

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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TRAPPERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Introduction

The Council of the Northwest Territories at its July, 1961, Session approved a Trappers' Assistance Program and provided \$5,000.00 from which loans of up to \$400.00 per individual could be made for equipment and groceries. Trappers who do not repay their loans will not be eligible for assistance in succeeding years. Exceptions are made if a trapper proves conclusively that he did not obtain sufficient fur to do so. The primary purpose of the program is to assist trappers to reach remote, unharvested or underharvested areas. In 1961 it was agreed that loans would not be made for aircraft charters. The matter was reviewed again at the July, 1963 Session and Council approved an expansion of the program to permit loans to a maximum of \$400.00 for equipment and supplies plus an additional \$300.00 for aircraft charter.

Report on Operation of the Program

During the 1961-62 season, twenty-four trappers received a total of \$2,653.28. Fur taken by these trappers was valued at approximately \$5,000. Of the funds loaned, 56% was repaid. Better than half of the loans were made to Fort Smith and Fort Resolution trappers.

In the 1962-63 season loans totalling \$2,084.93 were made to twenty-three trappers. Fur taken by these trappers amounted to approximately \$2,000. Repayment of the loans was approximately 31%. Eighteen of the twenty-three men granted loans were Fort Smith and Fort Resolution trappers.

Total loans made in 1963-64 to twenty-four trappers amounted to \$5,144.39 in varying amounts up to \$400.00. As a result, of these loans, fur to the value of \$5,000 was produced, in some cases from areas that had been unharvested for several years. Repayment of 1963-64 loans was 69% or \$3,539.39.

It will be noted that the percentage of repayment has been increasing year by year since the inception of the program.

During 1963-64 a number of applications were refused because of lack of sufficient funds. For this and other reasons it was recommended that the amount available for the program be increased to \$10,000. It was recognized that as the program was becoming more widely known and used, an increase in program funds was required but it was considered that the reasons advanced did not warrant a 100% increase. An amount of \$8,000 was provided for the 1964-65 program.

In last report, loans totalling some \$4,000 have been made to a total of seventeen trappers as follows:

Place	Number	Total Loans
Aklavik Inuvik	4	566.08
Fort Good Hope	3	1,538.27
Fort Norman	6	774.18
Nae	1	250.00
Hay River	1	275.47
Fort Smith	2	327.06
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6	17	3,791.06

The loans at Fort Good Hope include funds for aircraft charter to fly the trappers into areas which have been unharvested for years. The relatively large number of applications usually received from Fort Resolution and Fort Smith trappers have not yet been received but are expected before the spring hunt, together with more applications from other areas. The program has been well advertised and the trappers have been encouraged to use it.

While it is early to make any firm prediction, fine fur is believed to be more plentiful this year than last and repayment is expected to compare in percentage to previous years.

Summary

While not an unqualified success, it must be noted that this program is apparently of value to the trappers who use it and to the economy. The program enables trappers to remain for longer periods on their traplines and produce more fur. Fur is in good supply in many of the remote areas. The program assists those who wish to go into those remote areas and make their living off the land. The harvesting of areas which have been untouched for a number of years can be a significant contribution to the economy.