

*Northwest Territories Act*

**Mr. Speaker:** If there is no further discussion I will put the motion. The motion is that I should leave the chair for the house to—

**Mr. Black (Cumberland):** Mr. Speaker, I asked for a statement from the minister. He can either make it now or later; but I think it would be to the advantage of hon. members that they have his statement. Then they will know how to deal with it. Perhaps there will be no objection to it at all at the next stage.

**Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Resources and Development):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the statement I make will not be objectionable. I can assure you and the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) that he could not have been forecasting my statement about this resolution because I can say that my statement is neither long nor has it been given to the press. Mr. Speaker, you have heard the views of the government with respect to the appropriate time for me to make my statement. I will say that although I should be glad to make the statement, I would prefer to do it after the house goes into committee of the whole to consider the resolution.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, are we not likely to get into an extended argument in which you would not rule against us, even if you made the ruling that the Prime Minister submits you should make? We probably would be arguing from the negative as to why we should not be proceeding at all, and that is exactly the sort of difficulty we might get into. If the minister is satisfied that this statement is not one that would raise any controversy—and it is quite likely that it is not—I think probably we would avoid unnecessary argument at this stage if he would proceed with it. He might be surprised to find that everyone was in immediate agreement with him.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** The minister has spoken once on this motion.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Carried.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Beaudoin in the chair.

**Mr. Winters:** Mr. Chairman, the continued growth of Canada's north was the underlying reason why the government, during the first session last year, asked parliament to pass a number of amendments to the Northwest

Territories Act to bring it more into line with present-day conditions. The principal amendment at that time was one empowering the citizens of the Northwest Territories to elect three members to the Northwest Territories council, whose total membership is eight. Since that time a careful study has been made of the apportionment of responsibilities between the federal government and the territorial government. It is now proposed to transfer additional revenues to the territorial government and to place upon it additional responsibilities more in keeping with its new status.

It is proposed to confer upon the commissioner in council of the territories legislative jurisdiction in several matters which are now not assigned to it; to provide for the establishment of a territorial revenue account; to re-establish the territorial court to facilitate the administration of justice.

In one of the amendments last year provision was made to pay to each elected member of the council the actual travelling expenses incurred by him in travelling from his place of residence to the place where the council holds its session, and return; and also an allowance for living expenses not exceeding \$15 for each day during which the council is in session. For a variety of reasons the amount established to cover living expenses is not considered to be adequate, and it is proposed to increase it. It is proposed also to make a number of other minor changes to the act.

The proposed legislation will be in the form of a consolidation of the present act of 1927 and the four amending acts passed in 1938, 1940, 1948, and 1951.

**Mr. Black (Cumberland):** Did I understand from the minister that the first legislation having to do with the Northwest Territories was passed in 1927? I understand that the Northwest Territories were taken over by Canada long before that date, and I presume legislation would be enacted to enable the government of the territories at that time. Perhaps the minister can tell the committee just when the Northwest Territories were taken over. When that was done the maritime provinces were instrumental in passing the legislation, and were partially responsible for the taxation appropriations enabling the administration of the territories. Those of us from the maritime provinces made our contribution. Our elder statesmen had great vision, and we know that Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Leonard Tilley and many others made their contributions.

I am interested to learn from the minister when the first legislation was passed by this