

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

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

A BRIEF
PROPOSING THE CHOICE OF YELLOWKNIFE FOR THE
CAPITAL OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

THIS BRIEF IS RESPECTFULLY
SUBMITTED BY THE BOARD OF
TRADE OF THE TOWN OF
YELLOWKNIFE.

Submitted to the Territorial Council
June 1965

A BRIEF FOR PRESENTATION TO THE JUNE 1965 SITTINGS
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COUNCIL WITH REASONING
SUPPORTING YELLOWKNIFE AS THE CAPITAL FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

PREAMBLE

It is assumed that the capital would be in the Mackenzie area as this area is presently the most highly developed and as it holds the most promise for future development. It is further assumed that Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith would be the three localities under consideration because of existing facilities, transportation, development, etc. It is the purpose of this brief to demonstrate that because of its superior development, facilities, location and other factors, Yellowknife is the logical choice as the location for the capital.

Establishment of a capital is of great economic significance to the municipality concerned as well as to various government departments planning administrative and other expansion in the north. Designation of a temporary capital at Fort Smith has resulted in the location of many government offices there. There would be no waste of these facilities due to relocation of the capital because these facilities would presumably still be required in Fort Smith to administer that area. The need for early establishment of a permanent capital is without question. All factors must be considered and a wise choice made.

ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING YELLOWKNIFE AS THE TERRITORIAL CAPITAL

1. LOCATION. Yellowknife is more centrally to the Mackenzie area than either of the other municipalities. It is the present "jumping off" point for exploration in the area and to the north. Because of this latter factor the town's facilities to support such activity are well developed.
2. TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION. Yellowknife has daily service by scheduled airlines and also boasts the largest charter air base in Canada, involving five different companies. The airport is the best in the Territories with a paved two way runway, navigational aids and room for expansion. The Mackenzie highway provides for ground travel by bus, car and transport trucks. Yellowknife is also serviced by Northern Transportation Co. Ltd. in water transport. These factors combine to give Yellowknife superiority in the transportation field.

In the radio, C.F.Y.K. serves as base station for Fort Smith, Hay River, Uranium City and Fort Simpson. Through this the C.B.C. has shown Yellowknife to be its choice as a focus for its operations in the Southern Mackenzie and Great Slave Lake areas.

Canadian National Telecommunications provides good telephone, teletype and telegraph service to the area.
3. ACCOMMODATION. With three hotels and two motels plus restaurants, the Elk's Hall, the Legion, etc., Yellowknife is best equipped to handle tourists, conventions, and other activities that the capital would be called upon to provide.
4. SERVICES. Professionally, Yellowknife has three doctors, one dentist, five lawyers, two accountants and a consultant engineering firm all operating in private enterprise situations to serve the area. There are many other semi-professional people which provide the town with services required in their

areas. The town is large enough to support more than one outlet for each of the various classifications as in hardware, foodstuffs, clothing, etc., and this is of benefit to the consumer because of competitive prices being offered. A smaller community would not be able to support more than one retail outlet in each of the various fields and because of the monopolies existent the costs to the consumer would be higher.

5. THE ECONOMY OF YELLOWKNIFE. This is based mainly on the mines operating in the area and secondarily on the tourist business. There are two mines operating near town and two others, 50 and 150 miles away. Many ancillary enterprises are associated therewith. The value of the gold production in Yellowknife far exceeds that of any other natural resources or other production in the Territories. It is inevitable that new mines will develop in the area and continue to support the Yellowknife economy. It is recognized that the present mines will eventually run out, but the many businesses and services already established would remain to serve the capital's needs. The presence of the mines has allowed for the development of facilities and services far more extensive than those in Fort Smith or Hav River. Tourism, it has been said, is the north's best prospect for rapid development and economic advantage over the next ten years. Yellowknife is not lagging in developing this industry. The town maintains one campsite and plans further development in this line. The Board of Trade operates an excellent tourist information centre and handled a tremendous amount of correspondence from would-be visitors. Arctic Circle cruises has this year re-located to Yellowknife as a base for operating its pleasure and sporting excursion boats on Great Slave Lake and up the Mackenzie River. A number of sporting enterprises on Great Slave, Great Bear and other lakes operate out of Yellowknife.

6. CONSTRUCTION. Although construction costs are slightly increased the town offers superior construction sites because of the availability of bedrock on which to place foundations. The advantages of this over muskeg, etc., as in Hay River particularly are obvious. Further to this, permafrost is not a problem in Yellowknife. We submit that the slightly increased cost of construction would be well compensated for by the decreased maintenance associated with better foundations, etc.

7. THE TOWN OF YELLOWKNIFE. Yellowknife as a municipal district is very capably administered by a fully elected town council. The town has water and sewer services plus electric power from three sources supported by diesel electric stand-by unit. A new 35 bed hospital has been approved and will be under construction by August 1st.

The effectiveness of our local fire brigade is evidenced by our relatively low fire insurance rates. The town has a pavement paving program outlined and as well as a sidewalk program. The town has recently purchased an asphalt plant which will facilitate the execution of this program. Yellowknife has a comprehensive master plan of development which will result in a step by step development of all municipal services and control thereof by zoning by-laws.

In the field of education, the public and separate school boards administer two elementary and one secondary school. The federal school adequately provides further secondary school education needs. A school for retarded children is being planned and should be constructed by the Fall of '66.

Some years ago the town chose a site for the location of capital buildings in Yellowknife and this site is still being reserved. The site can readily be served with utilities, is close to the business centre of town and overlooks Frame Lake. The municipal council of Yellowknife would offer every

co-operation in developing this site.

Some government departments have already seen the wisdom in establishing Yellowknife as a base for their operations. A judge of the Territorial Court, a magistrate and staff are all based at Yellowknife. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys maintain in Yellowknife the only resident geologist in the Territories.

RESUME.

From the foregoing outline it would appear that Yellowknife is presently the best equipped municipality in the Territories to provide the needs that would be required for the capital. It would seem to be good thinking that the capital should be in such a location as to be closest to the greatest population concentration in the Territories. Yellowknife can certainly claim to be such. The town's present and future development programs are compatible with the establishment of the capital here.

We respectfully submit that there is an urgent need for the establishment of a permanent capital of the Northwest Territories and further submit that Yellowknife is the logical choice for the capital.