

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
5<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 28<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

REFERENCE FOR ADVICE  
NO. 11-28



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

REFERENCE FOR ADVICE NO. 11

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

The Commissioner requests the advice of Council regarding  
Tourist Development in the Northwest Territories.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENTA. Sport Fishery Problem:1. Introduction

When the first major development in the tourist industry of the Northwest Territories began in 1960 with establishment of sport fishing camps on Great Slave Lake, it was accompanied by the first indication of problems that were to come and that eventually would require regulation. The problem at that time was essentially one of camps being located so close together that each destroyed the wilderness atmosphere of the other. A worsening of this problem was stopped partly by persuasion and partly by administrative policy under the Business Licence Ordinance. A decision was made against recommending legislation at that time because the development was so new and the type of development which would take place, the kind of problems which would develop and, therefore, the type of legislation which would be required were largely unknown.

After two years of concentration on the Mackenzie District, the emphasis in tourist development was shifted in 1962 to the Eastern Arctic in an effort to start development in that area. Throughout 1963, it was necessary to reduce the level of the tourist development program due to staff shortages. Because of these circumstances, it was impossible to maintain close liaison with the tourist industry, and in particular with the sport fishing camps in the Mackenzie District for a two-year period. Further action on an ordinance and regulations to govern the tourist industry was therefore postponed.

At the June Session, 1964, Council approved an item in estimates for hiring an officer on contract to study legislation in the provinces and draft an ordinance and regulations for the N.W.T. A suitable person could not be obtained on a short-term contract, and because of the problems which had developed by then in connection with Great Bear Lake and Tree River, officers of the Industrial Division who were familiar with those problems, at the request of the Commissioner, undertook to draft the required legislation.

2. Great Bear Lake and Tree River

A great deal of publicity has been given in recent months to problems in connection with sport fishing on Great Bear Lake and the Tree River. These problems are not unique. They have been experienced in other parts of Canada, but they are perhaps more serious in the Territories due to the relative importance of domestic and sport fisheries.

The problems developed primarily during the summer of 1963. Joint action was started by the administration and the Federal Department of Fisheries in the winter of 1963-64. The problems were discussed during the February 1964 conference of the Northwest Territories Tourist Association, and subsequently at a special meeting with sport fishing camp operators at Edmonton in June 1964. During the summer of 1964, the Department of Fisheries stationed an officer on the Tree River to supervise the fishing operations and to enforce regulations. Officers of the Department of Fisheries also made periodic inspection trips to lodges on Great Bear Lake. The Fisheries Research Board of Canada maintained a research crew on Great Bear Lake for the second season of a three-year limnological study of the lake. The Administration sponsored a tour by sportswriters of other Arctic streams in the Coppermine-Cambridge Bay-Bathurst Inlet area in order to locate other good char streams and to direct some of the angling pressure away from the Tree River. The administration also hired a sport fishery consultant to study angling problems on Great Bear Lake and the Tree River. His views and recommendations have been incorporated into the following paragraphs.

Simply stated, problems on the Tree River are as follows:

1. Large quantities of char are being taken by Eskimos who have been attracted to the Tree River partly by opportunities for cash income from guiding.

During the past summer, the Eskimos were encouraged to take more seal for food in order to relieve pressure on the char. From a long-term standpoint, harvesting of deep-sea fish such as cod and flounder in the area may provide a large part of the Eskimo requirement for food for dog teams. The R.C.M.P. also reduced their domestic fishery at the Tree River this year.

2. Angling pressure alone can be sufficient to drastically reduce the fish stocks of a river-run fish, particularly in a river such as the Tree where the fish are restricted to a very short stretch of the stream. It will be necessary to find some means of limiting the number of anglers on the Tree River because the bag limit per angler alone will not control the total harvest.

The number of anglers fishing the Tree River can be reduced to some extent by developing and promoting other streams, but regulations controlling the number of anglers on the Tree River will be necessary because of its reputation and the fact that it is the closest good char stream to Great Bear Lake. One means of coping with this problem is recommended under "Public Camps on Char Streams".

3. There is mortality rate probably over 90% among char which are caught by anglers and then released. This is due to the nature of the fish. Fisheries specialists advise that some species including char, fight until exhausted and that a large number of the fish will not recover when released no matter how carefully they may be handled.

It has been proposed that anglers return no char to the water, but that all fish caught in excess of the possession limit be given to the Eskimo guides to reduce the domestic fishery requirements. Other forms of waste which have been reported by the press such as fish "left lying on the banks to rot" have not been observed by our officers.

Problems on Great Bear Lake are slightly different from those experienced at the Tree River. They can be described as follows:

- a) A reported decline in angling success in relatively small areas adjacent to sport fishing camps. This may be due to a number of factors including the number of anglers accommodated at lodges and, therefore, the amount of angling pressure in small areas; and the relatively small range over which Great Bear lake trout appear to migrate.
- b) Competition among sport fishing camp operators for main lodge and outpost camp sites in desirable areas. The erection of a series of sport fishing camps within a few miles of each other would increase the angling pressure in these areas and probably cause a rapid decline in the fish stocks, thus threatening the investment of each camp operator.

Both of these problems can best be met by a zoning system and regulations established under an appropriate ordinance. Each main lodge would be given a "protected area" within which other camps could not be established. Limits would be imposed on the numbers to be accommodated at main lodges and on the number accommodated at outpost camps, in order to relate the harvest by anglers to the rate of growth of fish stocks.

- c) There is apparently a high mortality rate among lake trout which are caught by anglers and returned to the water.

Unlike Arctic char, a high percentage of lake trout can be successfully returned to the water if they are handled properly by the angler or his guide. Guide training and use of single hooks so that lake trout can be released without being removed from the water are two steps which are being considered.

## B. Proposed Action

### 1. Ordinance and Regulations

The Commissioner proposed that an ordinance now being drafted be presented for consideration at the February 1965 Session. The ordinance would be sufficiently broad in scope to cover most aspects of the travel and outdoor recreation field, rather than be directed strictly at sport fishing camps. Initially, only regulations covering sport fishing camps would be brought into effect. Regulations to meet other needs and problems would be introduced as the requirements arise.

The regulations covering sport fishing camps would be prepared when the ordinance is drafted. The content of the legislation should be discussed with sport fishing camp operators for their comment before setting up as a Bill and presenting to Council.

### 2. Public Camps on Char Streams

As stated in the discussion of problems at the Tree River, some means must be found to control the number of anglers who are allowed to fish the Tree River or any other char stream. In parts of Eastern Canada, the exclusive rights to outfit or operate a sport fishing camp on some Atlantic salmon streams are sold or leased by competitive bid. The principle of leasing exclusive angling rights has not been accepted generally throughout Canada and is not recommended as a means of solving the problem on char streams.

Another possibility would be the application of an annual quota to each char stream and suspension of angling as soon as the quota were reached. This could lead to chaotic conditions, with the entire quota being taken in the first two or three weeks. It would be unsatisfactory for the camp operators and also from the standpoint of employment for Eskimo guides.

Another possibility and perhaps the most satisfactory solution in a situation such as the Tree River appears to be establishment of a "public" campground on each stream which is developed for intensive char fishing. One privately-owned camp would also be allowed on each stream, and a limit placed on numbers to be accommodated at both the public and private camps. The angling quota for the stream would be divided proportionately between the two camps. The facilities of the public camp would be limited to minimum facilities. The public camp's facilities would be available for the use of any outfitter or main camp operator in the Territories. The fees charged for use of the camps would be designed to repay capital investment plus costs of hiring a fisheries warden to supervise the use of each camp and the entire fishery on the river.

This approach to the problem on char streams was discussed with sport fishing camp operators. The reaction, with one or two exceptions, was favourable.

It is proposed to include a sum for operation and purchase of equipment for this purpose in the 1965-66 tourist development appropriations. The cost is estimated at roughly \$7,000 per camp. Before Council is asked to make a final decision at the February 1965 Session, this proposal will be discussed in more detail with camp operators and a more complete explanation presented for Council.

### 3. Contract Employee

A statement on a proposed level of tourist development was prepared at the request of Council and presented at the June 1964 Session. This statement noted that the most urgent need in the tourist development program was for staff, and that one alternative open to Council would be hiring of staff on a contract basis.

A tourist development officer is needed in the Mackenzie District. This need has developed during the past two years and has now become urgent with the sport fishing problems on Great Bear Lake and Tree River, and the regulatory and management steps which are proposed. The Northern Administration Branch cannot provide an officer based in Fort Smith before the 1966-67 fiscal year. It is proposed that Council hire a full-time contract employee as an interim step. If this contract is approved by Council, a suitable person should be hired as soon as possible so that preparations can be made this winter for the summer season. Total costs for the balance of this fiscal year (Jan. 1 to March 31) are estimated at \$4,000 including salary, travel and removal expenses. The necessary funds can be found in this year's estimates.

The costs for a full year of employment are estimated as follows:

Salary - based on bottom of NO4 range plus northern allowance and allowance for pension, etc.	\$ 9,000.00
Travel - primarily in Mackenzie District	2,500.00
Stenographic and clerical assistance (casual labour)	1,000.00
Office supplies	500.00
Total	<u>\$13,000.00</u>

Briefly, the terms of reference for this officer would be as follows: to be located in Fort Smith; to work in conjunction with and under direction of industrial development staff of the Administrator of the Mackenzie; to plan, carry out and supervise tourist development programs in the Mackenzie District; to maintain close liaison with all companies and individuals engaged in the tourist industry; to administer ordinances and regulations of the Territorial Government pertaining to the tourist industry.

### C. Grant to Northwest Territories Tourist Association

Note: This item is not directly related to previous items in this reference for advice.

No additional funds are requested, but permission is sought for a change in the manner of disbursement. In the past, matching grants have been made available to the Association and to other local organizations for development projects. Grants have been made to the Association for operation of an information booth along the Mackenzie Highway. This project is not operational at the present time. The Department has provided the secretary for the Association but to make possible closer liaison between the secretary and the Board of Directors, and to remove the secretary from the difficult dual role of secretary and tourist development officer, it is proposed that a basic grant of \$500 per year be made available to the Association to cover the costs of a private individual serving as secretary. It is not intended that this will set a precedent for other non-matching grants to the Association or to other local organizations, and matching grants will be continued for specific projects.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

## 5<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 28<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

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