

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 35TH SESSION

REFERENCE FOR ADVICE
NO. 1-35

TABLED ON NOVEMBER 22, 1967



November 17, 1967.

CONFIDENTIAL -
Not for release be-
fore tabling dur-
ing the 35th Session
of Council

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

*Reference for Advice
Tabled on Nov. 22, 1967*

REFERENCE FOR ADVICE NO. 1
(Second Session, 1967)

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

DISPOSITION

Tabled	To Committee	Accepted as Read	Accepted as Amended	Deferred (to Session)	Rejected	Noted not Considered

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

One of the greatest shortcomings in the present system of Local Government in the Northwest Territories is that it provides no meaningful local authority below the village level. Since the majority of settlements in the Northwest Territories fall into this category, a broadening of the role of Local Advisory Councils should be encouraged.

For many years on a broad and informal level, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has, as a matter of policy, encouraged staff to promote the establishment of Local Advisory Councils in the smaller and less sophisticated northern communities. As a result, a number of these Councils have been formed in settlements throughout the Northwest Territories. Their success has varied quite naturally in different locations but on the whole, they appear to have made a significant contribution to the development of local self-government in the Northwest Territories. In recent years, the Community Development Fund has been particularly helpful in that it has provided an opportunity for the Advisory Councils to gain experience in the management of local affairs by giving them limited funds to spend on local projects of their choice.

For some time, however, it has been recognized that some more organized administrative arrangement is necessary to co-ordinate the activities of these Councils,

and to supply them with advice, technical assistance and financial help. Proposals have been considered by the Commissioner regarding the provision of this assistance to the Advisory Councils through a social development program. The basis of these proposals is that Advisory Councils in unorganized communities require special services to assist them in the development of those skills that will be required if they are eventually to shoulder the responsibilities of full municipal status. In essence, the proposal is that the Territorial Department of Local Government would undertake to provide these special services to the communities. This is being arranged.

At the same time, an even more important consideration has emerged. It is apparent that a broad pattern of development is needed which will encourage small communities to have a meaningful degree of authority over their own affairs. This need gains greater significance in the light of the growing participation of local residents in community affairs in many settlements where Advisory Councils have been established. It has been characteristic for this growing activity to be expressed in the formation of a growing number of community organizations. These organizations provide local residents with many opportunities to gain experience in the management of community affairs. However, different roles and functions of these individual groups become increasingly difficult for local people to distinguish. Where this occurs, much local social action

can be dispersed into meaningless activity. It is felt that more autonomous Advisory Councils which could assume a meaningful role in local self-government in unorganized communities would be the best way of bringing orderly development.

To allow the Advisory Councils to assume a management role, a means of giving them incorporated status and control over land use is needed and it must be a relatively simple one. Land use control can be established in any settlement in which the Commissioner deems it necessary to have rudimentary control to ensure orderly development by designating it a Development Area under the Area Development Ordinance. It is therefore proposed that as appropriate, each settlement with a population greater than fifty persons be designated a Development Area to encourage this development. Unless an Advisory Council exists in these communities, the Commissioner proposes to encourage their formation as soon as possible. These Advisory Councils would then be incorporated, giving them legal status whereby they could manage funds, enter into contracts and take other executive-type actions. Perhaps a further step in increasing the responsibilities of individual Advisory Councils would be the creation of Local Improvement districts where appropriate and with possible changes in the Local Improvement District Ordinance, to clarify the composition and status of the Advisory Councils in Local Improvement Districts.

Therefore, with the consent of Council, it is proposed to initiate a comprehensive program of local

government in unorganized settlements along the following lines:

1. Designation of unorganized settlements with populations greater than fifty persons as Development Areas and the establishment of Advisory Councils in each.
2. Incorporation of the Advisory Councils.
3. Preparation of legislation outlining the terms of reference and authorities for incorporated Advisory Councils.

If Council can give advice on this matter in the current session, the policy can be worked out in detail and, if at all possible the required amendments to the above Ordinances presented at the next Session.

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