel I have no right to answer this question unless I consult my constituents at home about it. You cannot blame those people; they have never heard about those offshore islands, off Quebec. I cannot give you an opinion on it.