

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
5TH COUNCIL, 30TH SESSION

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL
NO. 7-30

TABLED ON JUNE 14, 1965



14 May, 1965.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL NO. 7
(Second Session, 1965)

RADIO COMMUNICATION - ANDERSON RIVER

PEEL RIVER

DISPOSITION

Accepted as Read.....

Amended..... See Text.

Rejected..... JUN 22 1965 See Text.

Deferred..... See Text.

Not considered.

RADIO COMMUNICATION - ANDERSON RIVER

PEEL RIVER

At the February Session, Council discussed the possibility of setting up radio communication between trappers operating in the Peel River, Arctic Red River and Anderson River areas and the nearest communities. Council thought the need for some form of emergency communication was obvious.

The number of trappers operating in these areas is 40 in the Peel River area and 17 in the Anderson River area.

From information gathered from communications officers it would appear feasible to establish radio communication although it would require some co-ordination and organization as well as funds from the Territorial Government to purchase or rent suitable equipment. There is a wide selection of equipment which might be used for this purpose. Cost varies according to size and range required. One model which might adapt itself to the requirements costs about \$350, weighs nine pounds and operates on flashlight batteries but is equipped with an antenna which, if broken or lost renders the apparatus useless. Another model costs about the same, weighs 25 pounds with batteries and any type of wire may be used as an antenna. Both have been used with some success by the Geological Survey of Canada in the High Arctic and in Northern British Columbia, although in the latter area the range is more limited. A factor to consider is that these radios are HF transceivers and their range depends on the terrain. In treeless and flat country, such as the High Arctic, the range under normal conditions might be 150 miles. In mountains and heavily forested areas the range might be cut by as much as 50%.

Still another model which is being produced for the RCAF by Canadian General Electric could be used, although it would require special co-ordinating efforts to make it effective. A complete unit weighs 15 pounds and the packset readily adapts itself to any kind of packboard for easy transportation. Its operation is simple, it is waterproof, shockproof and is built to operate down to a temperature of 40 below. The power supply consists of rechargeable cells. Estimated cost of this apparatus would be \$250. The difficulty with this set is that it has only a ground range of 10 miles but communication with an aircraft is unlimited. If it were used, periodic patrols would have to be arranged with a suitably equipped aircraft to check on the welfare of the trapper. An added complication would be the necessity of arranging with the RCAF to borrow the equipment for trial purposes. The other two models mentioned are manufactured respectively by Spillsbury & Tyndall of Vancouver and by Humble Manufacturing Company of Winnipeg (Perry Agency).

One point which Council might want to consider before buying such equipment is the effectiveness for the purpose in mind. It might be well to rent say three models in order to give the equipment a fair test under varying conditions and in the various areas in which they are to be used. It might be necessary to test several models, provided rental arrangements could be made in each case. The monthly rental charge for the first model referred to above would be in the range of \$50 to \$60 for each apparatus.

Apart from selecting the proper equipment, a licence to operate receivers and transmitters must be obtained from the

Department of Transport. It might be noted here that the Department of Transport, as a result of our informal enquiry, has indicated that an appropriate frequency might be reserved for this purpose pending receipt of a formal application once a specific type of equipment is selected and the number of models to be used is determined. This frequency would have to be confirmed with the C N Telecommunications who operate the commercial station at Inuvik, which would be the focal point for the dispatch and receipt of messages within a radius of 100 miles, before a transportable licence can be issued to the Department.

Once the licence is granted the equipment could be obtained either by purchase or rental. Users would have to be instructed on care and maintenance, operation, and on the observance of regulations relating to radio communication. Arrangements would have to be made by the Department of Northern Affairs to have appropriate officers in the field to see that this is co-ordinated, probably through Game Management Officers.

Reference was made as well at the last Session to the experience of the Department of Northern Affairs in the Eastern Arctic with what was termed ECU's. The Administrator of the Arctic reports more fully on this as follows:

Two Emergency Camp Units were established in 1960; one at Schultz Lake, near Baker Lake and the other at Chcrkbak Inlet, near Cape Dorset. These units were small and rigid framed cabins equipped with radios weighing about 75 pounds. Also in the cabin was a small quantity of food and medical supplies. There was a stove and fuel. Someone was designated to call on schedule once a week from each cabin. The cabins could not be kept warm constantly. Temperatures dropping to 50 below soon produced condensation in the radio equipment and destroyed it. As a result the experiment was discontinued.

Reference was also made to a system of communication for trappers having been in existence in Saskatchewan at one time. No attempt has been made to seek details of this operation since it would appear from discussions in Council that the system was more elaborate than is contemplated in that this system involved a central stationary receiving post which itself could relay stronger messages to populated centres.

The Commissioner recommends that steps be taken to apply for a licence; to rent three radio sets and the appropriate equipment for six months; to organize a procedure for lending the equipment to trappers; to arrange schedules with the main receiving point; to test the program as to effectiveness and that the necessary money, estimated to be about \$1,500, be appropriated from Territorial funds.