

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
7<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 51<sup>ST</sup> SESSION**

**TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 7-51**

**TABLED ON JANUARY 28, 1974**

T.D. 7-51

Tabled on Jan. 08, 1974

REPORT ON COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION  
CANADIAN REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR, OTTAWA, ONTARIO  
NOVEMBER 12 TO 16, 1973

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The Council of the Northwest Territories during its 50th Session named me as its delegate to the First Canadian Regional Parliamentary Seminar organized by the Canadian Main Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was founded in 1911, as the Empire Parliamentary Association and changed its name to the present form in 1948. It is an Association of Commonwealth Parliamentarians, who, irrespective of race, religion, or culture, are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and the rights and freedoms of the individual citizens and by pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. The Association exists to promote understanding and cooperation between Commonwealth Parliamentarians and respect for Parliamentary Institutions. It pursues these objectives by organizing annual Commonwealth and Regional Conferences and the interchange of parliamentary delegations.

The Association is composed of main, state, provincial, and auxiliary branches throughout the Commonwealth totalling about 100. In Canada, branches have been formed in each provincial

legislature and in the Senate and House of Commons. Neither the Yukon nor the Northwest Territories Council has to date formed a branch of the Association. The Members of any legislature in the Commonwealth in which a branch is formed are entitled to become Members of that branch.

The Canadian Main Branch of the Association decided to sponsor a Procedural Seminar with the intention of repeating it on a bi-annual or perhaps annual basis because at present attendance limitations enable only one or two Canadians to attend the Procedural Seminar hosted annually by the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It was felt by the Canadian Branch that many more Members would appreciate an opportunity to take advantage of such a seminar.

The objective of the seminar was to enable Members from all Canadian legislatures to become better informed about the underlying principals and details of parliamentary procedure and methods of conducting parliamentary business now in effect in Canada.

Representatives of the Senate, the House of Commons, all provincial legislatures and the Councils of both Territories attended the Seminar. Nearly all provinces were represented by a three-member delegation which, except in the cases of Ontario and Prince Edward Island, included either the Speaker or Deputy Speaker, and in some cases both of these officers. The Federal delegation, representing both the Senate and the House of Commons, consisted of eleven persons. In addition, the Speaker

and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the Senate were present from time to time.

In preparation for this Seminar each provincial legislature and the two Federal Houses were asked to provide answers to a 121 item questionnaire. An analysis of the replies received, which was prepared by officers of the Canadian Main Branch of the Association, formed the basis of all discussions during the Seminar. Each delegate received, in addition to copies of the analysis, copies of the replies submitted by each Province. The available time was divided into a number of portions, each one devoted to the discussion of a particular section of the subject matter. Each section or division was presided over by a Seminar Leader who in most cases was a Member of the House of Commons who had specialized in that particular area. The Seminar Leaders included representatives of all political parties. Among the subject areas discussed by delegates were the following: -

- General Rules of Debate
- Closure and the Allocation of Time
- Division of Powers - Federal and Provincial
- Broadcasting of Debates
- The Lieutenant-Governor and Opening of Session
- Members - Facilities and Services
- Officers of the House
- Parliamentary Papers
- Questions to Ministers
- Committees
- Financial Procedure
- The Legislative Process
- Private Members' Business and Private Business
- The Speakership

As a result of participation in this Seminar an insight was gained into the methods and procedures employed in specific areas in other legislatures, which may be adaptable to the Council of the Northwest Territories. These included:

The details of procedures dealing with Private Members' Bills. The Rules of Council at present are silent on this matter.

A number of matters relating to the operation of Special and Standing Committees.

The question of whether or not rulings by the Speaker (presiding officer) should be subject to appeal to the House.

The procedures used to ensure expeditious consideration of estimates.

The application of time limits on various phases of business to enable expeditious handling of all matters under consideration.

In summary, attendance at this first Canadian Regional Parliamentary Seminar by a Representative of Territorial Council was a most useful experience which should, I believe, be repeated when the opportunity presents itself. In the broad sense participation was, in my view, beneficial because opportunities were provided: -

To make a general comparison between the procedures employed in a Provincial Legislature and those of Council.

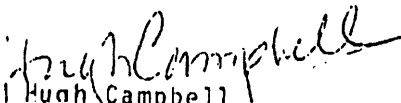
To learn about the means used in Provinces to expedite the business of legislatures and specific procedural problems which have or which may soon be encountered in the Territories.

To meet individual Members and Speakers of other Legislatures and to discuss matters of mutual interest with them.

To assess an organization in operation whose membership is composed of Speakers and Deputy-Speakers, Government and Opposition Members, Front and Back Benchers and Members of all political parties. I should point out that all members participate in the Association's activities on an equal basis without reference to political affiliations or to their particular roles in their respective legislatures.

And, to gain an understanding of the activities and benefits available through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to Members of all Commonwealth Legislatures.

I attach for your information a copy of a pamphlet outlining the aims, organization and activities of the Association and a copy of its constitution.

  
Hugh Campbell  
January 24, 1974