

*Northwest Territories Advisory Commission*

the forms of territorial government. The growing need to bring the government into closer touch with the area and its people is consistent with development of our Federal system over more than 100 years. There is an increasing awareness in Canada of the potential and importance of the Northwest Territories. The search for oil and metals is assuming extraordinary proportions. The development of the Territorial Government should proceed in an orderly, logical way, recognizing that increasing control over its own affairs carries with it greater financial, administrative and political responsibilities.

Since 1920 the Northwest Territories has been governed by a Commissioner and Council, with Ottawa as the seat of the Government, the Council presently consisting of four elected and five appointed members. Early in 1962 the Council passed a resolution recommending the establishment of a resident government which would require a division into two territories. The Government of the day accepted the principle implied in this resolution, and the present Government brought forward proposals based on that principle.

No conclusive action was taken, and early in 1964 the present Council asked the Federal Government not to proceed further with these proposals until it had an opportunity to study their implications. Subsequently, at its November 1964 session the Council requested the establishment of a Commission to look into and report on political and other aspects of northern development, and also requested that the territorial franchise be extended to all residents of the Northwest Territories. At this stage, there is general agreement that further constitutional development for the Northwest Territories is needed.

We believe there is need for an impartial and objective fact finding group of persons to consider the questions relating to the immediate and longer term political development of the Northwest Territories. In particular the residents should be given an opportunity to make their views known.

It has therefore been decided to appoint an Advisory Commission on the development of Government in the Northwest Territories. The terms of reference of the Commission will enable it to review government in the Northwest Territories and to recommend to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources the form of government that seems most appropriate consistent with political, economic and social development. Within this general framework the Commission will be

[Mr. Laing.]

expected to give specific attention to the following matters:

(a) the views of residents of the Northwest Territories and other Canadians regarding the foregoing;

(b) the nature of the Federal Government's responsibility for the Territories;

(c) consideration of the political development of the Territories contingent on the size, nature and distribution of population and its ability to pay a significant share of the costs involved having regard to the present and prospective level of social and economic development;

(d) the present forms of government of the Northwest Territories as defined by the Northwest Territories Act and the Northern Affairs and National Resources Act;

(e) the subject matter of the previous proposals affecting the constitutional structure of the Territories; and

(f) other recommendations the Commission considers desirable.

Dean A. W. R. Carrothers, B.A., LL.B., LL.M., Professor and Dean of Law at the University of Western Ontario, has accepted the invitation to act as Chairman of the Advisory Commission. Dean Carrothers at 42 years of age is one of the most eminent young members of his profession in Canada. Mr. John H. Parker has also agreed to serve as a member of the Commission. Mr. Parker is the able and highly respected Mayor of Yellowknife. He has lived in that city for a number of years and is thoroughly aware of the problems facing the northern areas today. I expect to be in a position to announce the name of the third member of the Commission very shortly. We are hoping that Mr. Jean Gourd of Amos, Quebec will agree to serve. These men can be expected to approach the assignment with professional competence and energy but without preconceived, rigid opinions or views.

The Advisory Commission will be asked to make its report and recommendations to the Minister before the spring of 1966. To assist the Advisory Commission in launching its studies, the Government intends to issue within the next two months a reference paper outlining in detail the social and economic conditions, the political structure and the resources of the Northwest Territories. The paper will not, of course, deal with future government policy, but we hope will serve a useful purpose for the Commission and indeed all Canadians interested in the north.

The Government will also bring before the House as promised in the Speech from the