

Yukon Act

Mr. Knowles: That is the reason for the change?

Mr. Winters: That is the reason for the change.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Has the minister studied the form of commission government under which Newfoundland operated from 1934 to 1949? I think he would get some ideas from such a study. That commission consisted of six men with the governor sitting in as chairman. I notice that here the commissioner does not sit in with the council. He is supposed to be a man especially selected by the governor in council and should be the ablest man of the lot because of his special qualifications. Probably he would come from outside the territory. The other men are going to be elected by popular ballot and they may benefit from some person of experience to help them and make suggestions.

Mr. Knowles: Don't you believe in democracy?

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Certainly I believe in democracy, but I believe also in precedent. Here we have a council of five members, and then in the next section provision is being made for a Speaker. A majority of the council would be three members who, including the Speaker, would constitute a quorum. I think it is worth considering having the commissioner preside at council meetings.

Mr. Winters: We have considered that and decided that the best operations would result if the commissioner did not sit in with the council. Perhaps the main difference between this council and the one that acted in Newfoundland is that in this instance it has no executive authority, its authority being legislative only.

Section agreed to.

On section 13—*Quorum*.

Mr. Knowles: How does the Speaker get appointed? I have looked at the act and can find no reference to the Speaker in the definitions or anywhere else.

Mr. Winters: The Speaker is appointed by the council and is one of the members of the council.

Mr. Knowles: Should not there be some provision for that? It just seems as though he is picked out of thin air.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Has the minister power under the act to issue general instructions as to procedure in connection with such things as the election of the

[Mr. Winters.]

Speaker? I think it would be wise to have something of that kind.

Mr. Winters: I suppose under the general authority given to the minister that could be done, but we have left it to the council to conduct its own business and to devise ways of doing so. That has been found to be satisfactory. Leaving to the council the right to select a chairman or, as we call it here, a Speaker, has worked satisfactorily. There has been no question about it so far and I am sure there will not be.

Mr. Graydon: Would the minister take another look at this section to see whether there should not be something added before the word "Speaker"? I am somewhat impressed by the suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I am simply trying to be helpful. It may be there should be something that has just been left out.

Mr. Winters: I shall be glad to do that. There is no change from the existing act in that respect, but I do not believe the hon. member for Peel would wish the legislation held up on that account. I will look into that.

Mr. Knowles: Has the minister the other act there? I see that the explanatory note on the opposite page says there is no change in substance. Has the minister the actual wording of the previous section 16?

Mr. Winters: The previous section 16 read as follows:

A majority of the council, including the Speaker, shall form a quorum.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Might I suggest that there might be a subsection 3 added to clause 9 which would read something like this, that the person obtaining the largest majority should be the Speaker, or that the council shall have the power to elect a chairman or Speaker.

Mr. MacInnis: The word "Speaker" in section 13 is not the most appropriate term that could be used for a council of this size. The word "Speaker" is used for the officer presiding over a parliament or other body having the functions of a parliament. In this case I think the term "chairman" would be much more appropriate both with respect to the functions which the council has to discharge and the number of members on the council. A chairman chosen from one of their number would be much more fitting, so far as the term is concerned, than "Speaker".

Section agreed to.