

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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Title: [Erik Nielsen on the Yukon Progressive Conservative Association's resolutions]  
Speaker: Erik Nielsen (EN)  
Date: [Nov 1971?]  
Transcriber: Archivist  
Time: 0:10:00  
Transcript information in square brackets [ ] provided by Archivist

**Abstract**

See <http://yukon.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/144/FIL/LIST/SISN%209811?SESSIONSEARCH>.

**Transcript**

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**EN:** Good evening. Tonight I wish to speak with you about the aims and objects of the Yukon Progressive Conservative Association with respect to our future here in the Yukon. We do have a bright future of sensible policies are adopted if we provide the proper incentives for Yukon residents and for Yukon commerce and industry. Yet however we in the Yukon are to be burdened with policies such as that embodied in Bill C187 an act to amend the Yukon Minerals Act then our future looks bleak indeed. In discussing the resolutions passed last September 16th by the annual convention of the Yukon Progressive Conservative Association it is not going to be possible to talk about all of them in the 10 minutes I have at my disposal tonight. However you have either received or will be receiving a kit of information from me in which among other information contains an outline of our resolutions printed on the reverse side of the polling division map of the Whitehorse area. What are some of these resolutions then? First we would like to see the basic personal income tax exemption raised by the sum of a \$1,000 for the taxpayer and a \$1,000 for his or her spouse as well as an exemption of \$500 for each dependent or equivalent. For seasonal workers these exemptions would be calculated proportionate to the length of time the taxpayer was employed in the Yukon. We believe that the permanent settlement of the Yukon is in the general national interest and that there is a reluctance on the part of Canadians to settle here in the Yukon on a permanent basis largely because of the relatively higher cost of living here in the Yukon. We also believe that by increasing the basic personal exemption as I have outlined an incentive is thereby given which will make it more attractive for people to become permanent Yukon residents. Home construction in the Yukon is more costly than most other areas of Canada. More homes would be built here if the costs were lowered. We therefore advocate that the existing 11% sales tax on building and construction material should be abolished. I might add that the abolition of the 11% sales tax on building and construction materials is also a commitment of a Conservative Government in Ottawa. With respect to labour in the Yukon the time has long passed when the Yukon should have laws dealing with industrial relations in disputes investigation. We advocate the passing of such law. We also believe that we must have a full labour relations board here in the Yukon and our resolution calls for the setting up of such a board consisting of one person selected by labour, one by management, and one by the Territorial Government. Our Yukon Progressive Conservative Association also believes that we

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should create and operate our own Yukon workmen's compensation scheme rather than continue the present arrangement where huge sums of money are paid by Yukon businesses and individuals to one private insurance company for workmen's compensation insurance. The people of the Yukon could have the benefit of all those premiums by a territorially government operated scheme. Further we believe that we should have our own Yukon workmen's compensation board instead of having the Alberta board administer Yukon workmen's compensation as is the case now. The Yukon board would consist of one person selected by labour, one by management, and one by the Territorial Government. With respect to the civil service we would change the laws that now stand so that government employees would be encouraged to participate in political affairs secure in the knowledge that their careers in the public service would not be prejudiced by such participation. At the federal level we would set up an independent commission for the purpose of arbitrating disputes between civil service employee organizations and the government. The present situation where Treasury Board performs this function is most unfair since Treasury Board takes its instructions from the government. In a related area our association has passed a resolution advocating the passage of legislation which would give Yukon contractors a 5% preference over outside contractors when bidding on all territorial contracts. It is our feeling that the practice of outside contractors bidding non-union rates of pay and the performance of territorial contracts is not only penalizing the Yukon contractor but is also causing a hardship on Yukon workmen since outside labour is usually brought in by the outside contractors for the performance of the work. This is a grossly unfair situation and should be rectified at once. It is interesting to note here that such a measure was passed unanimously by the Territorial Council at their last session but was vetoed by the Commissioner on instructions of the Minister of Northern Affairs. Perhaps the single most contentious matter concerning hundreds of Yukoners is the restrictive and rigid policies embodied in the lands administration in the Yukon. Here in this vast territory of 207,000 square miles an applicant for a small parcel of land is almost looked upon as asking for the Crown Jewels when he makes a request for a reasonable amount of land upon which to build a home or develop a business. No real reform has taken place with respect to the streamlining of these procedures throughout the whole of the last eight years of Liberal government. The cumbersome procedures and lengthy delays which confront Yukoners endeavoring to obtain land are extensive. One of our resolutions calls for the complete overhauling of the existing system so that lands will be made more readily available as they are elsewhere in Canada for the legitimate requirements of Yukoners.

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I am sure that a good many Yukoners would be interested to learn that the average age of the Yukon citizen is in the area of 27 years. It being the youngest average age of any area in Canada area. In the view of our association sports, recreation and physical fitness are not only important to the Yukon way of life but to all of Canada. So far government participation in sports and recreation in the north has been limited to assistance in the holding of competitive sport functions. We should be more involved and more competitive. Accordingly, the Yukon Progressive Conservative Association has concluded that in order to provide improved facilities for competitive sport at all levels and in order to improve the caliber of Yukon athletic representation at such events as the Arctic Winter Games, the Canada Games,

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the Polar Games, other interprovincial, international, and national competitions, a capital recreation fund be established for the purpose of assisting and constructing and equipping recreational facilities throughout the Yukon wherever required, including, but by no means limiting, gymnasiums, swimming pools, hockey and curling rinks, and the like. The millions of dollars that have been wasted on the many grants made under such programs as OFY, Lifgry [sp?], and others, would be far better spent in this fashion in the Yukon and elsewhere throughout the country and the youth of our country would derive far greater benefit from such activities than they do now from making surveys of tombstones in the city of Toronto, counting seagulls of the east coast of Newfoundland, or growing marijuana in the interior of B.C. It is essential that the development of Yukon resources should proceed, that is inevitable, if we are to progress at all. Such development should however have as its top priority the maintenance of the integrity of our environment. To this end our national policy is the enactment of a Canadian bill of an environmental rights. This would provide legal recognition of the individual and collective rights of Canadians to live in an environment which is protected against pollution in all its forms. With respect to the Yukon our association is appalled at the fact that raw sewage is being poured into the Yukon River at the rate of nearly 1 billion gallons a year, or 30 billion gallons since 1942. And this from a system designed by the federal government and installed with federal government money and notwithstanding the fact that Parliament past two years ago a northern waters protection act which makes a continuation of this practice a punishable offense. Our association has therefore passed a resolution requiring the immediate construction of a sewage treatment plant in Whitehorse at federal government expense. And further that similar non-polluting plants be established in all developing Yukon communities. In addition, because such great concern should be taken with respect to the maintenance of a healthy environment, we are advocating the installation of anti-pollution devices where required in any industrial development so as to result in an absolute minimum of ecological and environmental damage. There are a number of other resolutions which our annual convention passed. They involve the accelerated paving of the Alaska Highway, concentrating on a program of commencing paving in both directions from the established communities along the highway. We are advocating an accelerated program of the restoration of buildings of national and historical value in Dawson City and developing tourist roads in that area. Resolutions urging the establishment of updated radio communication and air navigation facilities in the northern remote areas of the Yukon as part of our program. Our association has gone on record as opposing the passage of Bill C187 the act to amend the Yukon Minerals Act which is waiting to be re-introduced in Parliament should the Trudeau government be re-elected. We also oppose the amendments to Bill C193 concerning changes in the Northern Canada Power Commission Act. Airport terminal facilities at Mayo and Dawson are the subject of one of our resolutions. A study to determine the feasibility of Tarr Inlet as a Canadian port is also advocated commencing with a study in co-operation with the province of British Columbia. The time is long past when a bridge over the Yukon River at Dawson City should have been constructed. The construction of such a bridge is the subject of one of our resolutions. There are other resolutions concerning industrial development, concerning our forests, concerning our hydroelectric potential, concerning Indian affairs, the recognition of aboriginal rights, the economic development of the Indian people, the educational policies as they affect the Indian people, and many others too numerous to discuss in this brief 10 minutes. Our program is a positive one. Our Yukon Progressive Conservative Association has passed these imaginative and

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farsighted resolutions after having debated all of these subjects for two days. Delegates from all communities in all parts of the Yukon attended and participated. The resolutions represent the needs and legitimate desires of all segments of Yukon society. And it's a sound program which when implemented will provide that kind of a bright future for the Yukon and for we who live here and for Yukoners to come.

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