

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

5TH COUNCIL, 29TH SESSION

SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 1-29

TABLED ON FEBRUARY 8, 1965



February 3, 1965.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 1
(First Session, 1965)

COMMISSIONER'S OPENING ADDRESS

Members of the Council of the Northwest Territories, it is my very great pleasure to welcome you to this 29th session of the Council of the Northwest Territories and the third session of the present Council membership. I would like to take this occasion to review progress, take a look at the present position and think of prospects for the future.

1964 was the year the present Council members were elected and appointed for their three-year term of office. It is noteworthy that members entered upon their duties with vigor from their first day of meeting. This vigor has tended to increase rather than diminish. After the November session your Commissioner found that Council had left with him no less than 57 items on which they asked for studies, reports or action. What has happened so far on each of these items will be reported to you during this session. Council members visited 15 N.W.T. communities in November. In my opinion the tour was valuable, - even essential if we are to discharge our responsibility to the people of the north and to the country.

Many documents have been sent to Council members for examination at their homes in preparation for discussions. In addition the Commissioner's mail has brought large indication of the responsible and active minds of Council members.

The Third National Northern Development Conference was held at Edmonton in October. The theme your Commissioner drew as most significant from a very remarkable and wide-ranging agenda was the truly steep rise on a world scale in population, industrialization and consumption of raw materials. Commodity markets show no shortages of goods today. There is a buyers' market in practically everything. But some inexorable things are happening. The most extreme of these is in silver. Twice as much is being used as produced. Where will this lead? In the 1970's shortages of most metals will occur unless very large new sources of supply are brought into production. It has long been recognized that the wealth potential of the Canadian north must derive from mineral production as its main factor in the foreseeable future. Somewhere between 10 and 15 years hence should see mineral demand turning to the Canadian north purposefully. It behooves us to be ready.

The Yellowknife gold mines have continued to produce during 1964 and Tundra Mines have added to this.

During the year the Tungsten market regained partial equilibrium and enabled operations to resume on Flat River.

The lead-zinc field at Pine Point commenced to produce during the year. Great credit must go to the Canadian National Railways and their contractors who completed the rail line to Hay River and Pine Point a whole year ahead of schedule. Members of the Council saw the locomotive come into Hay River when they were there on October 31. In November, shipments of ore to Trail began. This is crude ore from the highest-grade deposits in the region. The concentrating mill will not be operating until later this year. Last month Pine Point Mines announced the blocking out of very much larger tonnages of ore than had hitherto been known. Substantial quantities of this are of higher grade and more favourably located for mining than had been expected. During the year one notes the staking of additional claims by Pine Point Mines and by other interests in the general area. This would indicate the probability of even

larger reserves. There is no doubt that we are justified in thinking of Pine Point as a mining region comparable with the famous tri-state area that has produced such tremendous values in lead and zinc for the United States during the past century.

During 1964 Baffin Iron Mines announced a raising of their sights because of tonnages and quality greater than what had formerly been known. It is too early to say that this is a property soon to come into production. It is not, however, too early for the Government of the Northwest Territories to study what it will mean in their jurisdiction if an iron-mining town comes into existence on North Baffin Island. I have spoken to the Council on a previous occasion of the very great need for well-made plans if we are to avoid, in the negative sense, precipitate and wasteful actions. Let us not merely avoid negative values. Let us rather address ourselves to creating living and working conditions that are efficient, profitable for all concerned, investors, employees (with northern people getting first consideration), with revenues for government services; and let us build beautiful and enjoyable places.

This brings me to the subject of research, which I wish to present to you as the highlight of this address. In November, Council members visited the Inuvik Research Station and I am sure that you shared my pleasure in seeing this new development. It is the only facility of its kind in the Canadian north. There is, however, much other research going on and the total research spending runs to millions. This is very necessary. In fact, it is essential because scientifically northern Canada is a comparatively unknown region. There is pressing need for research. Without scientific research the resources of the north will remain little-known and little-exploited and any development will be accompanied by high costs, - or prevented by high costs. The main, in fact the only hope of reducing these costs substantially lies in research. Research implies discovering, collecting, and compiling reliable information on the north. Without information of this sort we cannot avoid errors, and there is no place in the world where mistakes prove more expensive.

The benefits of research tend to be long-term rather than immediate. As a result, research is always in danger of being deferred in favour of more immediate calls on resources of men and money. This policy is both short-sighted and self-defeating. If planning for development is to be effective it must be based on sound information - on fact rather than on conjecture, on tests rather than hopes. Sound policies can be framed only in the light of adequate research. The role of research is to guide, and it should, therefore, precede development. It should not be carried out in retrospect in an attempt to provide explanations for errors, - but this is exactly what will happen if it is not done in advance.

We should not expect research to lead to sudden improvements. Sometimes it does result in important innovations in materials or techniques, but usually its advances are in a number of small steps rather than a leap. Transportation methods evolve, communications become better, weather forecasts more reliable, foundations more stable, housing more comfortable. This is the usual path of progress, and research leads us along this path.

We have difficult problems in the north and ignoring them will not make them easier. The fact that we have difficult problems may dismay the developer, but not the scientist. For the scientist it means that he has more to do and a more important part to play. The very real problems that face development in the north mean that the role of research is correspondingly greater.

Earlier in this address, I referred to a period of 10 to 15 years hence when we should expect northern mineral wealth to find entry into the world market on a real and large scale. I suggest that Canada has this decade before her in which to make ready to produce and sell northern products. What Canadians must do is learn how to operate in the north efficiently. I am not sure that our northern research programs are all the right ones, or that adequate co-ordination is being done. We need to look at all this more closely. We need to make sure that young men and women are training for northern scientific work, - and that they have opportunity to get at it. This is what industry is doing in every field. In 1965 research is the key to industrial competence. On industrial competence depends standards of living, cultural values, even nationhood. It is the number one must.

I now turn to the business of this session. Winter sessions at Ottawa are especially suitable for budget tasks because the fiscal year commences on April 1, and because Council can easily call on many witnesses it may wish to hear from. This session will follow the pattern in that the legislative agenda is light except for the Appropriation Ordinance for the coming year and the Supplementary Appropriations Ordinance to take care of unforeseen requirements for the balance of the current fiscal year. Although they are the main business, the Appropriation Ordinances are only part of the work before Council at this session.

There are two other Ordinances:

The Probation Ordinance provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a probation service including the operation of a medium security prison and minimum security camps for offenders in the Northwest Territories.

The Tourist and Travel Ordinance, although relatively simple, is important because it will give the Commissioner authority to regulate the tourist industry, and establish standards for the operators. It is essential that controls be established over sport fishing camps if collapse from overfishing is not to occur in this rapidly developing industry.

There are several Sessional Papers. Some are reports on established programs but others relate to subjects discussed by Council at the last session. There is a paper on wolf bounties as Council requested, and there are interim papers relating to the subsidization of electric power costs in the Northwest Territories and to uniformity in price of fuel oil in the Northwest Territories.

Recommendations to Council now number 10. They range from a Recommendation on the Financing of School Districts in the N.W. T., to a Recommendation regarding a program of Alcohol Education in the Northwest Territories. Three papers are about projects pertaining to the Centennial. Three others concern recommendations regarding the administration of the Territorial Liquor System. A complete list of the proposed legislation, of the Sessional papers and Recommendations to Council has been prepared and distributed to members together with copies of all these papers.

We are indebted to the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honourable Alan Macnaughton, for the use of this conference room in the historic West Block for our session. The Honourable Gentleman expressed the view that, as a legislative body in its own right, the Territorial Council should be provided with a suitable Chamber for its deliberations. I have a special satisfaction in convening this session of the Council of the Northwest Territories on Parliament Hill in the shadow of the Peace Tower.

Let us turn to the business before us.