

*Northwest Territories Act*

general election. This date is fixed in the order that the commissioner issues to the chief electoral officer prior to each general election. The life of the council will begin on that date, following the practice which the Canada Elections Act provides with respect to the House of Commons.

The present act also provides that the governor in council may, at any time after the expiration of two years from the date of the return of the writs of election of the elected members of the council, dissolve the council and cause a new council to be elected and appointed. It is now proposed, by the new amendment, to bring the principles relating to dissolution in the territories in accord with the principles followed in the provinces and in this house. A similar change was made several years ago in the Yukon Act, and its provision in this act is another step in the evolution of the Northwest Territories toward responsible government.

Hon. members will have noted that some sections are to be repealed and not replaced. These subsections provided that when an elected member dies, resigns or is otherwise incapable of holding office, the vacancy thus created in the council should be filled by appointment by the governor in council. With the repeal of this subsection, the provisions of the Canada Elections Act for by-elections when an elected member dies, resigns or is otherwise incapable, become effective. They will be effective by virtue of section 114 of the Canada Elections Act. Thus, although there will be no specific provision for by-elections in the Northwest Territories Act itself, by-elections will be held as provided in the Canada Elections Act. It is considered that the time has come to provide for by-elections, thereby making fully effective the right of the people of the territories to elect their own representatives. The Yukon Territory has had provision for this type of by-election for some time.

Another amendment to the bill will authorize the commissioner, on the recommendation of the Northwest Territories council, to designate the place in the territories where, under the act, one session of the council will be held each year. Under the present wording the right to designate the place rests with the governor in council and it is a forward step to give to the commissioner the right to do so on the recommendation of the council itself.

The purpose of the third amendment is to clarify the present section 37. It is desired to appoint presiding officers for the small debt tribunals established under the judicature ordinance, and it is not clear whether the present section 37 of the Northwest

Territories Act is broad enough to authorize their appointment. A similar amendment was passed at the last session of parliament in connection with the Yukon Act.

The fourth amendment in the bill concerns the importation of liquor into the territories. At the present time subsection (1) of section 42 of the Northwest Territories Act prohibits the importation of liquor into the territories unless the permission of the commissioner has been obtained. The commissioner may be unavailable, and it is therefore proposed by this amendment that he be authorized to designate a person to act for him under this section when required. Once again, a similar amendment was made to the Yukon Act at the last session of parliament.

Although section 42 of the Northwest Territories Act adequately controls the importation of liquor into the territories, at the present time another federal statute also applies. The Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act prohibits the shipment of intoxicating liquors into a province except to the provincial government or provincial liquor board or commission. The application of this statute to the Northwest Territories is unnecessary duplication, and this amendment will exclude the territories from its application. A similar amendment was made to the Yukon Act at the last session of parliament.

The purpose of this last amendment is simply to authorize the governor in council to make regulations respecting the protection of sites, specimens and documents of archaeological, ethnological and historical importance. This is considered by the legal officers of the crown to be properly the subject of federal legislation. The proposed amendment is similar to section 51 of the Yukon Act and it will bring the Northwest Territories Act into accord with the Yukon Act in this respect.

With this statement of general principles on these amendments, Mr. Speaker, I think I will content myself. I should like to emphasize the point I made at the resolution stage of this bill that we are moving step by step toward assuring that the administrative and judicial aspects of these expanding territories will grow as the economics of these territories change. In some cases, the changes will be faster possibly than the people in the territories may request them, but in most cases the changes will be with the advice of the councils in each of the two territories. I think this indicates the attitude of the government. I trust that in the debate that will occur on these amendments the various points that can be taken