

*Northwest Territories Act*

heard him compliment those who were appointed by the government because of the benefit they brought to northern Canada by reason of their previous knowledge and the fact that they knew southern Canadians who had influence in southern Canada.

These members of the council are able to tell the story of the north which so few Canadians who reside in southern Canada have an opportunity to tell accurately and, indeed, to induce the investment of money from the southern part of Canada in our north. I would think that for some years to come, though I will be guided by the Carrothers report, it would be extremely beneficial to those residing in northern Canada to have the benefit of that link; I am quite certain there is such a benefit.

My predecessor in office has joined with the hon. member from the Yukon in supporting the suggestion that all of the members should be elected. Let me ask my predecessor in this post whether this ever occurred to him while he was in office.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Yes, it was part of the grand strategy for autonomy of the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Laing:** Well, I have heard a great deal about grand strategy and vision.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** By 1967.

**Mr. Laing:** And in this position I am trying to do something.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** It could have been done in 1963.

**Mr. Laing:** Because not only of the protestations with regard to electing members to the council from within the territory but because the denial of the franchise was sticking out like a sore thumb I thought, notwithstanding the impending Carrothers report, that we should take care of this matter now and that is why this amendment is before us. For the first time it will give an opportunity to the elected members of the Northwest Territories council to have a majority of the members on that council.

You may call me out of order now, Mr. Chairman, but I believe I cannot introduce the subject better than on this particular section. I had intended last evening, had I summed up before the committee stage, to tell hon. members that we are concerned and saddened too by the fact that it has been intimated to us by the commissioner of the Northwest Territories that he intends to leave

the service some time in 1966. I am referring to Mr. Ben Sivertz who is commissioner of the Northwest Territories at this time. I want to say that I have not met any person whose sense of humanitarianism as applied to people is greater than that of Mr. Ben Sivertz. This quality of understanding and compassion, if you like, has been tremendously beneficial because of the nature of his task in the territories and the people with whom he has to deal.

• (12:10 p.m.)

I have asked him if I may have the continuing benefit of his advice after we receive the Carrothers report. I am glad to tell the house he has consented to make himself available to advise us when that report is received. I am going to suggest that in the light of the impending Carrothers report it would be insulting, I think, were we to go beyond the necessitous points taken care of in this bill. I am going to suggest that I feel we have done very well indeed in seeing to it that all of those residents in the Northwest Territories have the franchise. We are taking a very important step in making the majority of the council elected members from the Northwest Territories.

Again I say I wish more members of parliament knew exactly the problems we are up against in these areas. When members are elected from these areas of the high Arctic, the eastern Arctic and Keewatin, it is going to be extremely difficult at times to bring them together for a council meeting. The sheer physical disabilities of getting a plane in to pick them up are sometimes insurmountable. We have a population in these three new constituencies of about one person per 160 square miles. There are small settlements to which access is difficult at many times of the year.

In so far as these areas are concerned, I am reminded of what Lloyd George once said about Russia. "It is quite easy to get into that country but very difficult to get out of it." This applies to the Northwest Territories at certain times of the year. You can get in there but you may be held up by the weather for some days after you get there. We are doing the best we can under difficult circumstances. I think if you were to ask the elected members of the Northwest Territories Council today what they think of the appointed members from southern Canada they would tell you, do not drop them but continue that policy. We are going to be guided in