

ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR THE NORTH

Evidence of the Government's intention of pushing ahead with the political development of the North is contained in the recent announcement by Northern Affairs Minister Arthur Laing of the setting up of an Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories. This body will study the practical problems involved, seek the views of northern residents and recommend to the Federal Government the steps required to provide a greater measure of self-government in the Northwest Territories. An impartial, fact-finding group, its members are drawn from fields outside government.

"Political development must keep pace with the remarkable changes which are occurring in the North", Mr. Laing stated. "Territorial governments with powers commensurate to their present capacity for self-government and their ability to assume the financial and other responsibilities entailed are essential if policies and programmes responsive to the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories are to be achieved".

OBJECTS OF STUDY

Within the frame of reference, the Commissioners have been directed to give specific study to:

- the views of residents of the Northwest Territories and other Canadians with northern experience;
- the nature of the federal responsibility for the Territories;
- consideration of the political development of the Territories contingent on the size, nature and distribution of population and its ability to pay a significant share of the costs involved having regard to the present and prospective level of social and economic development;
- existing forms of government as defined by the Northwest Territories and Northern Affairs and National Resources Acts;
- previous proposals affecting constitutional structure.

Many questions concerning the present form of government for the Northwest Territories require careful and expert study before new policies can be formulated. Since 1912, there has been no change in the geographical extent of the Territories, and only limited development in their constitutional structure. The present Territories have been governed by a Commissioner and Council, with Ottawa as the seat of government, since 1920. The only significant change since then was the enlargement of the Council in the 1950s to provide for four elected members, instead of three, to sit with the five who are appointed. In recent years the Council has been fully involved in plans to provide a greater measure of self-government in the Northwest Territories and, at its November 1964 session, requested the establishment of a judicial commission on the future of the Territories and the extension of the franchise to all residents.

As promised in the Speech from the Throne, the Government will bring before the House of Commons amendments to the Northwest Territories Act to

extend the franchise and to raise the stipend of members of Council in both the Yukon and Northwest Territories to bring them more on a level with indemnities paid in other Canadian legislatures, as well as measures to facilitate setting up a territorial public service in the Northwest Territories. These amendments are urgently required and are of such a nature as to prejudice the findings of the Advisory Commission.

The Commission's terms of reference deal with the Northwest Territories only. It is also the Government's intention that measures designed to enable the people of the Yukon to exercise increased powers of self-government be undertaken as soon as possible.

NEW WEAPON AGAINST FOREST FIRES

An airborne device that may greatly improve forest-fire detection in Canada will be tested operationally this summer in the Ottawa area. An infrared scanner, designed and built by Computing Devices of Canada Limited, will be carried on regular fire-patrol flights by aircraft of the Quebec and Ontario Departments of Lands and Forests.

During the first two months of the trial period, which will begin in mid-June, the scanner will be flown by a Quebec Forest Protection Service plane based near Ottawa. For the second two months of the fire season, it will be carried on an Ontario government plane based at Pembroke. The project is being co-ordinated by the federal Department of Forestry.

A prototype of the infrared scanner was tested last summer at the Forestry Department's Petawawa Forest Experiment Station near Chalk River, Ontario. The device is designed to record very slight differences in ground temperature on the terrain being scanned, the variations so recorded activating a light signal or sound signal, or both, within the aircraft. In addition, the scanner is designed to produce a continuous thermal photograph or map of the terrain, permanently recording the precise location of "hot spots".

UNIFORM FOR SEAWAY EMPLOYEES

During the present navigation season, operating lock crews of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority are being provided with a distinctive uniform to ensure their ready recognition by ships' crews and the public. Over 450 Seaway Authority men at installations from Montreal to Sault Ste. Marie will wear the new dress, which consists of a one-piece garment of dark blue wool-terylene construction.

CAPS AND CRESTS

Lockmasters' uniforms will feature a hat of officer's type, while linesmen will wear a light-weight working cap to match the uniform. Distinctive crests in the Authority design will appear on the uniform and caps.

The Seaway Authority uniform was developed with the assistance of the Directorate of Interservice Development of the Department of National Defence.