

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
5<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 27<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**REFERENCE FOR ADVICE  
NO. 11-27**

**TABLED ON JUNE 2, 1964**



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

REFERENCE FOR ADVICE

SELECTION OF A SUITABLE SITE FOR THE NEW SCHOOL  
AND HOSTEL IN THE YELLOWKNIFE-RAE AREA.

The Commissioner requests the advice of Council on the selection of a suitable site for the new school and hostel to serve the Yellowknife-Rae Area.

Selection of a Suitable Site for the New School  
and Hostel in the Yellowknife-Rae Area.

Introduction

A new school and hostel are required to provide educational facilities for children of compulsory school age living in the Yellowknife-Rae area.

Based on the 1961 Census (projected) and school enrolment reports in 1964, there are 100 children of school age not enrolled in any school. Reports from our field officers indicate that a large proportion of the 232 pupils registered in school have attended or are attending their present schools on a very irregular basis, and that there may be an even larger number than 100 out of school.

The following table shows the number of children from the areas concerned and the schools in which they are registered as well as the number of children not now enrolled in schools.

Table 1 - Children Enrolled in Schools and Children  
not Enrolled in Schools - 1964

<u>Area</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>
1. Rae area	Fort Smith	81
2. Yellowknife	Fort Smith	46
3. Lac la Martre	Lac la Martre	16
4. Rae settlement	Rae	<u>89</u>
5.	Total in School -	232
6. Rae area - out of school		75
7. Yellowknife area - out of school		<u>25</u>
	Total out of School	<u>100</u>

The large number of pre-school age children who will attain school age in the next five years will increase these numbers substantially while at the same time the increase in school population at Fort Smith will tax existing school facilities there to capacity without including children from the Rae area. Children living within the town of Yellowknife have not been included in the above table.

Objections to sending their children to reside in Fort Smith and to attend school in that settlement are reported from parents in the Rae area. It is now apparent that we must decide upon a suitable location for a large school and hostel in the Yellowknife-Rae area in order to accommodate those children who are not now attending any school, and to make provision for the rapidly increasing school population of this area. In doing so it is also possible to help improve school facilities for Rae and Lac la Martre.

Present Accommodation

1. Rae

The original Indian school at Rae was designed as a two-classroom school. Due to previous increases in enrolment two additional temporary classrooms not attached to the existing school have been provided. Enrolment in the 1963-64 academic year is 89. Attendance at this school is often below average because of the hunting and trapping activities of the parents.

2. Lac la Martre

The Lac la Martre Federal School is a one-classroom school with an enrolment in the 1963-64 academic year of only 16 pupils. Attendance

has been extremely irregular and, as a result, educational progress has been very disappointing. In view of the meagre educational progress which has been realized under present arrangements, a plan to accommodate these children in a school and hostel which might be built in the area should be considered provided that the parents are agreeable and willing to co-operate by enrolling their children in such a school and hostel.

### 3. Fort Smith

For some years children from the Rae area residing beyond daily commuting distance of the Rae School have been accommodated in Turquetil Hall in order that they may attend Joseph Burr Tyrrell School. Some objections to this practice have been registered by their parents and difficulty in recruiting children for this hostel is experienced each year. A high drop-out rate and an inconsistent school attendance pattern results in a high degree of age-grade retardation among the Rae area children. Certainly, we cannot consider the present results as satisfactory, nor does there appear to be any prospect of improvement in the future under present arrangements. It is proposed to construct initially an eight-room school and a hostel in this area. The hostel would be built to accommodate initially 100 or more pupils on a full year basis, but should have additional space for approximately an equal number who might be accommodated on a seasonal basis when their parents are hunting or trapping. A capacity of 200 pupils for the hostel, therefore, is envisaged. Four rooms would be replacements for the present local school which is unsatisfactory. A second phase which would add four classrooms and utilize the additional 100 hostel beds on a full-time basis could be constructed in approximately four years' time.

### Possible Sites

The following possible sites have been suggested for the proposed new school and hostel:

#### 1. Rae

The reasons which favour construction in this settlement include:

- (1) Only one school complex would be required to accommodate both village and area children. The economies and educational advantages resulting from a larger school are important factors to consider.  
(If the proposed new school and hostel were constructed at another site, the present unsatisfactory school and educational situation at Rae would remain unchanged and would at some future time require remedial action.)
- (2) The Rae people have expressed a strong desire to have the proposed new school facilities established in that settlement.
- (3) Employment for Rae residents would result and the problem of providing hostel staff and caretaking for the school would be less difficult than at other proposed sites.
- (4) Establishment of a reasonably large school and hostel would result in several intangible benefits to this community, for example, social improvement by reason of the interaction of the school and hostel staff members with local inhabitants. A more varied adult education program than is now possible could be carried out and the concept of the community school could be more fully realized. Many of the school activities would have a pronounced effect for the better upon the local residents. A larger proportion of children from other communities would attend school at Rae than is now the case and this should provide a broadening experience for both the local and the outside children.
- (5) Conversely, the presence of an established community would give valuable support to the school and hostel. Children from remote areas would gain valuable educational experiences through their

opportunity to observe community institutions and participate in their activities. School and hostel staff could be more easily recruited than would be possible for a similar plant established in a remote unpopulated site.

At a recent meeting of the Rae residents, Chief Bruneau, who speaks for the Council, strongly favoured the erection of the school complex in the settlement of Rae. At that time, he stated that he had pointed out on two previous occasions that hostel facilities should have been established at Rae. Both times his proposals were rejected and other settlements chosen. He agrees that it is important for children to receive an education in the white man's way of living but believes that in obtaining this education, they should not be cut off from their own people.

A possible building site near Rae has been examined although only superficially because the area was still covered with snow at the time of the examination. No final decision could be made concerning its physical suitability for our construction proposals, but surface appearances under winter conditions indicated it to be of sufficient promise to be worthy of detailed investigation by an engineering consultant.

This site is close enough to Rae so that existing sewer, water and electric power services might be extended the short distance needed to provide the proposed school and hostel with the required services. It has access to the existing all-weather road linking the Mackenzie Highway with Rae settlement. It is considered to be a very good building site providing that the foundations are extended to the rock formation. Additional fill for landscaping and improvements to surface drainage is also available on the site.

The capacity of the existing water and sewage disposal system would have to be expanded if a school plant of this size were to be constructed at Rae. The practicability of such expansion from the standpoint of economy would also need further detailed investigation. Our Engineers believe there are no insurmountable problems in respect of water and sewage but costs would have to be studied carefully.

## 2. Frank's Channel

Frank's Channel is the site of the bridge which spans the northern reaches of Great Slave Lake. There is no settlement at this point now in existence, but its location on a good highway and near proven fishing grounds are factors favouring community development there. Since it is seven miles from Rae and connected to it by an all-weather road there is good access from Rae. The water which is available in abundant quantity close at hand would have to be checked for purity. A playground area is available but would need considerable improvement. No survey has been carried out to establish whether this would be a good site from a building construction point of view.

The main disadvantages to building here are:

- (a) The lack of an established community. Where residential schools for Indians have been established in comparable sites in other parts of Canada in the past, they have almost invariably been unsuccessful, leading to their eventual abandonment with practically no chance of conversion to other useful purposes. (This information is from the Indian Affairs Branch.)
- (b) The reported objection of Rae residents to establishing such facilities outside of that settlement to provide physical, economic, educational and social support to the school and hostel.
- (c) Recruitment and retention of staff might pose problems. Costs would increase by reason of the necessity of providing housing for all support staff.
- (d) Children would be cut off from normal community contacts.

- (e) Two relatively small school units, one for Rae and one for area pupils, would have to be operated, or alternatively, the costly and unnecessary provision of hostel facilities at this site for Rae residents would have to be considered. A second alternative, also very costly, would be to transport the Rae children by buses to the new school.
- (f) Establishment of proposed facilities in such a location might encourage another "squatter" type of community unsupported by an adequate economic resource base - hence increased welfare problems might result.

### 3. Stagg River

Stagg River is 15.4 miles south of Rae on the Yellowknife Highway. The only construction at this site at the present time is a highway maintenance building. Available engineering reports indicate that this would be a good location from a construction standpoint but there has been no detailed study to confirm such reports. Large quantities of potable water are reported available. Playground space is reported as adequate and the terrain is suitable for the foundation of the new buildings.

The same important disadvantages noted above for Frank's Channel would also apply to the Stagg River site.

### 4. Yellowknife

If Rae area pupils were educated in Yellowknife the conveniences of a larger community would be realized and the pupils would have a better chance of becoming integrated with white people. From this standpoint, Yellowknife has distinct advantages over all other proposed sites. Yellowknife is closer to homes of the children than is Fort Smith and has the added advantage of being connected by an all-weather road to Rae.

Factors which may offset the advantages are:

- (a) The Sir John Franklin School does not lend itself either physically or educationally to the needs of the elementary pupils from the Rae area. Because the Public School and Separate School in Yellowknife are in school districts and do not have the responsibility for accommodating children from outside their districts, it would be necessary to construct a new school and hostel in Yellowknife for them. A proposal is now being studied for extending Sir John Franklin School to accommodate pupils of the Yellowknife Region for junior high school grades, therefore construction of still another school and hostel at this location for elementary school pupils from Rae might produce an imbalanced condition and over-tax the facilities of Yellowknife.

### 5. Russell Lake

Russell Lake is the alternative site proposed by the Rae inhabitants if construction of a school and hostel within the village is not practical. Russell Lake is about four miles from Rae. Although there is some objection that even a distance of four miles would impose hardship and inconvenience on some of the parents who wish to visit their children, it is recognized that the Russell Lake site would have the advantage of proximity to an established community over Stagg River or Frank's Channel.

### Summary

Rae has the advantage of public acceptance over any other proposed site. Detailed investigation of a proposed site near the settlement to ascertain physical suitability for construction, and the thorough study of the costs of extending water and sewage systems for such an establishment must be undertaken before a final decision could be made. Rae has the added advantage of providing a means either now or in the future, for improving existing educational facilities for elementary school children from Rae as well as for area children. The support which an established community can provide for such an institution should also be considered as a most favourable and important advantage.

Frank's Channel, Russell Lake and Stagg River are all undeveloped sites which promise good physical conditions, but lack the advantage of location within an existing community. Experience has proven the undesirability of establishing a school and hostel in such isolated locations.

Yellowknife would probably provide greater opportunity for integration than any of the other proposed sites, but such advantage might not be fully realized because of the school organization in that centre, and because the Indian population to be served has expressed a strong desire to have school facilities closer to their home in Rae.

The Commissioner requests the advice of Council on this matter.

May 6, 1964.