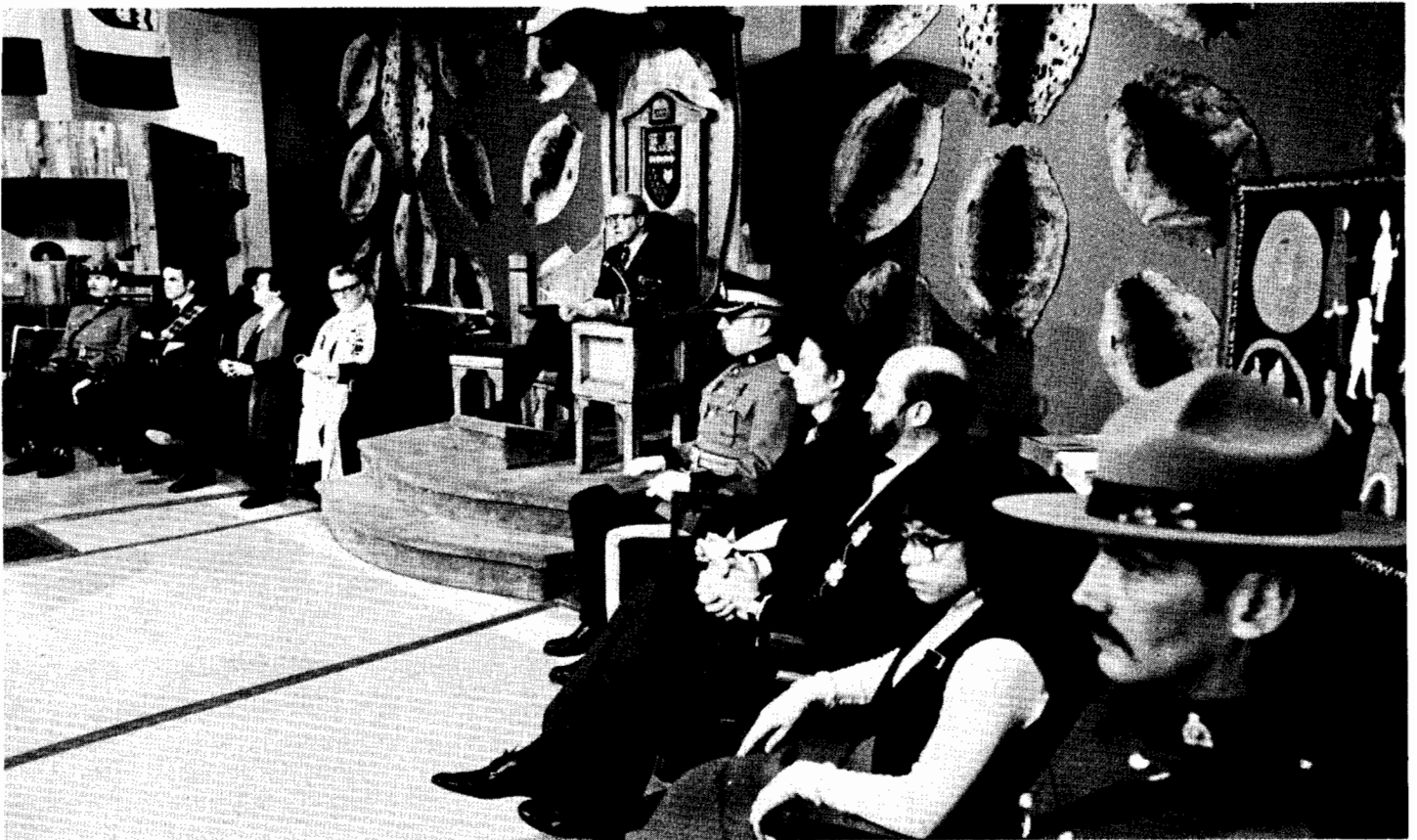


A Procedural Clerk Goes North

Susan Baldwin



Commissioner John Parker's Opening Address, 1983 (*Tessa Macintosh, Department of Information, NWT*)

Most Canadians are raised with the idea that the North is the last great frontier, even though the vast majority of us live close to the American border as if seeking the warmth "down south". I had the opportunity to redefine what "down south" meant when I was seconded to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories for their 1983 "Budget Session". Having lived in Ottawa all my life and spent my entire procedural career in the House of Commons, I arrived in Yellowknife knowing little of either

Susan Baldwin is a Procedural Clerk in the Table Research Branch of the House of Commons. She recently completed a six week secondment to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

the Assembly or the Northwest Territories, but chock full of romantic ideas about our "true North". Let me say immediately that the Northwest Territories are more interesting and exciting than even our best writers or poets can portray.

The Territories are huge: about a third of the total area of Canada with a population of only 46,000 which is predominately native: 33.7% Inuit (Eskimo); 18.5% Dene (Indian); 9.8% Metis (mixed ancestry) and 38% of other extraction. The largest city is Yellowknife, with a population of 9,500. Inuvik is second with 3,147 and Hay River third with 2,863. Much of the population lives in settlements of less than 300 people. The resource industries are mining, hunting, trapping, commercial fishing, petroleum and natu-

ral gas. The secondary industries are tourism and arts and crafts which are world famous. (Needless to say I came home flat broke and wishing I had had the foresight to take more money with me!)

The Legislative Assembly needed another Table Officer since their Clerk, W.H. Remnant, had left in January 1983 to become Clerk of the Manitoba Legislature. The Clerk Assistant, David Hamilton, was appointed Acting Clerk and duly confirmed as Clerk during the session but this still left the Assembly short one Table Officer. David then had the brilliant idea of asking the Clerk of the House of Commons, Dr. C.B. Koester, if the NWT could second one of his procedural staff for the session. Dr. Koester was very pleased with this suggestion and started inquiries as to who was both willing and able to go. My response was a loud chorus of "Me! me! me!" but without any real expectation of being heeded as I knew there were many people senior to me who were indeed willing. Fortunately for me they were unable to go due to ill health, family responsibilities or simply because they were indispensable to the smooth functioning of the House. So I was chosen.

I took the train to Edmonton (a three day trip) and early the next morning flew to Yellowknife where I received a warm reception from the staff of the Assembly. I thought this was quite a trip until I found out the itinerary of Mr. Appaqaq, the member for Sanikiluaq, the riding which includes the islands in Hudson's Bay and James Bay. It took him four days to reach Yellowknife as he had to go from the Belcher Islands, NWT, to Great Whale River, Quebec, to Montreal, to Edmonton, to Yellowknife. And he flew all the way!

Government and Politics in the North

The Assembly has twenty-two members (including two women). There are seven Inuit and five Dene members which comes close to reflecting the population demographics. Until recently, there were no political parties and each member was elected as an independent. The ramifications of this lack of partisan politics are far reaching. Five of the seven cabinet members are selected by secret ballot of all members of the Assembly. The Commissioner appointed them (and two others chosen by the Eastern caucus) to the Executive Committee (or Cabinet). There being no Official Opposition, government policies are opposed on the grounds of the particular issue involved or by the temperament of the individual members (a few questioned almost everything and a few had no comment to make on most issues). The stated goal of the Legislative Assembly is to achieve "consensus government". Even though many members complained this goal was impossible, the Assembly frequently came close to realizing this very idealistic objective in large part because of its small size and its freedom from partisan politics.

The NWT Government and the Assembly are in a state of rapid transition for, as the Drury Commission found: "... at the beginning of the 1960's the Territorial Council was, in effect, little more than a departmental committee and the territorial government was merely an administrative branch of the federal government". The change from a largely appointed Council to a fully elected Assembly has happened in only twenty years.

The Chief Executive Officer is the Commissioner, a federally appointed civil servant who reports to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in Ottawa. The federal govern-

ment has a one year veto over the decisions of the Assembly. It is therefore not surprising that one of the major concerns in the NWT is the attainment of provincial status and its attendant independence in decision-making. The present situation is made more bearable by two factors: first the popularity of the present Commissioner, John Parker, and second the ever increasing responsibility of the Assembly. For instance, while I was there, administrative responsibilities for the departments of Public Works and Information were transferred to two of the members of the Assembly who are ministers, leaving only the Department of Personnel and four of the fourteen Secretaries and Boards under the management of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner.

The Commissioner, under the rules of the Assembly, may sit with the Assembly only while it is in Committee of the Whole, but not while the Speaker is in the Chair. Mr. Parker attended such meetings but usually only spoke in response to questions. Speaker Donald Stewart (Hay River), is keenly aware of the responsibilities of the Speakership and therefore very rarely enters into debate. The only time he did speak was during the debate to change the Rules to prohibit the Commissioner from sitting with the members during Committee of the Whole. He spoke against this motion which was defeated. The Speaker did not sit in Committee of the Whole and he did not vote.

In addition to striving for provincehood, the NWT is preoccupied with dividing the Territories into two separate parts. This division had been a matter of discussion for many years when a plebiscite was held on April 14, 1982. The result was 56.5% in favour of "creating a new territory in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories" with the boundaries unspecified. The eastern Arctic voted more than four to one in favour of division in a 73.5% turnout. The federal government has supported, in principle, the division of the Territories but with several provisos: continued popular support in the Territories for division; the successful or nearly successful resolution of the native land claims; consensus on the boundary; and consensus on the division of powers between the territorial, regional and municipal levels of government.

The discussion of how to resolve these issues is now well underway. The structure of the two formal groups involved is very interesting. Part of the Assembly's contribution is the Special Committee on Division of the Northwest Territories to which every member belongs. The Special Committee's mandate, seems to be mainly technical: which laws will have to be changed, how the civil service will have to respond, what are the necessary transitional steps, etc. I suspect it's role could change significantly if agreement is not reached on the most important decision to be made before division is possible: the boundary. The other major organization is the Constitutional Alliance of the NWT which is really two groups who meet as the Alliance to discuss matters of mutual concern: The Nunavut (or Eastern) Constitutional Forum and the Western Constitutional Forum. The membership of each includes two Members of the Legislative Assembly (one of which was officially designated to represent the interests of the non-native groups) and the leaders of the native organizations (Inuit in the case of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum and Dene and Metis for the Western Constitutional Forum).

The Legislative Assembly has formally accepted the mandate of the Constitutional Alliance to consult the public on political

reform, develop proposals for political development, seek public ratification and then negotiate the outcome with Ottawa. Since the Nunavut Constitutional Forum proposed a boundary which would follow the treeline and run roughly in a north westerly direction from the southern boundary of the NWT on the west side of Hudson Bay to the northern boundary of the Yukon and the Beaufort Sea and the Western Constitutional Alliance has suggested a boundary with a North-South axis, it promises to be a lively discussion. While division of the Territories was not the subject of intensive debate during the Budget Session, it naturally permeated the entire session.



Speaker Don Stewart sporting stole with moosehair tufting and beadwork designed by NWT Native Women's Association. It represents a continuing attempt to reflect aboriginal traditions and cultures in the Assembly.

While there are no political parties, there is the loose coalition of ten members commonly referred to as the Eastern Caucus. Their ridings are entirely or largely above the treeline, roughly following the boundary proposed by the Nunavut Constitutional Forum. Their constituents are at least 80% Inuit. The Eastern Caucus, therefore, has a cohesion built on common geography and culture. They are a political force but they are not a political party and do not always vote as a block. In fact, they occasionally have competing interests.

Political parties arrived in Assembly politics on the last day of the session, when Lynda Sorensen, the member for Yellowknife South, announced she was joining the Northern Party whose purpose is to promote the interests of the Northwest Territories. Mrs. Sorensen, a well-known supporter of the federal Liberal Party, said that the Northern Party intended to confine its activities to the NWT and would have no affiliation with any of the federal political parties so that negotiations with the federal government would not be affected by partisan politics. The Northern Party hopes to contest all twenty-two ridings in the next election and feels confident it can field candidates in the twelve ridings of the Western Arctic. Since the Northern Party is so new it is impossible to assess what effect it will have, either on the division of the NWT or on the development of partisan politics in the Legislative Assembly.

The Budget Session

The Legislative Assembly opened on February 2, 1983, in the Kitimavik rooms of the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife, as the Assembly does not yet have its own building. The fact that the Assembly is portable is quite an advantage, inasmuch as it can, and does, meet in any town with enough hotel rooms for the members, staff, press, and visitors. The decor was fascinating and favourably commented on by all: the red wall behind the Speaker's chair was hung with seal skins, the ends of the two tables where the members sat were draped with moosehair tufting, the ceiling was hung with many flags of the Northwest Territories and the walls had pictures donated from the Heritage Centre. It was a very colorful and appropriate display.

The members sit at two long curved tables facing each other, twelve on one side and ten plus the Commissioner (at the end farthest from the Speaker's Chair) on the other. The Clerk's Table is positioned so that it is in the space at one end of the oval created by the members' tables. The Speaker's Chair is about ten feet immediately behind the Clerk. The table reserved for witnesses during Committee of the Whole occupies much the same position as the Speaker's Chair but at the other end of the oval. Court reporters sit within the oval, not far from the witness table. Simultaneous translation from English to Inuktitut and vice versa is provided. The Assembly hopes to be able to provide translation for at least some of the Dene languages within the next year.

The session opened with prayers in English, Inuktitut, Dogrib (a Dene language) and a Prayer Song by the Detah Drummers (Detah is an Indian settlement not far from Yellowknife). Mr. Parker then gave the Commissioner's Address in which he welcomed a new member, Mr. Wray (Keewatin North) recently elected in a by-election; outlined the work of the Assembly (the Budget, the Estimates and 23 bills) and the state of the economy (relatively good in comparison with many economies), the visit of two members of the Assembly to the European Economic Community to protest the proposed ban on the trade of sealskins, and the deaths of several distinguished old-time Northerners. Finally he announced the Commissioner's Awards for outstanding public service and acts of bravery.

The Speaker spoke next. He recognized distinguished visitors, acknowledged those who were responsible for the new decor and the opening prayers, and announced the changes at the Table. The Assembly then adjourned until the following day.

The Speaker's reception was held that evening and attended by the members, the staff and all who had participated or been present in an official capacity for the opening. What fun it was! The Detah Drummers drummed and we all, with varying degrees of expertise, danced one of the traditional large circular dances to their accompaniment. We were also fortunate enough to hear two "throat singers", (part of the Inuit culture) which is impossible to describe but was fascinating to listen to.

Towards the end of the session, the Commissioner held his dinner which is also a much anticipated feature of most sessions. Peter Fraser, the Deputy Speaker, very expertly called one of the square dances. He must have been one of the few people present who really knew how to square dance. Later in the evening, Ludy Pudluk, speaking Inuktitut, called the Inuit equivalent of a square dance (done in one large circle, instead of separate squares). To my very inexperienced eye, the amount of confusion was no more or less whether the dances were called in English or in Inuktitut. We all laughed so hard I am sure that I was not the only one with aching sides.

The session ended with the *pirogi* (prorogation) party which was closed by a rousing chorus of "God Save the Queen" and "O Canada" in English and Inuktitut.

The Rules of Procedure

The Assembly usually sat Monday to Thursday from 1 pm to 6 pm and on Fridays from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. The procedural publications of the Assembly are fairly limited. A daily transcript is prepared for distribution the following morning. After the end of each session they are bound to form the *Debates*. *Votes and Proceedings* are prepared by the Public Affairs Officer, Rosemary Cairns, when her other duties permit. These are not bound to form the *Journals* as is done in the House of Commons. The Order Paper is a single sheet read by the Clerk at the end of the sitting and distributed to members the next day. Precedence on the Order Paper is at the discretion of the Speaker subject only to motions carried in the Assembly. There is no Notice Paper so that the notices required by the Rules for bills and for formal motions are given orally in the Assembly. Notice is not required for oral or written questions or for motions moved during Committee of the Whole.

As I sat at the Table I gradually began to learn the procedures of the Assembly and I could not help but compare some of them with those of the House of Commons. Written Questions were asked less frequently than Oral Questions. There were days with no questions at all. Unlike Ottawa there is no limit on the number of questions that can be asked or on the time that can be spent on oral and written questions. The subject matter was usually local in nature (winter roads, bridges, problems with water tanks or trucks, etc.) but could apply to all of the territories (the Northern Canada Power Commission rate increases; meetings with the National Energy Board; northern preference to northern businesses, the meetings of one or the other of the Constitutional Forums, etc.) Ministers more readily took questions as notice than in the House of Commons and it was not unusual for a minister to ask a question of another minister. It was quite unlike the very structured Question Period in the House. I was interested to note that Speaker Stewart,

had the same difficulty as Madam Sauvé in keeping questions short, not anticipating the orders of the day, etc.

Ministers' Statements were very diverse and included for example: the application process required for financial assistance for day care; cruise missile testing; mining and mine safety; the seal and trapping industries. Statements occurred almost daily and one day there were three. There is no procedure whereby members can question the ministers or respond to their statements, which struck me as unfair at first (being used to the House of Commons procedure) until I realized that the members had many opportunities to bring their concerns before the Assembly.

Petitions and their presentation are thoroughly covered by the Rules. There is no Clerk of Petitions, each member being responsible for the content of the petition he presents to the Assembly. When presenting a petition the member usually gave a very short explanation of the petition. Four petitions were presented asking for such things as: Polar Bear shaped licence plates for motorcycles similar to those for cars; a social worker for Lake Harbour; more housing in Arctic Bay and an extra teacher in Sachs Harbour.

One petition drew a complaint that it had been signed by Donald Duck.

MR. MACQUARRIE: I am just wondering if the Speaker is going to look into this quackery a little further.

MR. SPEAKER: It would appear that your subject is strictly for the birds.

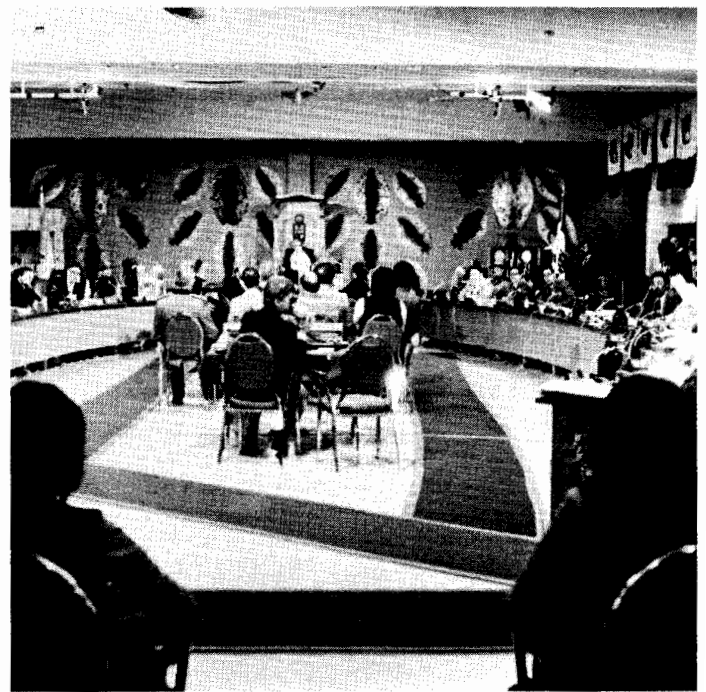
Six reports were presented to the Assembly but not all of them were presented under the Reports of Standing and Special Committees heading of the Order Paper. The report of the Standing Committee of the Rules and Procedures was tabled in the Assembly and under Reports a motion was moved to consider the report as the second item of business two days hence. This motion was carried without debate. The Report of the Standing Committee on Finance, was delayed, by unanimous consent, until later in the day when the Minister of Finance had given the Budget Speech, as it was a pre-study of the finances of the government and was really the Committee's response to the Budget Speech. A report from the Special Committee on Constitutional Development was read into the record by one of the members of the Committee. Indeed all committee reports were read into the record. I assumed this was because there is no publication comparable to the House of Commons *Journals* so the content of the report might otherwise be lost. The first report of the Special Committee on the Division of the Northwest Territories and the report of the Special Committee on the Constitution of Canada were read into the record by the leader of the government, Mr. George Braden. He later moved a motion that the Special Committee on the Constitution of Canada be dissolved as its usefulness was at an end, it was agreed to.

Tabling of Documents can be done either by ministers or members. Tabled documents included such things as the Report of the Auditor General, the Annual Report of the Government of the NWT; the Annual Report of the Territorial Accounts for 1981-82; a letter of protest on some of the "adult" shows shown on pay TV; a draft bill on liquor laws; and the Report of the Constitutional Alliance of the NWT.

Two items on the orders for the day were particularly interesting to me: Notices of Motions and Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Because there is no Notice Paper, all notices are given orally, in the Assembly. Under the Rules, a member is required to give forty-eight hours notice before moving a motion or for first reading of bills. In almost all instances the members asked for unanimous consent to waive the notice requirements and it was granted. This procedure was so common that members tended to be surprised when unanimous consent was not given.

It also led to some hard feelings. On one occasion a member said nay to another's request for unanimous consent to give notice of three motions when only two are allowed by the Rules. Shortly afterwards the second member said nay (three times) to the first member's request for unanimous consent to move his motion without waiting forty-eight hours and further said: "... That turkey has got problems. Why do you not go home? Why do you not leave? Take off!" The first member responded: "That is

The subject matter of the Motions was as varied as the individual interests of the members and the business of the Assembly. They dealt with such things as the appointment of members to committees, the creation of committees, changes in the hours of sitting for a special occasion or as a permanent change to the Rules, and appointments to various boards under the control of the Assembly. One of the motions requested that witnesses from government departments or similar bodies appear before the Committee of the Whole where they could be questioned more thoroughly on a matter of interest. All but one of these motions passed easily and frequently without any discussion. The other motions defy categorization and include: that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation establish a facility in the Kitikmeot Region; that the Federal government be requested not to close the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Vocational Training Section and Inuit House in Ottawa; that public hearings be held on the issuance of a broadened operating licence to various commercial airlines; that a science institute be established; and that awards be



A meeting of the NWT Council in 1967 (left) and the Legislative Assembly as it looks today.

okay; get mad at me, you (unparliamentary language)". The other member then asked the first to take off his glasses and left his seat with the evident intention of attacking him, although to my eye he was moving slowly enough to leave time to be stopped. The Sergeant-at-Arms, David Williamson, and the Speaker restored order and the first member was ordered to withdraw his unparliamentary language which he did to applause from the Assembly. This member then said that being called a turkey constituted provocation and should be withdrawn. The Speaker ruled that "turkey" was not unparliamentary language but asked the member to withdraw it in order to "get accord in this House". With some encouragement from his colleagues he did reluctantly, and the incident ended there.

given to those who show the most initiative skill in building their homes under a government program. All these motions were carried.

Much to my astonishment, and unlike Ottawa, many bills were not debated at all at the second reading stage. Furthermore, it was not unusual for a bill to receive notice, first reading and second reading by unanimous consent in one day. Twenty bills were considered in Committee of the Whole, received third reading and were given Royal Assent all in the last day and a half of the Assembly. There are a number of explanations for this apparent haste. One of the bills was the *Appropriation Bill* for the Supplementary Estimates and these traditionally take very little time in any

Assembly. The rest of the bills were basically of a technical or at least non-controversial nature.

The most interesting reason, however, was the method for studying bills in the Standing Committee on Legislation, for which I served as Committee Clerk. Under the terms of reference for the Committee, it shall "review all draft legislation prepared for introduction into the Legislative Assembly". The Committee interpreted this to mean that the Executive was to prepare all the bills in advance of each session, so that the Committee would have time to carefully examine the bills before they were introduced in the Assembly. This is not what happened as most of the bills were introduced to the Assembly and given to the Committee at the same time. The Committee did consider lodging a formal complaint but decided not to, largely because the content of the bills was non-controversial. Moreover, the Assembly was preoccupied with the Estimates, so that the Committee had sufficient time to examine all the bills before the detailed study in the Committee of the Whole.

For its pre-study the Committee on Legislation would call the minister and the relevant civil servants before it to explain the bill and then deal with any other witnesses who wished to appear. The ministers were very willing to amend the bills as requested by the Committee and indeed most of the amendments made to the bills during the Committee of the Whole were proposed by the government and based on the suggestions of the committee. In several instances during the debate in Committee of the Whole, the minister concerned did not speak but deferred to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislation, Bob MacQuarrie, who then gave the Committee's position on the bill.

It was quite a smooth process and did not impinge on the rights of members to thoroughly debate the bills, although most chose not to. Both the willingness of the ministers to amend the bills to suit the Legislation Committee and the speed of the process impressed me very much. To my mind the legislation procedure came very close to the ideal of consensus government that the members had set for their Assembly.

Committee of the Whole is where the Assembly does most of its work. Not only were all the Estimates thoroughly considered but the Committee of the Whole heard witnesses from diverse groups as well as doing the clause by clause study of twenty-one bills. There was a time limit of 10 minutes per speech but the members could speak as often as they liked for 10 minutes. I did not see a case where the member was not given unanimous consent to continue his remarks, if he so requested.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole kept a check list of members who wished to speak and the order of speakers was not disputed as each knew that their turn would come. The Rules state that once a member has spoken on a matter, the other members who wish to speak are to be recognized before that member speaks again. However, as a matter of courtesy and custom, a member is allowed to ask as many questions or make as many comments as he wishes before other members are recognized. This led to a coherence in questioning that would be the envy of any member of the House of Commons, but simply is not possible in a 282 member body.

Committee of the Whole was more informal than what the members called "formal session", i.e. occasions when the Speaker was in the Chair. There were two scheduled coffee breaks and while the member speaking was never interrupted to recess the Committee of the Whole for coffee, matters frequently arranged themselves so that no one was speaking at that time. Smoking was allowed and while beverages and food were not, the occasional cup of coffee appeared and was not commented on. The Rules state that the members are to address each other by their last names or by the name of their constituency, but first names were sometimes used and no one objected. Many (but not all) of the interjections by members took the form of good-nature teasing and were received in that spirit.

Relevancy was a problem in the Assembly (as it is in the House of Commons) particularly during Committee of the Whole. The presiding officer would occasionally draw the attention of the member speaking to his or her irrelevance, but points of order from other members had more effect. It was very interesting to me that such different bodies as the Assembly and the House of Commons had the same problem, with the same rules to cover it and had come to the same impasse!

Financial Procedure

We came at last to the main purpose of the Budget Session: the debate on the financial affairs of the Northwest Territories. First of all the name of the session is rather misleading: it would have been more appropriate to call it the Supply session. While the Minister of Finance, Mr. Butters (Inuvik), did indeed give a Budget speech, i.e. a speech that addressed itself to the general economic situation in the Northwest Territories and what the government proposed to do, it was done, not as a separate piece of government business, but as a speech at second reading of Bill 1 (83-1), the *Appropriation Ordinance*.

The highlight of the Budget speech for me was not the economic content but the fact that over 80% of the funding for the NWT government is obtained from Ottawa. The Territories is considered along with other federal departments, rather than as a separate government. Less than 20% of the revenue of the government is raised by taxes. Therefore, it should not have come as a surprise to me that there were no Ways and Means motions, nor any tax bills based upon them, introduced during the "Budget Session".

The only speech in response to the Budget was given by Mrs. Sorenson, as Chairman of the Finance Committee. It was the Report of this Committee on its pre-study of the Main Estimates and on the Budget in general. The Finance Committee appeared to be quite satisfied with the way in which the Territorial Government was managing the economy and commented in particular on the co-operation extended by the Minister of Finance and the Deputy Commissioner to the Committee. The Committee was, however, not pleased with the kind of negotiations required in dealing with the federal government nor with the effect of Ottawa's restraint program. This is, of course, another expression of the NWT desire for provincehood. After these two speeches, no one else wished to be recognized and the *Appropriations Ordinance* was referred to the Committee of the Whole that same day.

What particularly struck me about the Budget procedure is that there did not appear to be any opportunity to move a motion of non-confidence in the budgetary policies of the government, except, perhaps, as a separate substantive motion. Nor did there appear to be any need to move such a motion given the degree of support for the policies of the Minister of Finance by the Report of the Finance Committee. Indeed, it could be said that the general budgetary policy of the government had been approved by the members of the Assembly through their Finance Committee before the session even began!

This unanimity was a surprise to me: it is literally unthinkable that the opposition in the House of Commons would so fully support the Minister of Finance. This is partly because the federal Minister of Finance has more scope in preparing his Budget but, I think, also because the operation of the House of Commons is based on party politics: it is the job of the Opposition to oppose, to present an alternative. Since this is not the case in the NWT, it was possible for the elected government to attempt to meet the demands of the members in preparation of the Budget. This effort was recognized by the Report of the Committee and mentioned by all the ministers when defending their departmental estimates.

Thus while the debate on the Estimates in Committee of the Whole was occasionally quite heated, it was directed to the details of the Estimates and to various grievances and not to general financial policy. As a Table Officer, I found the lack of distinction between the budget process and the supply process rather disturbing. To add to my unease, neither is even mentioned in the Rules of the Assembly but this is understandable given that twenty years ago all decisions financial or otherwise, were taken by an appointed council and not an elected Assembly.

The procedure for dealing with Supply in the House of Commons is very structured and formal. All our formality however, does not even come close to giving the members of the House of Commons as much freedom to express their grievances as have

the members of the Assembly. First, there is no guillotine or limit on the number of days spent discussing the Estimates. The Committee of the Whole only moved on to the next item in the Estimates when everyone had had their say and, indeed, the Committee frequently returned to an item by unanimous consent if a member decided he had something more to say or had failed to realize that he must bring up a particular concern under a particular item.

It is also quite in order for any member of the Assembly to move a substantive motion without notice providing it was relevant to the items in the Estimates then being discussed. One of the motions was that the Assembly expresses its loss of confidence in the wildlife biologists who carried out the surveys of the Kaminuriak cariboo herd (as a Table Officer, I was required to read this motion out loud and mispronounced "Kaminuriak" giving the members a good chuckle).

While it was clearly understood by all the members that such motions were merely recommendations to the Executive Committee, it was also clear that the members expected action. There were also a few motions moved and then withdrawn on the minister's assurance that action would be taken on the grievance. I was very impressed by the entire supply process and in particular with the efforts made to redress grievances. I think that members' questions on the various items were fully answered even if the members did not always like the minister's answer.

Conclusion

I was fascinated by the Legislative Assembly and what it taught me, both about the North and about parliamentary procedure. My six week visit convinced me that in order to better understand the procedure of one's own House it is a valuable experience to learn the procedures of another House. I was very sad to leave the Northwest Territories and I look forward to going back at the first opportunity.