

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
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REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TO: Commissioner and Council of the
Northwest Territories

FROM: The Standing Committee on Finance

Introduction

On the 10th of November, 1969, when the Honourable Jean Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs & Northern Development, addressed the Council of the Northwest Territories, he announced his intention to create "between now and the January Session" a Standing Committee on Finance. In December, 1969, the Commissioner announced the appointment of the following six (6) persons to this standing committee:

Mark Fairbrother	- Member
Simonie Michael	- Member
John H. Parker	- Member
Clarence Gilchrist	- Member
E. M. R. Cotterill	- Member
David H. Searle	- Chairman

On December 30, 1969, the Standing Committee on Finance held its first meeting at Yellowknife with all members in attendance except Mr. Simonie Michael who was unable to be present. It was agreed at this meeting that the Committee should make a report to the January Session of Council which report should deal generally with the Committee's feelings regarding its terms of reference, recommendations generally and the 1970 - 71 estimates in particular.

1970 - 71 Estimates

As to the 1970 - 71 estimates which Council will be considering this Session, the Committee only very briefly reviewed these and cannot purport to have had any input into their preparation due obviously to the timing of the Minister's announcement, the date of the Committee's appointment, on the one hand, and the lead time necessary in preparing the estimates, on the other hand. This will not be the case, however, with the Supplementary Estimates for the June Session nor the Main Estimates for 1971 - 72.

Terms of Reference

Regarding the Committee's terms of reference, the Committee recommends:

- (a) that the Standing Committee on Finance should consider all financial matters affecting the Government of the Northwest Territories which are referred to it for advice by the Commissioner;

- (b) that the Committee would expect and hope that such matters to be referred to it would include the main and supplementary estimates, program planning and the opportunity to make recommendations concerning revenue sources available to the Territorial Government, not just expenditures.

Recommendations Generally

1. The Committee recommends that the following timetable be considered appropriate with regard to the development of Government programs and the determination of the financial requirements of the administration:
- (a) that the administration would begin, in approximately November of each year, to update previous five-year forecasts to correspond with their actual needs for the fiscal year ahead.
 - (b) that the individual members of Council would be invited at the January Session, just after considering the estimates in question, to present to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance their priorities and requirements for expenditures within their ridings to be included in the next Main Estimates. These priorities and requirements should be presented to the Chairman by mid-February on the following basis:
 - (i) specific requests on expenditures and priorities should be made, following which the Committee would recommend to the Commissioner whether these should be included in the current estimates, the five-year forecast, or not at all.
 - (ii) general comments of the members of the Council should also be made regarding, not only their own riding, but the priorities which should exist and the type of Government spending required generally.
 - (c) the Standing Committee on Finance would meet next in early March to consider the five-year forecast that had been prepared by the administration, particularly in relation to the priorities and requirements that had been submitted by members of the Council. In considering these forecasts, the Standing Committee on Finance would then make recommendations to the Commissioner regarding the over-all priorities that should be set by the Territorial Administration for the fiscal year ahead. The Commissioner would hopefully carry this advice with him at the time of his discussions with the Minister in April.

2. The Committee recommends that the Minister meet with the Commissioner in approximately April to review the program of the Territorial Administration at the time when the departmental northern programs are advanced and determined rather than the present practice of the Departmental officers making the initial determination of the funding requirements of the Territorial Government. The Minister then decides how much of this program to support in his discussions with the Treasury Board in relation to the over-all requirements of his Department.

3. The Committee further recommends that in any discussions with the Department of Indian Affairs & Northern Development, or with the Inter-Departmental Committee, this Committee should not be directly involved. It is recommended that this Committee should merely provide the Administration, particularly the members of the Committee who are from the Administration, with guidelines and/or specific goals which should be sought. The Administration then, through the members of this Committee who are from the Administration, would report back to the Standing Committee on Finance with regard to their discussions with the Department of Indian Affairs and other Federal agencies.

4. The Committee further recommends that meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance be held and called at the discretion of the Chairman, though this Committee presently foresees the need for at least four meetings between Sessions as follows:

- (a) approximately early March to consider specific matters which should be included in the program forecast for the fiscal year commencing in 13 months and to begin preliminary discussions and consideration of the balance of the five year forecast.
- (b) approximately May, depending on the Commissioner's Report of his discussions with the Minister of Indian Affairs & Northern Development with regard to the amount of money that the Minister would be prepared to request in his initial submission to the Treasury Board.
- (c) in June, approximately one or two days before the June Session, in order to consider supplementary estimates.
- (d) in September, in order to give final guidelines for the preparation of the estimates that would be presented to Council for their approval in the January Session following.

5. The Committee further recommends that this Council recommend to the Commissioner the establishment of a per diem allowance, plus expenses, for members of the Council serving on all standing committees, not just the Standing Committee on Finance.

6. The Committee further recommends that beginning with the June, 1970 Session of Council, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance chair committees of the whole which are considering estimates or supplementary estimates.

7. The Committee recognizes that in view of the provisions of the Northwest Territories Act, the Committee could only make recommendations to the Commissioner.

8. The Committee approves its present composition, but recommends that in all its deliberations and meetings, the Chairman be allowed to vote on all matters, not just in case of a tie.

9. The Committee further recommends that a quorum should consist of two of its members from the Administration and two of its members from the Council. In case of the illness or absence of the Chairman, the Committee recommends that the Commissioner appoint a Deputy Chairman if and when the illness or absence occurs for the period of same.

Conclusion

The Committee respectfully requests the approval of the Commissioner and Council of the foregoing report, terms of reference and recommendations.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

(Sgn.) David H. Searle, Chairman