

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 36TH SESSION

RECOMMENDATION TO
COUNCIL NO. 1-36

TABLED ON FEBRUARY 7, 1968



January 25, 1968

CONFIDENTIAL -

Not for release before
tabling during the 36th
Session of Council

RC 1-36

Tabled on Feb. 7, 1968

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL NO. I

(First Session, 1968)

PURCHASE OF LIQUOR BY SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

RECIPIENTS

DISPOSITION

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

PURCHASE OF LIQUOR BY SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

At its 35th session the Council of the Northwest Territories requested the administration to present to the next session a report on the possibility of introducing legislation to prohibit recipients of social assistance from purchasing liquor so long as they were recipients of such assistance. Council further directed that draft legislation to implement this proposal accompany the paper.

The Canadian Welfare Council has examined this proposal and reports that in their view legislation cannot effectively prevent people from purchasing alcohol with social assistance funds. The Executive Secretary of the Canadian Public Welfare Association, for 20 years the Deputy Minister of Welfare in Saskatchewan, supported this belief.

Two methods do exist, it was suggested, which might be of some use in this connection. The first, interdiction, is already provided for in the Northwest Territories Liquor Ordinance. It is not widely used because it is relatively ineffective and difficult to enforce. The second is the re-establishment of a liquor permit system. Permits issued to social assistance recipients would be retained by the issuing authority so long as social assistance was being provided. Numerous difficulties are inherent. Establishment of such a system would produce a substantial additional administrative workload, and unless each liquor outlet was provided with a continually revised current list of permit holders, the system would be useless. The Superintendent of the Territorial Liquor System advises that the revenue produced by selling permits at \$1.00 each, a practice which was discontinued in 1963, was exceeded by the administrative costs involved. He also states that it was ineffective as a means of control.

Persons who are determined to obtain liquor can almost always do so in spite of preventive measures. Attempts to prevent them from obtaining liquor usually produce as side effects other social ills of equal or greater consequence, for example, boot-legging.

The Canadian Welfare Council suggests that the most satisfactory solutions to this problem can probably be found through education and intensified welfare counselling. The Northwest Territories Alcohol Education Programme, although not specifically directed at social assistance recipients, is meeting the need for such education.

It was also suggested that in cases where social assistance recipients have demonstrated an inability to manage their own financial affairs, a trustee (a dependable resident of the community where the recipient lives) be appointed to manage the recipient's social assistance funds. This procedure would apply to all social assistance recipients who had demonstrated an inability to manage their funds for any reason, not just because of liquor problems. Similar provisions are in effect with respect to family allowance funds, although it is not known how often or effectively this procedure is used. The Social Assistance Ordinance and regulations provide for the implementation of such a procedure.

The Commissioner therefore recommends that:

- (1) the Alcohol Education Programme receive continuing support and that wherever possible particular attention be devoted to social assistance recipients demonstrating a need for Alcohol Education.
- (2) Increased counselling in respect to the consumption of alcohol be provided to social assistance recipients.
- (3) the provisions of the Social Assistance Ordinance and regulations which permit the appointment of trustees (dependable residents of the recipient's community) to manage the financial affairs of social assistance recipients be implemented where necessary.