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REFERENCE FOR ADVICE
NO. 1-28



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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

REFERENCE FOR ADVICE NO. 1
Second Session, 1964

INOCULATION OF DOGS
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Commissioner requests the advice of Council on a program of inoculating dogs against Rabies and other diseases.

Reference for Advice on Inoculation of Dogs

At the Summer Session 1964 of the Council of the Northwest Territories it was agreed that a paper should be prepared for presentation to the Fall Session concerning the possibility of a universal preventive inoculation program for dogs in the Northwest Territories.

Early History

In 1955-56 the Health of Animals Branch, Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, initiated an anti-rabies vaccination program among dogs in a few areas in the Mackenzie District and in the Yukon Territory. Since then the anti-rabies vaccination program has been extended to other areas in the Canadian north, including Baffin Island. However, the number of dogs inoculated each year falls far short of the estimated canine population in the entire Canadian north.

Present Program

In 1963 a vaccination program was initiated in Arctic Quebec by the federal government. The program was extended in 1964, at federal expense, to Baffin Island as a mean of controlling disease among Eskimo sled dogs.

The program in those two areas is not limited to rabies control but also includes vaccination against distemper and infectious canine hepatitis. Solely in terms of dogs' lives and the economy of northern communities, distemper and infectious canine hepatitis pose a more serious threat than rabies, notwithstanding the importance of the latter disease from a human standpoint. This is exemplified by the serious outbreak occurring at Pangnirtung three years ago and the several outbreaks that have occurred in Arctic Quebec and northern Manitoba in past years. It is clearly desirable to protect dogs against all three diseases.

The triple vaccination program recently initiated in Arctic Quebec and Baffin Island could be extended to other northern areas and could replace the anti-rabies vaccination program.

Estimated Costs

The following estimated cost of a universal program is based upon the size of the canine population and the cost of vaccines and equipment (syringes and hypodermic needles) for their administration. It does not take into account the casual labour help that may be required for the implementation of the program nor the cost of shipment of the vaccines to the various northern points.

The canine population in northern communities, with the exclusion of Arctic Quebec, is estimated as follows:

1. District of Franklin

Baffin Island	3,850	
Queen Elizabeth Archipelago	400	
Other Arctic Islands	<u>470</u>	
		4,720

2. District of Keewatin

2,100

3. District of Mackenzie

4,900

Grand Total

11,693

The initial cost purchase of vaccines and equipment is estimated at \$19,356.00. Anti-rabies vaccine would be provided by the Department of Agriculture while the Department of Northern Affairs would provide the other vaccine (combined anti-distemper and infectious canine hepatitis) which can be purchased at a cost of \$1.59 per dose. Syringes (nylon, unbreakable and reusable) are obtainable at \$3.00 each; hypodermic needles at \$3.00 per dozen. Thus the total cost of \$19,356.00 is broken down into the following figures:

Vaccine (anti-distemper-infectious canine hepatitis)		
11,693 doses at \$1.59		\$18,591.00
(including vaccines for Baffin Island where program is already under way)		
Equipment		
90 syringes at \$3.00 each		270.00
165 doz hypodermic needles at \$3.00 per doz.		495.00
	Total	\$19,356.00

Duration of Program and Later Costs

Since rabies, distemper and infectious canine hepatitis are endemic in many areas of the Canadian north, the vaccination of all dogs whenever this can be done, is highly desirable.

The present program in Arctic Quebec and Baffin Island calls for vaccination each year. Except for rabies, it is proposed to continue this for a few years until a system can be set up to enable the selection of dogs for vaccination on the basis of age classes and vaccination history. Ultimately most of the dogs vaccinated will be young ones. That may be the situation in about three years' time, perhaps earlier in localities where there can be a good check on the dogs and the owners. By that time it would be possible to vaccinate every second year rather than each year.

Thus though a triple vaccination program would involve a yearly expenditure of some \$19,500.00 (including Baffin Island but not Arctic Quebec) for the next three years, the cost of implementing the program would be much reduced thereafter, probably cut in half, and possibly lower.

It should be noted that whereas eventually only a certain category of dogs need be inoculated with vaccines against both distemper and infectious canine hepatitis, anti-rabies vaccination would have to be performed on all dogs regardless of their age, according to a schedule drawn up for the various localities in a manner that would fit the overall implementation of the program.

Estimated cost of program for Mackenzie District

On the basis of the canine population, the implementation of the triple vaccination program in Mackenzie District only, would cost about \$7,000.00 a year for the next few years. It would be much less thereafter, probably sooner than elsewhere, as there are several localities in this area where a good control of owners and their dogs could be exercised.

Assessment of the present program

While the results of the program initiated in Arctic Quebec have been most gratifying, Dr. Choquette, senior veterinary pathologist, feels that on the sole basis of those results, and pending the outcome of the program on Baffin Island, he is not ready to recommend one way or the other regarding the establishment of the program in all northern communities. However, he thinks that with the general administrative facilities existing in the Mackenzie District the program could be initiated there at any time.

It is evident that the successful implementation of the program depends to a great extent on the support and collaboration of the dogs' owners. Education is important. The administrative facilities of the Mackenzie District would facilitate the launching of such a program.

It will be noted that up to now the inoculation program has been a federal program. This is appropriate because the great majority of the dogs are owned by Eskimos or Indians and it is these people who are immediately affected by sickness and death of dogs.

Recommendation: The Commissioner recommends that Council instruct him to advise the Department of Northern Affairs that it is Council's view that the triple dog-vaccination program be accelerated throughout the Northwest Territories as quickly as possible and that the Territorial Government is prepared to accept charges for the cost of inoculation of dogs owned by persons other than Indians or Eskimos.
