

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
8<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY, 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

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Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
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2 June, 1978.

Mr. Edward Broadbent,  
Leader of the New Democratic  
Party of Canada,  
House of Commons,  
Room G29-3,  
Ottawa, Ontario.  
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Broadbent:

Further to our telephone conversation of June 1, I wish to indicate to you the position of the Northwest Territories' legislature in terms of the amendment to the Northwest Territories Act we are seeking, and to request the support of the New Democratic Party in granting unanimous consent for a "Friday afternoon bill" effecting that amendment.

As I indicated to you by telephone, the amendment we have requested the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to introduce would contain the following two measures:

- (a) A mechanism whereby the legislature would be empowered to set the number of its Members, with a minimum and maximum level of 15 and 25. An Electoral District Boundaries Commission has already been struck to make recommendations to our legislature which would undoubtedly see an increase from the present number of 15.
- (b) A change in the official designation of our legislature from "Council of the Northwest Territories" to "Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories."

These two changes will in no way change the present relationship of our government and legislature to the Federal Government or Parliament, nor do we feel there is any basis to believe these changes will prejudice current

land claims discussions. The increased size will, however, give a much better representation of Northerners in our legislature and will both enhance representative government in the N.W.T. and facilitate the creation of more manageable constituencies, given the vast size of the N.W.T. As for the change in the name of our legislature, we feel that "Council" is both a colonial and anachronistic term, and should be changed to reflect the advances made toward responsible government in the N.W.T. since 1905. (The term "Legislative Assembly" was in use in the old N.W.T. from 1888 to 1905 - before responsible government became a reality).

It seems to our legislature that the changes we are requesting are wholly reasonable, and totally in keeping with the tradition of democratic government in Canada. We cannot understand the reluctance of Mr. Firth to support us to date, but are hopeful that this has only been an unfortunate misunderstanding. I look forward to your favourable response, advising of the support of the New Democratic Party for more representative government in the N.W.T.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
ARNOLD J. MCCALLUM

AIRHART/McCALLUM/var

Arnold J. McCallum, M.L.A.,  
Caucus Chairman.



