

Northwest Territories Act

the present sessions, and thereafter in perpetuity. As soon as assent is given to the bill the commissioner of the Northwest Territories will be empowered to call by-elections in time for the newly-elected members to join their colleagues for the coming session of the council this summer.

There are two sections of the bill which cause me some concern and which I believe have been referred to previously by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). However, I should like to state my own feelings in this regard.

The first matter of concern to me relates to the principle involved in section 12 of the act, which will increase the present indemnities paid to the elected members of the Northwest Territories council from \$2,000 per year to \$5,000. This also includes a \$1,000 tax exemption. Incidentally, this section also provides for the first time an indemnity to appointed members of the council at the rate of \$3,500 per annum.

There is no doubt in my mind that it is essential that the indemnities now paid to the elected representatives be increased. This will give the elected members the opportunity to spend more time with their constituents. Those of us who know southern Canada find it hard to realize the time, distance and expense involved, even with a small constituency in the north, for an elected member from the Northwest Territories to travel to his constituency to meet the people he represents. If the Northwest Territories council is truly to express the views of the people of the north and to take over increased responsibility in the management of their own affairs, I think that in this section there is an opportunity for the government of Canada to give the council greater authority by allowing it to establish its own indemnities. As the hon. member for Yukon mentioned a moment ago, if the people of the north are not satisfied with the rates of pay which the councillors establish for themselves, they will express themselves properly at the ballot box at the next election.

A second area of even greater concern to me is the proposed amendment to section 19A of the act, which in effect states that only the Commissioner may introduce money bills in the council. As I said earlier, the Commissioner is an appointed person; he is appointed by the governor in council and, in effect, is a civil servant. The principle being proposed in this amendment is consistent with the responsibilities of the executive in both the

federal and provincial governments throughout Canada. However, I suggest that the situation of the Northwest Territories is somewhat different.

As the executive arm of government is represented by the commissioner, it is possible that the situation might arise—though I do not anticipate it—where members of the council who are anxious to see a particular matter brought into legislation—primarily a money matter—would not be able to do so because the Commissioner took an adamant position. In theory the Commissioner can refuse to introduce the necessary measures to the council which meet with the wishes of the elected representatives.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the amendment to section 19A provides for the establishment of a Northwest Territories consolidated revenue fund. Up to the present time those revenues which are solely territorial in nature have been kept in the consolidated revenue fund of Canada and are only released to the Commissioner and the council through the written authority of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner and the council will have control over revenues which are territorial in nature.

Mr. Nielsen: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Orange: When I have concluded. On the one hand, we see what appears to be a backward step by giving the Commissioner exclusive control over the introduction of money bills in the council; on the other hand, the Commissioner and the council have more direct control over their own financial resources.

I have been told that, in the first instance, this section was not previously included in the Northwest Territories Act because of an oversight. I accept this explanation up to a point. I should like to think that the minister will look into this contentious section once again and determine, in the light of the recommendations of the Carrothers commission, what means might be developed whereby councillors will have a greater say in the introduction of money bills in the council.

The situation in the Yukon territory is somewhat different. In the Yukon territory there is a financial advisory committee who meet with the commissioner, and comes to Ottawa from time to time to meet with the minister to determine the budget of the