

## IMPORTANCE OF CANADIAN NORTH

**TERRITORIES ACT AMENDMENTS:** The importance of the Canadian Northwest Territories as an area for development was stressed in the House of Commons on January 19 by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. George A. Drew, during second reading of a bill to amend the Act respecting the Northwest Territories.

One of the changes heralded by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Mr. Jean Lesage, was an increase from three to four in the number of elected representatives on the Council of the Northwest Territories.

After the Minister's explanation of the changes, Mr. Drew spoke, in part, as follows:

"I welcome the statement by the Minister that the Government has decided to make this increase from three to four, and welcome, too, the manner in which the statement has been made. It is encouraging to feel that out of a discussion of this kind, we can find a substantial measure of agreement in matters of great importance for the years ahead...."

### INTEREST IN NORTH

"The important thing is that a decision to increase the number of elected representatives is positive evidence to the people in northern Canada, as well as the people in other parts of this country whose interest we wish to arouse in the north, that there is a steady movement toward elected representation for that area.

"By the standards of representation in the southern areas of Canada, the numbers in those northern parts are small. It is not likely that at any time there will be a great concentration of population in the north. Nevertheless within a comparatively few years we have seen enormous changes taking place. It is only a few years ago that there was practically no mineral of importance in the north, with the exception of the romantic Yukon. Since then we have seen the discovery of increasing quantities of rich ore of different kinds. The Northwest Territories have played a vitally important part in the development of atomic energy. In many ways the north beckons to the young and the vigorous, to people of all ages, who look for the rewards that come with adventure and with new developments such as we have seen in that part of Canada.

"I appreciate the words in which the Minister announced the decision of the Govern-

ment. I should hope the fact that we can find such a substantial measure of agreement as to the desirability of dramatizing in some measure the move toward greater representation in the northern area would be a happy augury of the approach to be made to the broad problems of that great internal empire. Numbers of population are small. I agree with the Minister that in the Keewatin and Franklin areas it would be so small that it would be difficult to have separate representation there at the moment, with any sense of reality. Nevertheless we recall that the Franklin area is one of the historic sections of Canada. Who can tell that any part of that great northland will not provide new opportunities in the years ahead?

"All Canadians should regard the north as an important area for development. There are reasons why the Government and Parliament should seek in every way to encourage increased population in that area.

### VITAL IMPORTANCE

"We speak often about our neighbours to the south, but not nearly so often in friendly terms about our neighbours to the west and north. Yet, the fact is that only a little more than 50 miles of open water separates this continent from the mainland of Russia. Our great northland is of vital importance in many ways. I do not often speak of Russia as offering us examples of desirable things, but I must say it is worth noting that Russia has been devoting a great deal of attention to the development of its northland, and to the opening of new possibilities for supporting population in that area. We will hope that those developments will be for peace rather than for war - peace that will provide opportunities for us and for other people.

"I would hope that in every way possible we would direct our attention to that distant area so as to encourage young Canadians and others who have not yet come to Canada to seek opportunity there. I welcome the Minister's statement today respecting the proposed change and accept it as a gesture on the part of the Government which will be welcomed by Parliament, and as an indication that we are interested in the expansion and development of the north."

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**RETAIL SALES DOWN:** Canadian retailers had estimated sales in November valued at \$1,001,648,000, down eight per cent from October's \$1,088,379,000, and off 0.5 per cent from 1953's November sales total of \$1,006,888,000. This was the first month since the end of World War II that retail sales declined from the same month of the preceding year. Cumula-

tive sales for the first 11 months of 1953 aggregated \$10,921,986,000, a rise of 4.8 per cent over 1952's \$10,418,936,000.

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Agricultural implements were the principal products of 85 factories in 1952, four more than in 1951.