



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

4th Session

10th Assembly

HANSARD
Official Report
DAY 1

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1985

Pages 1 to 15

Speaker: The Honourable Donald M. Stewart, M.L.A.

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1985

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Angottitauruq, Mr. Appaqaq, Mr. Arlooktoo, Mr. Ballantyne, Hon. Tom Butters, Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Hon. Tagak Curley, Mr. Erkloo, Mr. Gargan, Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. MacQuarrie, Mr. McCallum, Hon. Bruce McLaughlin, Hon. Richard Nerysoo, Hon. Dennis Patterson, Mr. Pedersen, Mr. Richard, Hon. Nick Sibbeston, Hon. Don Stewart, Mr. Wah-Shee, Hon. Gordon Wray

SPEAKER (Hon. Don Stewart): Rev. Short, would you lead us in prayer, please?

ITEM 1: PRAYER

REV. PETER SHORT: Let us pray. O Lord, by whose Spirit all that has being is sustained, we who have gathered in this House of the people, offer to You and to one another the best efforts of heart and mind and hand. Grant that in this place may be found faithful workers for the treasuring of the planet and for the life and health of the people. We thank You for those who have prepared a way before us and whose efforts have made possible this day. Let all that is said and done here be without selfish motive or regard for personal gain, and grant that compassion, diligence and faithfulness might arbitrate in all our ways, bringing honour to You in the service of Your daughters and sons, the people of this land. Amen.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We will remain standing for "O Canada".

---"O Canada"

Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if the Commissioner is prepared to address this Assembly at this time?

ITEM 2: COMMISSIONER'S ADDRESS

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly: It is my pleasure to welcome you to the fourth session of the 10th Legislative Assembly. There are a number of special guests present today and at the outset I would like to extend my warmest greetings to each of them.

The Hon. David Crombie, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, is present. This is Mr. Crombie's second trip to the Northwest Territories in the last few months. His deep interest and growing understanding of our stage of development and our aspirations for change are greatly appreciated.

We also have a long list of former Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and elected and appointed Members from previous Assemblies with us today. In particular, I would like to greet several of my own predecessors: R. Gordon Robertson served as Commissioner from November 1953 to July 1963; Bent G. Sivertz served from July 1963 to January 1967, and Stuart M. Hodgson, after serving as Deputy for two years, was Commissioner from March 1967 to April 1979. Welcome back, gentlemen.

---Applause

I would also like to recognize the attendance of former Deputy Commissioner Robert S. Pilot who served from November 1979 to April 1984, the present Deputy Commissioner, Mrs. Agnes Semmler, and the many Members of former Assemblies who have decided to join us today. The presence of these men and women who have served so diligently over the years makes this a special occasion indeed.

---Applause

Constitutional And Political Evolution

We would do well to reflect upon the speed at which the Northwest Territories has continued to evolve and progress in a constitutional and political way over the years. In 1951, two years before Gordon Robertson was Commissioner, the Northwest Territories Act was amended to provide, for the first time since 1905, for the inclusion of elected Members on the Council of the Northwest Territories. Three elected Members representing the Mackenzie District joined five of their appointed colleagues on the Council. With the dual responsibilities of Commissioner and Deputy Minister of the newly created department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Gordon Robertson directed the establishment of educational and social services across the North.

In 1960, the practice of drawing Council appointees from the private sector was begun on an ongoing basis. Previously, only senior officers of the federal government were appointed to these positions. This change brought a wealth of experience into the Council and guaranteed that we would continue to have fresh perspectives on the governing of northern Canada.

Ben Sivertz became Commissioner of the Territories in July of 1963 and was the first person to serve on a full-time basis. During his tenure, Mr. Sivertz was responsible for commencing the establishment of a territorial public service.

In 1966, legislation was enacted to create electoral districts in the Eastern Arctic for the first time. In August of that year, Members from that part of the North were elected as Members to Council, including Simonie Michael, the first elected Inuit Member of the territorial Council.

Stuart Hodgson was appointed Commissioner of the NWT in March of 1967. Mr. Hodgson was responsible for preparations leading up to the move of the territorial government to the North, and the establishing of administrations, first in the West and then in the Eastern Arctic. Under his leadership the Councils of the day took important steps toward responsible government, and the people across the North became aware of and active in governmental advancement and change.

The terms of the last Members to be appointed to the territorial Council ended in January of 1975. From that point onward the Council, now known as the Legislative Assembly, has been composed of elected Members, with a Speaker chosen by the Members. Today we have a Legislature of 24 persons. Its Members elect eight of their number to form an Executive, or cabinet, one of whom, the Hon. Richard Nerysoo, serves as Government Leader. In looking back over the last 34 years, I congratulate our predecessors for their dedication, tremendous services and determination in bringing the NWT to the point at which it stands today.

Land Claims And Division Of The Territories

This Assembly commenced its second year in January 1985. There is a likelihood that two important issues will be advanced substantially in the coming months. Land claims undoubtedly will continue to be actively pursued in 1985, and 1984 saw a significant step being taken with the signing of the Western Arctic Settlement Act. To the 2500 Inuvialuit living in the Beaufort Sea coastal region, the Act will ensure that they maintain essential control over their lands and any development that takes place upon them. The upcoming year hopefully will see similar progress being made by the Dene and Metis throughout the Mackenzie Valley and by the Inuit of Nunavut.

Division of the Territories has been a topic of major focus in the North for several years now. Just three weeks ago a significant hurdle was cleared with a preliminary framework for a boundary agreement being established. Deciding upon a border that suits the needs and aspirations of all residents will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the most complex issues ever faced by northerners. The ultimate settlement will be a tribute to the spirit of co-operation and integrity with which all parties have carried out these negotiations.

At this session the Minister of Finance will table the 1985-86 budget for this government. Along with the political gains mentioned earlier, the government will also be entering a new era of fiscal responsibility in 1985 with the introduction of formula financing. The Executive Council will now be able to move with greater confidence in establishing spending priorities on a somewhat longer-term basis than had previously been the case.

Major Priority Directions For 1985-86

The past year has been a busy one for the Executive Council as it worked many long hours in establishing a comprehensive priority framework to work within over the next three years. The creation of employment opportunities has emerged as one of the major policy thrusts of my Executive. Hand in hand with this priority goes the recognition that a strong, diversified territorial economy is an essential goal of this government. The Executive intends to further its efforts in strengthening existing businesses and fostering the development of new industries in the North.

Closely tied to economic development is the policy of this Executive to improve the levels and availability of education to our residents throughout the North. My government firmly believes that the education of our youth and the training of our adults is essential if we expect to share in the benefits brought about by economic development.

In response to the initial findings of the special legislative committee on housing, the Executive Council has also made a significant priority commitment to improving the serious housing situation in the NWT. Higher levels of construction, programs to encourage home-ownership, and improved maintenance capabilities all figure prominently in this government's plans for the upcoming year.

The Executive Council has chosen wisely in determining these major priority directions for 1985-86. It is an economic fact of life that we are never able to do as much as we would like to do in all of the areas that deserve attention. Limited funding levels always put an upper limit on the type of services that can be provided. However, I believe that the choices made by the Executive are the best possible given the financial constraints that we are inevitably forced to live within. All of these directions have my complete support.

Passing Of Distinguished Northerners

Several well-loved and respected citizens of the NWT have passed away since our last session, and I ask this House to join with me in honouring the memory of their lives among us. Friends, family and colleagues from Eskimo Point and across the North were deeply saddened by the death of Joe Curley on November 19. Born in Repulse Bay in 1908, Mr. Curley spent most of his life hunting and trapping, and was an influential and highly respected member of his community. He is survived by a large family, including one of his sons, the Hon. Tagak Curley, MLA for Aivilik and Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Dr. Jack Hildes of Winnipeg died on November 28 after a long bout with cancer. Dr. Hildes was known by many northerners for his kindness and dedication to improving health services in the Keewatin. In 1983 Dr. Hildes received the Commissioner's Award for public service at the highest level in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to bettering the quality of life in the North.

A respected member of the Aklavik community, Joseph Illisiak, passed away in November at the age of 83. Mr. Illisiak was a trapper in the Mackenzie Delta for most of his life and an elder in the Anglican Church.

Mrs. Alice Hardy from Fort Norman died on December 30 at the age of 72. Over the last 20 years Mrs. Hardy was a strong supporter of the continued development of native arts and crafts. She was also active in the Native Women's Association and served as a member of the Commissioner's Awards committee from December 1967 to January 1979.

We join the people of Fort Resolution in their sorrow over the passing of their oldest and one of their most respected residents, Antoine Beaulieu, who died January 20 at the grand age of 108 years. Mr. Beaulieu was born at Salt River and moved to Fort Resolution in 1940. He was a hunter and a trapper, well-known for his strength and bravery.

Just three days ago, a respected former Member of this House, Robert Porritt of Hay River and Fort Resolution, died as a result of a stroke at the age of 80. Mr. Porritt was first elected in 1954 and served for a total of three terms. He had hoped to be present today to visit with his former colleagues. His dedicated service to the House and to the communities south of Great Slave Lake were greatly appreciated.

Commissioner's Awards

Through the medium of Commissioner's Awards, persons offering outstanding public service and those who perform acts of bravery can be recognized. I am pleased to announce awards to the following persons. Dr. Otto Schaefer of Edmonton is to receive the Commissioner's Award at the highest level in recognition of his outstanding contribution to improving the health and nutrition of native northerners over the last 30 years. From 1964 until his retirement last year, Dr. Schaefer served as director of the Northern Medical Research Unit. As a valued member of the NWT Water Board, Dr. Schaefer also brought his medical expertise to bear on environmental and occupational health concerns in the North.

I am pleased to announce that Mr. Hugh Feagan is also to be recognized at the highest level for his years of outstanding public service with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Presently Chief Superintendent of "G" Division, Mr. Feagan will be retiring in April of this year. Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Feagan has won respect and admiration not only for his dedication to law enforcement in the North, but also for the role he has played in rekindling a spirit of community service within the RCMP. As well, Mr. Feagan has served St. John Ambulance in first aid at every level and as a hard-working and dedicated officer within the organization wherever he has been posted in Canada.

Mr. Dan O'Neill of Cambridge Bay is being recognized at the highest level for rescuing an unconscious man from the burning Fort Franklin Co-op store last April. With total disregard for his own safety, Mr. O'Neill twice entered the smoke-filled building to make sure that no one remained trapped in the blaze.

In November 1984, Denise Drybones of Rae attempted to enter a burning home to rescue its three sleeping occupants. Unfortunately, along with the occupants, she perished in the fire, and for this brave act she is being recognized posthumously at the second level.

At the time of presentation of these awards, much more will be said about these people.

Turning now to the upcoming year, 1985 will mark the celebration of two special occasions in Canada. First, this year marks the centennial of the establishment of the National Parks system. In the Northwest Territories we are fortunate to have world class examples of parks which so well represent the beauty of our natural heritage. Second, 1985 has been proclaimed by the United Nations to be the International Year of the Youth. The NWT will participate through several initiatives to be announced by the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Government Programs And Policies

It is not my intention now to review the accomplishments of my government over the past year, nor to outline in detail future plans and priorities. You will be considering closely the activities of each government department during this budget session and these discussions will be led by the appropriate Minister. I will take this opportunity, however, to bring to your attention some events and new projects that will affect the residents of the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Local Government will continue its efforts to develop strong local government and regional councils. Plans to provide recreational facilities and much needed residential lots in many northern communities reflect the priorities established by the Executive Council.

An alcohol and drug education program prepared with extensive community involvement, a new NWT health education program developed jointly with the Department of Health, and a program for children with special needs all figure prominently in the Department of Education's plans for 1985. The adult education and Arctic College programs will also receive increased attention.

The Department of Health and Social Services will be stepping up its efforts to reduce the alarmingly high rate of smoking in the Northwest Territories. The department also expects to be tendering for the construction of the new Stanton Yellowknife Hospital this spring. In the area of social services, the new Baffin Correctional Centre will be fully operational by October. Studies of methods by which our handicapped and senior citizens can be better served will also be undertaken. The task force on spousal assault will soon have completed its travel and consultations in communities across the North. It is expected that a preliminary report will be presented at this session. It will serve as a guide for the development of a co-ordinated and effective strategy to deal with this problem.

As mentioned earlier, housing is a major priority of this government. As a result, the NWT Housing Corporation's budget will be increased by 18 per cent to \$54 million in 1985. I am pleased to announce that construction will soon begin on a two million dollar senior citizens complex in Rae-Edzo. It is an excellent example of how a model facility can result when a community becomes involved in a project from the very beginning.

The Department of Personnel will soon begin to implement this government's affirmative action policy. It will first be directed toward native employment and then be expanded to include women and the handicapped. I believe that this policy will go a long way toward making the territorial government more representative of the people it serves.

At this session, the Minister of Government Services will be speaking about two subjects of considerable interest to northerners: the sale of the Northern Transportation Company Limited and the revised business incentive policy.

In the coming year the Department of Renewable Resources will be placing increased emphasis on strengthening the renewable resource sector of our economy. Funding levels for hunters and trappers associations and outpost camp programs will be increased significantly.

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism will also be introducing programs to strengthen the territorial economy. Entrepreneurial training, a comprehensive arts and crafts strategy, and a venture capital fund will all be programs undertaken in 1985. Construction of the NWT pavilion for Expo '86 will begin this summer in Vancouver.

Proposed Legislation

During this session a legislative program of 10 bills will be introduced for your consideration. Amendments to the following ordinances will be advanced: Public Service, Young Offenders, Council Retiring Allowances, Interpretation, and Workers' Compensation. Four financial bills will be presented: Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance, No. 3, 1984-85; Appropriation Ordinance, 1985-86; Financial Agreement Ordinance, 1985; and Loan Authorization Ordinance, No. 1, 1985-86. A new Council Ordinance will be introduced. My Ministers consider these bills essential to the good conduct of government business and I recommend the passage of each one of them.

In recognition of our advancing constitutional position as a government, and in line with usual Canadian practice, the Government Leader will outline a proposed change in the style of naming our legislation in a statement to this House to be made shortly.

I now commend to you for your earnest consideration and wise judgment the business of this House as I declare open the fourth session of the 10th Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. A Speaker gets very little opportunity to speak so today I am going to enjoy myself because among the gallery we have many old friends. It is a privilege and an honour today to recognize so many distinguished guests in the Speaker's gallery but you will just have to wait to meet most of them until later in the proceedings when we make presentations. I would at this time, however, like to recognize the Hon. David Crombie, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. Welcome Mr. and Mrs. Crombie.

---Applause

We have received many telegrams and letters of congratulations from various other legislatures across Canada today. Some of these notes might lead you to believe that these quarters will be the permanent headquarters of this government. I would like to make it abundantly clear that although we are pleased with our improved surroundings, this is a temporary home until such time as a proper legislative building can be supplied and we trust, Mr. Minister, that within the next five years we might have some word on when that might be done.

---Laughter

Tribute To Former Members

On the opening of such a building, the North will have truly come of age and become a fully accredited member of our Confederation. Today in our gallery are many past Members of the Northwest Territories Council or Assembly as some of the newer Members refer to our association. I thought I might point out to some of our elected Members, if they really want to have a good look at the appointed Members, that there really aren't any of them with two or three heads. The appointed Members are very much like all of us and over the years have had to take, on several occasions, the brunt of a few rather severe remarks and they were not able to protect themselves inasmuch as they were not here. So I intend to do that for them today.

It may be worth noting that in twenty-some years of public life I have never found any reason to believe that a person's intelligence, abilities or dedication were increased or decreased by the process of appointment or by election. To those appointed, the Commissioners, the Deputy Commissioners, the Clerks and to the appointed Members, thank you. We could not have reached the point of self-determination that we enjoy today if you had not legislated change, especially change in the number of Members elected to this House.

---Applause

You literally voted yourselves out of existence when your job was done. We miss you, we thank you for a well-done job. To the elected Members, you ran, you won, you served. We could ask no more of any person. Thank you.

---Applause

As mentioned by Commissioner Parker, I also note with regret the passing of Bobby Porritt, a good friend and a long serving Member of this House. I am sure Members will join with me in passing on our condolences to Mr. Porritt's family and many friends. It is my understanding that the funeral of Mr. Porritt will be held in Hay River on Friday afternoon at 3:00 and transportation will be made available to Members wishing to attend.

It has been pointed out to me that on this day in 1865 the Hon. J.A. Macdonald opened the confederation debate in the Legislative Assembly of Canada. It may well be that this fourth session of the 10th Assembly of the Northwest Territories may be debating similar matters in regard to the Northwest Territories development in this session. It is hard to believe but this year, 1985, is the 10th year of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly being fully elected. Happy anniversary. Thank you.

To the orders of the day, Item 3, Members' replies. Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' REPLIES

Motion Of Appreciation

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move a motion of appreciation to the Commissioner's Address.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nerysoo. Mr. Butters.

Motion Of Appreciation Seconded

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to second the motion of appreciation just made by my colleague, the Hon. Richard Nerysoo.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the day, Item 4, Ministers' statements. Item 5, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 5: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 1-85(1): Interpretation Act

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 1-85(1), An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Nerysoo.

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 2-85(1): Public Service Act

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 2-85(1), An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Any further notices of motion? Mr. Wray.

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 3-85(1): Workers' Compensation Act

HON. GORDON WRAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 3-85(1), An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Butters.

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 7-85(1): Appropriation Act, 1985-86

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 7-85(1), An Act Respecting Expenditures for the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending the 31st Day of March, 1986, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Butters.

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 8-85(1): Financial Agreement Act, 1985

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 8-85(1), An Act Respecting a Financial Agreement Between the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada, be read for the first time.

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 9-85(1): Loan Authorization Act, No. 1, 1985-86

While I am on my feet, if I may give notice to the next two bills, Mr. Speaker, I would give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 9-85(1), An Act to Authorize the Commissioner to Borrow Funds and Make Loans to Municipalities in the Northwest Territories During the Financial Year 1985-86, be read for the first time.

Notice Of Motion For First Reading Of Bill 10-85(1): Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1984-85

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 8th, 1985, I shall move that Bill 10-85(1), An Act Respecting Additional Expenditures for the Public Service for the 1984-85 Financial Year, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Notices. Last call, notices.

Item 6, tabling of documents.

Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to tabling of documents, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent to go back to an item. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Proceed, Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 6: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Tabled Document 1-85(1), Government of the Northwest Territories 1984 Annual Report.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Mr. Patterson.

HON. DENNIS PATTERSON: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Tabled Document 2-85(1), Self-Government for Northern Peoples: Canada and the Circumpolar Story, A Report to the Government of the Northwest Territories, prepared by Peter Jull. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Tabling of documents.

Item 7, oral questions.

Item 8, written questions.

Item 9, returns.

Item 10, petitions.

Item 11, reports of standing and special committees.

Item 12, notices of motion.

Item 13, motions.

Item 14, first reading of bills. Mr. Wray.

HON. GORDON WRAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent for Bill 3-85(1).

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent being requested for first reading of Bill 3-85(1). Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Proceed, Mr. Wray.

ITEM 14: FIRST READING OF BILLS

First Reading Of Bill 3-85(1): Workers' Compensation Act

HON. GORDON WRAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Pine Point, that Bill 3-85(1), An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. First reading of bills. Bill 3-85(1) has had first reading. Are there any further first reading of bills? Mr. Butters.

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move first reading of Bill 7-85(1), Appropriation Act, 1985-86.

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent for first reading of Bill 7-85(1). Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Proceed, Mr. Butters.

First Reading Of Bill 7-85(1): Appropriation Act, 1985-86

HON. TOM BUTTERS: Bill 7-85(1), An Act Respecting Expenditures for the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending the 31st Day of March, 1986, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: First reading of bills.

Item 15, second reading of bills. Nobody going to take a chance today?

Item 16, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. It is my understanding that unanimous consent has been requested to have the Minister of Indian Affairs, the Hon. David Crombie, address the Assembly in committee of the whole. Is this agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any nays?

ITEM 16: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

We will resolve into committee of the whole with Mr. Wah-Shee in the chair.

PROCEEDINGS IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER ADDRESS BY THE HON. DAVID CROMBIE TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wah-Shee): Committee will now come to order. Does the committee agree that we are now ready to hear from the Minister?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wah-Shee): Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please request the Minister's appearance?

Address By Hon. David Crombie To The Legislative Assembly

HON. DAVID CROMBIE: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Assembly, distinguished guests, friends from both North and South of Sixty and peoples of the NWT: I want to thank you, first of all, very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I bring with me the greetings of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. He has had a life-long special interest in Canada's North and Canada's northerners and I have been asked to make sure, by him, that I convey to you his best wishes.

(Inuktitut translation) Greetings to all the people of the Northwest Territories.

(Slavey/Dogrib translation) Greetings to all the people of the Northwest Territories.

(French Translation) Greetings to all the people of the Northwest Territories.

I am very pleased to be able to join you in celebrating another milestone in your history, the opening of the new chambers of this Assembly. You have moved strongly to create a fully-elected Assembly, representing all regions and all peoples of the NWT. In all of Canada, the development of new democratic institutions has never been so full or so rapid. Your institutions are well-grounded in the maturity and experience of people from all walks of life. Your devotion to high principle and village detail, your respect and reconciliation of regions and peoples of many cultures, your co-operation for common goals are your gift and your example from the North to all of Canada.

History has moved swiftly in recent times. Just 25 years ago, John Diefenbaker gave Canada his vision of the North. Soon afterwards he became the first incumbent Prime Minister to visit the NWT. It was 20 years ago that his government prepared a bill for Parliament to change the NWT into a Mackenzie territory and an eastern Nunassiat territory. Mr. Diefenbaker's Ministers of the day, Alvin Hamilton and the late Walter Dinsdale, saw clearly that government and administration in these Territories must grow from the experience of those it serves. They realized that people with long and rich pasts must not be asked to abandon their identities to suit Ottawa mandates or official convenience, and they realized the needs of new people and new communities must be met.

Native Leaders And Elected Officials In Forums

You too have taken a far-sighted approach in a creative political process. Unlike the experience in southern Canada, here in the North, discussions and planning for constitutional development have included native peoples. Indeed, the original peoples of the Territories have shown the same leadership in this process that they have shown in the First Ministers' Conferences on Aboriginal Rights in Ottawa. Your two constitutional forums are unique, bringing together your elected officials with leaders of the native peoples to explore and secure social and political consensus on constitutional development. This is a major precedent. Peoples and governments in Alaska, in northern Europe and elsewhere are watching your developments with great interest. The result is that native peoples participate in public government with their fellow citizens as one vehicle to realize their aspirations and to protect their collective identity and future. And in developing government to accommodate their diversity they have ensured wider powers and wider opportunities for all northern residents, native and non-native alike.

Four years ago, a special committee of your Assembly reported that the manner in which the Territories were defined was not supported by most of its people. In the plebiscite of April 1982, a majority of voters across the Territories supported division. The Legislative Assembly accepted the results without a single opposing vote. Less than just a month ago, the Western and Nunavut Constitutional Forums reached consensus on the most acceptable process for defining the boundaries of the two new territories. It is in this context of this recent history that we have heard your clear, eloquent, firm and innovative call for fundamental change in your democratic institutions. The call has come from Members of the Assembly, leaders of Dene, Inuvialuit, Inuit and Metis institutions, your Members of Parliament, and the Executive Council of your government.

Acceptance That Division Is Desirable

Today, as part of the dedication of these chambers, I want to add to this historic moment to respond and to accept the wishes of the people of the Territories.

---Applause

I accept your own wisdom that the division of the Territories is desirable. The people of the Eastern Arctic have been thoroughly committed to creation of a Nunavut territory for many years. The broad base of support for their dream cuts across region, party and cultural boundaries. There is a recognition of the sincerity and intensity of the drive to make Nunavut a political reality. From the outset a member group of this Nunavut dream has been the Inuvialuit in the Beaufort Sea region and one of their political goals has been a new constitutional arrangement that reflects the desire of their communities for a regional government.

The people of the West have also their dream. A constitution that both guarantees the political voice of its aboriginal people and one that hastens the transfer from Ottawa of emerging provincial powers. Understandably, the people of the Eastern Arctic share this desire to achieve greater authority in relation to provincial concerns.

There has been elaborate consultation by the people with the people. There seems to be consensus that the boundary process which is being followed is both practical and sensible. I find and my government finds the logic of the decision compelling. The integrity of the Inuvialuit claims area is protected, as is that of the Mackenzie corridor, and I am confident that the Government of the Northwest Territories will be able to accommodate the wishes of the border communities.

The time for change has come. There is every reason to move ahead, and there are no reasons to hold back. The only significant question left to ask, it seems to me, is how and when these stunning challenges should take place. Your leaders have asked that when division occurs, the

transfer of power will be done in a manner which ensures the smooth and continuous flow of public services. I agree. In addition, the security of territorial government employees should not be jeopardized. Social stability must be protected. No disruption of the economic or administrative patterns of the western territory should occur.

Task Of Development Of Constitutions

Many hands will be required for the work of building Nunavut. The implementation of Nunavut will require the effort of individuals, agencies, and non-governmental groups. We will rely heavily on advice from the Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Nunavut Constitutional Forum. Thomas Suluk, Member of Parliament for Nunatsiak and a long-time advocate of Nunavut, has offered to play an active role in the process of implementation.

Creation of Nunavut will require close examination of the public services and administrative capacity currently in place in the Eastern Arctic. Careful planning will be necessary to balance the need to upgrade these services and capacity with the financial limitations now facing the federal government.

The task of developing a constitution for the new western territory is an exciting and an inspiring one. The work of the Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Western Constitutional Forum will continue to have the strong support of the Government of Canada. And I know that the West will be able to count on the able and thoughtful assistance of their Member of Parliament, Dave Nickerson, in their efforts.

Projected Date For Division

I believe it to be the common resolve of all of us, that the Parliament of Canada transform the Northwest Territories into two new territories by the expiry of the current term of the Legislative Assembly in 1987. These territories will be equipped with constitutions tailor-made to achieve the objective we all share: strong, responsible, northern governments that capture and reflect the unique social values and economic realities on which they will be built.

I recognize the need of the Inuvialuit for satisfactory arrangements for their communities and understand the forum will attempt to accommodate the wishes of the Inuvialuit in working out the principles for sufficient regional autonomy. And, of course, safeguarding the interests of the Dene and Metis people is a matter of the greatest fundamental importance. We are prepared to consider any proposals which will harmoniously balance the aboriginal rights of these people and the individual rights of all. And all Canadians, all northerners, be they first northerners or northerners by choice, must be able to rely on the basic fundamental rights and freedoms which the Canadian political tradition guarantees them.

These issues must have bold and creative resolution. You may want to explore the creation of special institutions charged with protection of aboriginal interests, the structuring of electoral representation to ensure the strength of community identity and allegiance, the entrenchment of strong roles for local and regional levels of government, mechanisms for a high degree of democracy, and the retention of the option of aboriginal communities to benefit from any constitutional change regarding self-government. The range of options is wide, and it is subject only to the bounds of our imagination and the rich opportunities of Canada's political traditions.

Land Claims Settlement Not A Pre-Condition

I do not see the settlement of the claims of any aboriginal people as a pre-condition to significant constitutional development. At the same time, I think it is obvious that we cannot permit constitutional development which would prejudice those claims. Neither can we support territorial government powers in respect of natural resources unless the rights and interests of aboriginal peoples have been adequately protected.

Resource Revenues

I know you regard the question of resources as an extremely important one. The peoples of the North have made wise use of their resources in the past and they do so today. It is not acceptable that they should be denied a voice in the use of minerals, oil and gas. And I intend to seek the support of my cabinet colleagues to start discussions in this regard with territorial governments.

These discussions could lead to joint federal/territorial natural resource management and the sharing of revenues derived from development. There are some notable Canadian precedents, including agreements with Atlantic provinces concerning offshore resources. I look forward to exploring the interesting proposal, your proposal, that resource revenues be pooled and shared across territorial boundaries and I accept, as you suggest, the participation of aboriginal groups in these discussions on resource management and revenue.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the first time that I, as a representative of the federal government, have spoken on northern political development. I hope that I have been clear. We want to have an end to uncertainty which dampens economic growth. We want fairness, we want respect for aboriginal tradition and the cherishing and recognition of ancestral homelands. We want to respond to requests of your elected leaders.

As I have spoken these words I find myself humbled by the history of the moment. In making maps and making laws, in discussing traditions and rights, we are giving a shape and a direction to the life of this land forever after us. It is essential that we are guided by our best motives and our clearest judgment. The new North cannot be born in pettiness, or so it will live. It cannot be shaped in mere self-interest or it will become mean-minded. It must be open to the widest possible future because the children of the people who made this land, both long ago and in recent challenge, deserve all of that. Thank you for listening to my words.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wah-Shee): On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the Minister for his address and I would like to compliment him on his knowledge of the aboriginal language.

---Laughter

The committee has heard from the Minister and do you agree that the matter is now concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Wah-Shee): I will then rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Wah-Shee.

ITEM 17: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF ADDRESS BY THE HON. DAVID CROMBIE TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MR. WAH-SHEE: Mr. Speaker, your committee has heard an address from the Hon. David Crombie, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and wish to report this matter concluded.

Motion To Accept Report Of Committee Of The Whole, Carried

Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The committee has heard the report. Are you agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Before I call for orders of the day, I would like to make presentations. Pardon me, Mr. Nerysoo.

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to Ministers' statements.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any nays? Proceed, Mr. Nerysoo.

ITEM 4: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement On Address By Hon. David Crombie

HON. RICHARD NERYSOO: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege on behalf of the Executive Council of the Northwest Territories to welcome the Hon. David Crombie, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to this House today. I would also like to extend to all our other guests, especially those who had to travel to Yellowknife, greetings and a warm welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that like me, everyone else here today must have a feeling of history being made in their presence. The speech of the Minister has addressed the current issues of great importance to the Northwest Territories. I am referring, of course, to the question of the establishment of Nunavut, the determination of the composition and constitution of the western territory, constitutional evolution of the Territories toward full responsible government, the settlement of claims of aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories and the question of sharing the revenues from resources of the Territories. Mr. Speaker, as all residents of the Northwest Territories know, these issues are of fundamental importance to us. The Minister, Mr. Speaker, is to be congratulated for making a clear statement on each of those issues. As elected leaders of the Northwest Territories, it makes our task so much easier knowing the view of the Government of Canada on these issues.

On our part, we want to assure the Minister that the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to pursue these issues and will lend full support to the Minister as he deals with his government on those issues. Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in nation building today and we must not minimize the importance of it. This is probably the last frontier of Canada where such issues will arise and where solutions will have to be found that are suitable to the unique conditions of the Northwest Territories. We are a people with a long history. Our population is made up of aboriginal peoples who have been here for thousands of years and of people who, in historical terms, have arrived here recently. Any solutions proposed for the Territories must recognize the multicultural make-up of the Northwest Territories and protect and provide for the aspirations of residents of all races. I am confident that with the guidance and wisdom that this House can provide, your government will continue to pursue those aims and aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to address the former Members of the Legislative Assembly, former Commissioners and other special guests, among whom I could not overlook former Members of Parliament that are present here today. I hope that in viewing the proceedings today and in subsequent days they will go home with a feeling of satisfaction and pride that democratic institutions in the Northwest Territories are alive and well.

Mr. Speaker, we are going through, and have been going through a constitutional evolution which by its very nature may at times appear to be slow and frustrating. However, it ensures that the progress that it makes is progress that is built on a solid foundation not to be shaken off or destroyed at the first storm that it encounters. Mr. Speaker, the seeds of this constitutional evolution were sown by our guests today and their predecessors. We, therefore, owe them a debt of gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to thank the Hon. David Crombie for appearing before the Legislative Assembly in its new premises and giving us his views. I hope that our new premises will be the centre of several more historical occasions as we continue our constitutional march toward full and responsible government. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Nerysoo. I would like to take this opportunity of recognizing in the gallery, Mr. Suluk and Mr. Nickerson. I apologize for not doing that previously but Mr. Nickerson is such a familiar figure around here doing his job all the time that he just fits with the furniture.

---Laughter

---Applause

We also have with us today, Senator Willie Adams.

---Applause

Before I call for the orders of the day, I would like to make a presentation of commemorative medallions to our special guests. The Clerk will call the names and I would be obliged if you would come forward to be met by the Government Leader, Mr. Nerysoo and Mr. Butters, for the presentation. After the presentation, Members may proceed to the Members' lounge or may return to their seats for the close of the session. Do I have unanimous consent to allow our guests inside the ropes?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very kindly. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Stuart M. Hodgson, Ben G. Sivertz, R. Gordon Robertson, John H. Parker, Agnes Semmler, Robert S. Pilot, Abe Okpik, E.J. Scottie Gall, Dennis M. Coolican, Air Marshal Hugh Campbell, Lloyd I. Barber, J. Gordon Gibson, Frank Vallee, Louis A. Desrochers, Pierre Genest, Louis Hamelin, Senator Willie Adams, Ipeelee Kilabuk, Simonie Michael, David Nickerson, Lena Pedersen, Mark Evaluarjuk, George Braden, Peter Fraser, William Lyall, Peter Ernerk, David H. Searle, Ayliffe Pat Carey, James Arreak, Robert N. Harvey, James Rabesca, William Noah, Kane Tologanak, Richard Whitford, Bryan S. Pearson, John Parker.

MR. SPEAKER: I notice that we have another parliamentarian with us. I would like to recognize Barry Turner, MP, Member for Ottawa.

---Applause

Call the House back to order. Are there any announcements, Mr. Clerk?

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Announcements, Mr. Speaker. There will be a meeting of the standing committee on finance and public accounts tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. in the caucus room.

ITEM 18: ORDERS OF THE DAY

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 7th at 1:00 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Members' Replies
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Oral Questions
5. Written Questions
6. Returns
7. Petitions
8. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
9. Tabling of Documents
10. Notices of Motion
11. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
12. Motions
13. First Reading of Bills

14. Second Reading of Bills

15. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

16. Report of Committee of the Whole

17. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Thursday, February 7th.

---ADJOURNMENT

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Publications Clerk, Department of Information,
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\$1.00 per day; \$30.00 for 1st session, \$20.00 for 2nd and 3rd session; or \$50.00 per year
Published under the Authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
of the Northwest Territories