

*Territorial Lands Act*

know, a huge amount of territory and forest land north of 60 has been burned by some of the massive fires that have swept through in recent years. I hope the federal Government might take a look, perhaps two or three years from now, to see whether or not some kind of ongoing adjustment can be made; perhaps in terms of a transfer of payment for fire fighting costs, as was done by the federal Government through the Supplementary Estimates instead of being a separate budgetary item. Until the Northwest Territories has a larger capacity for creating its own revenue, fighting fires can put the Territory in a very difficult position.

This Bill is supported by the territorial legislature, by the Dene and the Métis and for those reasons it has been declared acceptable to the Inuit, as has been pointed out. The Bill affects the transfer of 122 person-years, which is about 200 persons, almost all of which are PSAC members. There are some IBEW members and some members from the professional institute. As of April 1, as I understand it, all will become members of the Public Service Association of NWT, although somewhere down the road a short pace that situation may change as a result of the case now being tested before the territorial courts by the professional institute in relation to the Baffin Regional Health Services transfer which took place September, 1986. That court case is a challenge of the ordinance that Territorial employees must belong to the Public Service Association of NWT. As of now, should they wish to be transferred to positions in NWT and become members of the Public Service Association of NWT they can, but that situation may change not too far down the road.

I am advised there are no problems with transfers or employee benefits. I assume that the officials who provided me with that information in a briefing are correct and that the same process is now under way for Yukon in moving to transfer employees and forest management and protection to Yukon.

The amendment to Section 19(e), which is interesting, was done at the request of the NWT legislature. It was in relation to concerns about experimental plots and national forests, that there might at some point be unilateral actions possibly taken by Ottawa prior to the actual and final transfer of ownership of forests and the lands north of 60. The wording as members will see was deleted from Bill C-43.

This indirectly affects the 10 sawmills in NWT and about 50 workers will be affected indirectly by this transfer of legislative responsibility in new licensing and so on. As of April 1, and I am sure we will pass this Bill in a few minutes, there will be no residual forest responsibility left within DINAC which will take an enormous weight off the back of the hard-working Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. McKnight). The Canadian Forest Service, however, will still have some residual responsibilities and those may be sustained for some time to come. Northerners and all Canadians would agree that it is appropriate to have a national body co-ordinating some of the work done by CFS in finding new

biological ways of dealing with disease, root rot and that kind of thing.

I am also advised by officials who were very helpful to me that there is a straight indemnification of all matters relating to this Bill as of this point. They still rest with DINAC. On April 1, they will become the responsibility of the NWT. The reason I raise it and will long continue to raise it is that I have a long memory for Bill C-44 which passed through this House a couple of years ago. We all have to reflect on the hatchet job done to John C. Turner as a result of the passage of Bill C-44. A few days ago, I wrote again to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) asking that he have one of his senior people and perhaps Dalton Camp meet with Mr. Turner to have a look at the effects of Bill C-44 on him.

• (1630)

I have been given the assurances that I now always seek from officials that there is no large-scale litigation and that there is not a need for a legal grandfathering clause in this Bill. There is a straight indemnification at this point in time and, as of April 1, it will be transferred to the NWT.

I trust the Government will move promptly to complete the process of settling comprehensive claims north of 60, not only in the Northwest Territories but in Yukon, and that we will move forward diligently in the spirit of a Bill such as this with self-government and assist with the Territories' very obvious desire for devolution to provincial status. Perhaps there will be three new provinces before the end of the decade, the Western Arctic, Nunavut and Yukon. I welcome this small step which is clearly a step in the right direction. I think all Members would agree that the Minister is making a good move today.

**Mr. McKnight:** Mr. Speaker, I believe, with the unanimous agreement of the House, all Parties would be prepared to see this legislation move to Committee of the Whole and proceed through all stages this day.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister is quite correct. There have been discussions along these lines and my Party would be prepared to proceed to the next stage in the passage of this Bill.

**Mr. Fulton:** I think that would be most appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Mr. McKnight, seconded by Mr. de Cotret, moves that Bill C-43, an Act to amend the Territorial Lands Act, be read the second time and, by unanimous consent, referred to Committee of the Whole.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Danis in the chair.

Clauses 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.