

Yukon and N.W.T. Government

disappear. The Carrothers Commission suggested that an executive council be established which would do a number of things. According to the Carrothers Commission, a member of the executive council would not be required to be an elected member of the legislative assembly in order to qualify for appointment. The executive council would be presided over by the Commissioner. Each member normally would be charged with the administration of one or more departments in the territorial government. The executive council would co-ordinate finance, prepare the budget, prepare legislation in principle and generally tender advice on any territorial matter on which the Commissioner should seek advice.

I would ask the minister to take another look at the question of the establishment of an executive council in the Northwest Territories. Without breaking down the principles in which the minister believes, I think we could achieve some sort of accommodation which would bring about this meaningful participation in government by members of the council. If the minister does not wish to involve the members of the council in operating departments at this stage, the executive council could consist of elected representatives, the Commissioner, the deputy commissioner and the senior financial official who could carry out the co-ordination of financial papers, the budget, legislation in principle and generally tender views on any territorial matter.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the hon. member. In his view, who should be in the majority on such a council; should it be the elected members or the civil servants?

Mr. Orange: My idea is that members of council should be the majority with the deputy Commissioner as a member of council.

The government has gone a long way in northern Canada in terms of bringing meaningful government to the people. Let us look at the record. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) outlined the progress in the Yukon Territory. Let me say something about the Northwest Territories. Up until 1959 the council of the Northwest Territories consisted of five appointed civil servants from Ottawa and four elected representatives from the north. In 1959 with the exception of the deputy Commissioner who is a member of council the four appointed members of council came from outside the civil service. This

[Mr. Orange.]

was sort of a step forward. It was a meagre one but also an important one.

In 1962, the former government came up with a proposal to divide the Northwest Territories. In 1963, this was passed on to the new government and as a result of committee hearings, at which there was a good deal of objection on the part of the people in the north, the idea of dividing the territories was put aside. In 1965 the former minister, the present Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing) came up with the idea of obtaining at first hand from the people of the north their ideas and views on the form and shape the government should take. The commission called the Carrothers Commission reported to the minister in 1966. Prior to the receipt of this report however, this government extended in the Northwest Territories the territorial franchise to the eastern and central Arctic by the addition of three more constituencies which brought the total of elected members to seven. This for the first time gave them the majority.

In 1967, the implementation of the Carrothers Commission recommendations was under way. First of all Yellowknife was declared to be the capital. A crash move to bring the government to the people in the north took place and in September 1967 the Commissioner arrived at Yellowknife with his staff to take up full time residence and work in the territories.

Let us look at some other aspects of the Carrothers Commission report as it affects us in the north. The first important recommendation was non-division. The minister supported this stand and went further. He reminded land hungry provincial premiers they should keep their eyes and hands off the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. Yellowknife has been declared the capital of the territories. The Carrothers Commission—and there is general support in the House and from the people in the north—does not recommend provincial status at this time. I must take issue with the minister when in reiterating the principle in this statement he used the phrase “for the foreseeable future”. The future is something we cannot predict. With the boom in economic development in the north, we believe the situation could change so rapidly that no government would wish to be locked into the position that there is no potential province or that there are no potential provinces in northern Canada. I would hope it would be the objective of all Canadians to see further provinces some day in northern Canada.