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SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 8

(First Session, 1968)

SHORTAGE OF MINERS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

DISPOSITION

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

SHORTAGE OF MINERS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

At its 35th session, Council requested a study of methods of improving the supply of miners in the Northwest Territories. The Director, Resources and Economic Development Group, reports that data on the total employment and daily production rates of the producing mines within the Territories for the period 1964-67, do not indicate a reduction in the overall number of miners employed:

Men Employed and Tonnage Milled
Northwest Territories Mines, 1964-67

	1964		1965		1966		1967	
	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled	Daily Tonnage Men Milled
Con-Rycon	173	440	201	472	218	451	231	433
Giant Yellowknife Mines	348	1,094	362	1,082	365	1,060	367	896
Discovery Mines	120	213	133	221	122	253	124	240
Tundra Gold Mines	85	114	95	131	94	143	95	136
Tungsten Mining Corporation	59	300	76	301	87	326	42(2)	--
Echo Bay Mines	41	71	64	98	74	121	77	107
Pine Point Mines (1)			106	2,334(3)	245	4,000	264	4,123
TOTALS	826	1,037	1,205	1,205	1,205	1,200	1,200	1,200

Based on 11 months' production.

(1) Open Pit Mine

(2) Mill and crusher house burned in December, 1966, and all employees in 1967 were on surface construction

(3) One month's production only through concentrator

NOTE: At Pine Point, in addition to tonnage milled, there was an average daily production of crude ore as follows:

1965
1,000 tons

1966
775 tons

1967
918 tons

Statistics on skilled labour turnover and the extent to which it has been necessary to train unskilled labour are not immediately available. It appears that mining companies have had to take more readily available unskilled labour and train such persons as miners. In carrying out the study requested by Council, particular attention will be paid to these questions.

Almost all miners presently employed in the Northwest Territories were born elsewhere. Many have worked in a number of mines, not only in the Territories, but also in adjoining provinces. The Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy conducted a survey of the mining labour force throughout Canada which indicates that the shortage of labour is a general problem; this is reflected in the

situation in the Northwest Territories. Changes in immigration policy and a general easing of the labour market in Canada are expected to help overcome part of the shortage throughout Canada, and therefore also in the Territories.

Other aspects of the problem include the provision of housing for employees with families and the provision of social amenities, for example, television and radio services. Also, single men generally wish to try out various opportunities, particularly those with the best wage and overtime possibilities. This practice alone leads to a high rate of labour turnover.

In the long run, one of the best hopes for providing a stable skilled labour force for the Territories lies in the solution of the problems of adapting indigenous peoples to such work. This difficult and complicated question is currently being studied by Dr. David Stevenson of Dalhousie University. Dr. Stevenson has completed one summer's study and is planning an enlarged program for next summer. The question of the provision of training facilities is also under study; a useful first step was undertaken by the Education Division of the Department through a functional analysis of the Mackenzie District mining industry. A report by Mr. Robert Jelking is nearing completion and should provide a basis for improved training programs, particularly programs of apprentice and "on-the-job" training. Such programs would assist both the mining industry through the provision of a skilled labour source, and the existing population through training for more highly paid local employment.

Close cooperation with the Chambers of Mines of the two Territories is maintained by the Department, and grants are made to these organizations to assist them in their work. The Alberta and Northwest Chamber of Mines and Resources acts as hiring agent for mines in the Northwest Territories and assists the Territorial Government and the Department's Mines Inspection Unit by arranging for the required medical examination of mine workers in dust exposure occupations. In view of this, the fullest cooperation of the organizations and of the mining companies in the collection of data can be expected.

The Department is already involved in work on the problems of supplying a skilled labour force. As part of their development strategy, they are undertaking a series of studies designed to improve the supply of skilled labour throughout the Territories, and will now include a study in depth of the situation pertaining to the mining industry. As soon as the study is complete, a comprehensive report including appropriate recommendations will be prepared and forwarded to Council.