

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES ACT.

The **MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR** (Mr. Sifton) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 114) to amend the North-west Territories Act. He said: The provisions of this Bill are somewhat miscellaneous in their character. I need not explain them at length now, because they will hardly be understood until the printed Bill is in the hands of hon. members. I may say, however, generally speaking, that the main provision of the Bill is to change the constitution of the government of the North-west Territories in this respect, that whereas they have what is called an executive committee, a committee that was entirely a statutory body—and I fancy without precedents in our constitutional system—under the proposed Bill they will have an executive council which will, to the extent of the statutory powers conferred upon the Government of the North-west Territories by the Act, exercise such powers in the same way as the executive council of a province. The effect will be rather as to the methods in which the Government is carried on than as to any extension of the powers of the Government itself. The natural effect of this provision will be that the system of responsible government in the North-west Territories will be more clearly defined and established than it has been heretofore.

Various clauses of the Bill are amendments for the purpose of bringing the Act into conformity with this provision. The other amendments which are not mere verbal changes, are in the first place, a provision which places it within the power of the legislative assembly of the Territories to deal with the qualifications of justices of the peace, that being a purely local matter which may be better disposed of by themselves than by the Parliament of Canada. The appointment of clerks of the courts in the Territories is also given to the executive government of the Territories. The sheriffs and clerks of the court have heretofore been appointed by the Federal Government. The sheriffs will continue to be appointed by the Federal Government, but by this Bill, if it receives the assent of the House, the clerks, who are paid entirely by fees, will be appointed by the Territorial Government. Another clause refers to the qualifications of police magistrates. Another clause gives the Territorial assembly power to pass ordinances respecting the road allowances. I may say that the fact that the Department of the Interior has been compelled to deal with every local application respecting road allowance in the Territories, has been a source of great annoyance and difficulty to the people there, and also of considerable annoyance to the department itself.

Mr. DAVIN. I am very glad the hon. Minister (Mr. Sifton) is introducing this Bill. I should like to ask him one question. He

used the expression "Executive Council of the province." Does he intend to change the name from "Executive Council of the North-west Territories?"

The **MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**. No; the word "province" is not used in the Bill.

Mr. DAVIN. The hon. Minister used that word in his speech. So far as I can see, the Bill is designed to bring in reforms which I have contended for year after year.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. Are there any changes with regard to the limitation of the legislative powers of the legislature?

The **MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR**. It just occurs to me—I may say in answer to the hon. gentleman's question—that I omitted to state one feature of the Bill. It gives the Territorial Assembly power to deal with questions of insurance, the incorporation of local insurance companies, and other necessary insurance business. This is a power possessed by the provincial legislatures, but heretofore not possessed by the Territorial Assembly. Difficulties have arisen through the lack of local regulations, and it is to meet these difficulties that this change has been made.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

LAND TITLES ACT.

The **MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR** (Mr. Sifton) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 115) to amend the Land Titles Act, 1894. He said: I may explain that the Land Titles Act, 1894, is an Act under which what is known as the Torrens system of registration is carried out in the Territories. It has been discovered by the registrars under that Act that the law makes no provision for the registration or use of what are known among lawyers as general powers of attorney. These instruments have been registered and acted upon in the Territories several times since the passing of the Act, but on a close construction of the Act, it appears this is not provided for, and it is to provide for this omission that the present Bill is proposed.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

DOMINION LANDS ACT.

The **MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR** (Mr. Sifton) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 116) further to amend the Dominion Lands Act. He said: The first clause of the Bill is to give to the Immigration Commissioner at Winnipeg power to grant leave to persons who may be nominated by him to act as agents for settlers who may come in and wish to make homestead entries. Several clauses relate to the powers of offi-