

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
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SESSIONAL PAPER NO. I

(First Session, 1968)

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DOG ORDINANCE

DISPOSITION

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

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DOG ORDINANCE

During the discussion of amendments to the Dog Ordinance at its 33rd session, Council directed that consideration be given to the following suggestions:

1. That each settlement in the Northwest Territories have a dog pound;
2. That each settlement have an area set aside in which individual owners could tie their dogs;
3. That a dog tag be issued for each dog and attached to the dog's collar;
4. That tranquillizer guns be issued to all dog officers;
5. That the owners of impounded dogs be charged the costs of impounding.

The Administration, to which each of these suggestions was referred for study, has returned the following comments:

1. That each settlement in the Northwest Territories have a dog pound:

Most settlements do have dog pounds, but many are inadequate. In Keewatin, for example, they are catch-alls for drifting snow. To be effective, they would have to be built with covers or roofs. If Council decides that effective dog pounds are to be erected, funds would have to be provided for their construction.

2. That each settlement have an area set aside in which individual owners could tie their dogs:

Many settlements have such areas (in some instances Community Development funds have purchased the material for dog lines). However, it appears that community planning groups have paid insufficient attention to this matter.

3. That a dog tag be issued for each dog and attached to the dog's collar:

Identification of dogs would be considerably less difficult if each animal were to wear a tag. This procedure, however, would place additional administrative burdens upon dog officers called upon to implement it. Dog officers, with the exception of members of the R.C.M. Police, are unpaid volunteers who cannot be expected to assume too many extra responsibilities. It is estimated that the cost of providing dog tags and of paying dog officers to administer the program would average \$500 to \$1,000 annually per settlement.

4. That tranquillizer guns be issued to all dog officers:

This procedure has many disadvantages. Dr. Milton R. Freeman, a biologist familiar with the use of tranquillizing and immobilizing drugs in arctic and antarctic conditions, summarizes these as follows:

"(1) Tranquillizer drugs are less useful for catching animals than immobilizing drugs.

(2) A rifle projector uses a gas charge (which is more accurate and effective than a pistol for field use). Under northern conditions, because it is very sensitive to temperature, it would be ineffective for much of the year. Gas guns must be kept in first-class operating condition, particularly very clean. A cross-bow is preferable for delivering the syringe.

(3) Guns using a powder charge are too powerful for close range use and should be avoided.

(4) The dosage must be calculated knowing the weight of the dog, to within 5 lbs., and many physiological variable--age,

nutritional, emotional and constitutional conditions, etc. The dosage is administered intra-muscularly, but bad aim or luck may deliver the drug intra-venously or intra-peritoneally. In first trials, up to 50% of the animals are usually killed.

(5) Even an inadequate dose may cause the death of the dog, if it is stressed by being chased. Too large a dose is invariably fatal.. Thus, even if weights of dogs are known, unknown physiological factors usually result in inappropriate doses. (When did the animal last eat? Is it fatigued or nervous, etc?) Deaths must be expected in up to 20% of the dogs injected by this method.

(6) Immobilizing drugs (nicotine alkaloids or curar-like products) are poisons. An overdose for an 80-lbs. dog is an overdose for a pre-teenage child. Treatment for accidental immobilization includes stomach irrigations and oxygen therapy, as well as appropriate chemical antidotes. Presumably, the use of these poisons would have to be matched by the provision of suitable emergency equipment, in case of accidents. Nicotine poisons are absorbed through the skin; they do not require injection or ingestion.

(7) The use of immobilizers as anesthetics in veterinary practice often requires the application of artificial respiration techniques during respiratory stress. Immobilizing drugs paralyse the respiratory muscles as well as the locomotory muscles.

(8) The immobilized dog must be immediately removed from the cold. Because important heat regulating mechanisms are involved, shock and freezing will follow.

The general consensus that I have encountered, and with which I concur, is that immobilizing appliances of this nature, including tranquillizing drugs, are not a simple or satisfactory solution, and may introduce additional problems."

Dr. Freeman suggests several alternatives to immobilizing actions: traditional practices of residents of the North, such as canine clipping, which was suggested by Mr. Simonie at the 34th session and which has been law in West Greenland for some years now; baited traps; and tranquillizer baits (drugs taken orally) where dosage is not so critical but which take from 30 to 60 minutes to act and which subdue rather than immobilize the dog.

5. That the owners of impounded dogs be charged the costs of impounding:

The Dog Ordinance provides for charging the owner of the animal the costs of impounding. However, it is often difficult to prove responsibility for dogs and to forcibly collect charges. There is little hope of enforcing the Ordinance in this respect unless dog officers are paid sufficient wages to allow them to devote time and effort to the task.