

Tuesday Letter AppendixCOUNCIL MEMBERS

Ottawa 4, October 18, 1966.

1. On returning after a three-week absence, I find things in excellent order under Stu's care. He has done a vast amount of work. The heaviest has been in connection with major policy work and preparations for the session. Both areas are in good shape.
2. The Carrothers report is a matter of great satisfaction to me. It differs from the recommendations of the Council in only one respect of any consequence. Carrothers recommends all the steps toward provincial status but it does not recommend the federal government at this time committing itself to the formation of a province in ten or fifteen years. This is a significant difference but it is not vital. Even if the federal government declared its intention to form a province, as we advised, they could have second thoughts about it some years hence. They could also alter the timetable. I am, therefore, perfectly happy with the suggestion that the matter be considered again in ten years.

Although I am happy with the Carrothers report, many people are not. Speaking generally, the senior men in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development are not enthusiastic. I believe attempts will be made to shelve it. If one wishes to prevent action on a scheme such as Carrothers', the most effective methods are two in number. First, cause delay. If delay can extend to two or three years, the thing will die of frustration and old age. The second method of killing a scheme is to divide the whole scheme into parts, voicing approval for some parts and proposing restudy of others. This provides rallying points for dissident elements and special interest groups whose opposition to various minor points can easily come to sound like condemnation for the entire plan. Federal Ministers who have to make the ultimate decision are sensitive to expression from dissident groups. If they respond to expressions of dissent on diverse points, the likely response is simply to decline to act on the whole question.

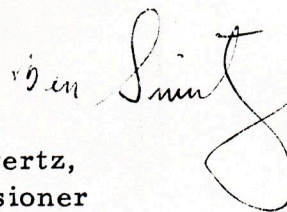
For the foregoing reasons, I believe that anyone who wants to see government in the north brought closer to the people and made more responsive to northern needs should seize upon Carrothers as the best possible instrument to achieve the purpose. Whoever seeks to have some aspects of the Carrothers report adopted and others rejected or modified will play into the hands of those who want to kill the whole thing. I, therefore, intend to advise the Minister to adopt the report in its entirety and lay out a timetable for legislation and other measures so as to give effect to the Carrothers recommendations at the earliest possible date.

We must be realistic about speed in making profound governmental changes like this. Council Members will remember that it took nearly two years from the time they heard the Minister say he would amend the Northwest Territories Act in some respects that were not in any way basic. I would say that it will take every bit of two years to accomplish the legislation, federal and territorial, needed to give effect to the Carrothers recommendations. It would be wise to make our plans in such a way so they will not fall apart if three years elapse before everything is accomplished. This means that the Territorial elections of 1967 would be the last before the major changes in Acts and Ordinances that would enable a 1970 election to be held in 14 constituencies.

In the meantime, however, much of the rest of the Carrothers recommendations can be given effect. I refer to the transfer of functions from federal to territorial, the setting up of territorial departments, planning of the territorial capital and the construction of the first of the permanent buildings. All of this can go ahead, granted only that a firm decision is made to adopt the Carrothers report. Decision is the prerequisite to everything. The heart of decision-making is to accept a concept and avoid ensnarements and divisions over detail.

3. This is the last Tuesday Letter Appendix before the Council session. I look forward to seeing you all.

B. G. Sivertz,
Commissioner



P. S. Just an additional note to remind you that Council Members will be supplied with a complete set of Sessional Papers, Bills, etc., so that it is not necessary for you to carry the bundles of material that have been sent to you, - except for the Carrothers report. We are not sure that we can obtain enough copies for everybody. So you had better bring the copies you have with you.

B. G. S.