

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 38TH SESSION**

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TABLED ON JANUARY 28, 1969

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January, 1969.

BRIEF OF THE DENINOO ASSOCIATION
OF FORT RESOLUTION.

We of the Deninoo Association of Fort Resolution wish to express our strong concern regarding the Governments plans to control the buffalo of the Fort Resolution - Fort Smith area.

Besides being an important part of our history and culture, the buffalo is a vital source of our food. Fish is not always available and there are no cariboo and very few moose in our area. Not only are buffalo the main source of food for us in Resolution, but they are essential to survival out on the trapline. Without buffalo trapping would become impossible. And without trapping making a living would become even more difficult than it is now.

We are all agreed that we, the people of the North, must continue to be able to trap and hunt and fish freely as has always been our right.

We believe that the Government has no right whatsoever to make plans regarding these animals without first consulting with us and the other people of the North. Without doing so they are breaking the Treaty. (Whenever native people ask for or say something the Government says that it is not in the Treaties or the Indian Act. Yet they do not consult us concerning things which ARE covered by the Treaties.)

If in fact there is any problem of disease within the buffalo herds (or other problems of overgrazing or management) we feel that they should be solved in consultation with us. If in fact there is a problem of disease among them then we are not against the Government killing the old or diseased animals. But we are certainly against the killing of young healthy buffalo.

We feel (contrary to the feeling in Fort Smith concerning their own area) that the healthy buffalo should be allowed to roam free. If in fact the corraling of the buffalo cannot be avoided for reasons unknown to us then we people of Resolution would consider owning our own herd, and, if we so desire, setting up a commercial venture of our own.

We firmly support the Fort Smith brief concerning their plan for 4000 head of buffalo to be put into their own hands with the possibility of a commercial operation resulting. We signed their brief for that reason.

Many of us feel as one of us said :

" If they shoot our buffalo they might as well start shooting off the native people."

The following is a list of proposals agreed to by the undersigned

ONE THAT THE GOVERNMENT ALLOW THE BUFFALO TO REMAIN FREE AROUND RESOLUTION.

- Reasons: (1) Vital source of food ;
- (2) The Government has not consulted the native people concerning their plans for the buffalo ;
- and (3) Trappers need the buffalo :
because there are no fish, no cariboo and very few moose.

TWO THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT TAKES THE BUFFALO , IT SHOULD CONDUCT A FEASABILITY STUDY ON RESOLUTION'S OWNING AND CONTROLLING ITS OWN HERD .

- Reasons: (1) So that many of us can have jobs ;
- (2). So that we can all look forward to the future ;
- and (3) So that we will not have to depend on welfare.

BUFFALO BRIEF

A BRIEF TO THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COUNCIL
FROM
THEBACHA ASSOCIATION
FORT SMITH, N.W.T.

This brief was prepared to outline a proposal designed to maintain disease control while preventing the useless slaughter of our Buffalo; to maintain our food supply; and to conserve our Buffalo as a future economic resource in northern development.

January, 1969

Frank Lamollette
Chairman

BUFFALO BRIEF

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FORT SMITH, N.W.T.
JANUARY, 1969

INTRODUCTION

Thebacha Association is a native organization involved in a community development function. We are registered under the Societies Ordinance and in the process of expanding our operation to also be incorporated as Thebacha Enterprises Limited. Our Association was formed in March, 1967, and inadvertently developed into a business through the use of Community Development funds and private contracts to employ Native people and in this way attempted to fulfill one of the most urgent needs in the community. We also act as liaison for various government divisions where our people are involved.

PREPARATION

This brief was prepared by the Thebacha Board of Directors and interested members to represent the wishes of the Northern Residents who have signed the Buffalo Petition.

BACKGROUND

We have recently been approached by Wood Buffalo Park with an offer of new employment opportunities - the building of a corral, selection and herding of 4,000 choice Buffalo, and subsequent slaughter of all other Buffalo in the area - an estimated eight to eleven thousand.

On further probing into the purpose of the undertaking, we were informed it was aimed at controlling the spread of disease among the herds and upgrading the quality of the remaining Buffalo. Our first reaction was one of great consternation. However, on contemplating constructive alternatives, we feel we have found a plan that will benefit all concerned and eliminate the diminishment of our prized Buffalo and the inane waste of one of our most vital sources of food supply - the Buffalo.

PLAN

Rather than allow the total destruction of this source of food, and knowing that the Canadian Government has already accepted the principle of developing the Buffalo into new commercial ventures, we wish to submit our own proposal for an alternate solution - a Buffalo ranching project sponsored by Thebacha Association. We therefore request 1) your assistance in conducting a feasibility study on our Buffalo ranching proposal, and 2) on preparing a project description which then might qualify for assistance under a development program such as ARDA.

PURPOSE

The purpose of our plan is to:

1. preserve the native people's natural food supply and assure a continuing source.
2. create new employment and a training program in responsibility and management, in disease control, and in feed and care of animals.
3. maintain our native people's deep pride in the Buffalo as part of their history.

4. provide incentive for other native people of the North to look into possibilities for grants to conduct similar projects with other wild animals in the North.

PROJECT

- We are planning a new branch of our Association to manage business ventures under a new charter: Thebacha Enterprises Limited.

- We wish to manage a large herd of about 3,000 head where a proportion of the increase will be sold to our own people and another proportion will be available for sale elsewhere.

- We wish to run this herd in the Fox Hole area, north of the main highway (see aerial photo and map). We request that this area be reserved for this project.

- We were advised that this area, with average rainfall, could support cattle at the rate of five acres per head. Winter pasture in the area is also sufficient, although we would need a supplementary feed supply.

- Part of the area would be reserved for winter grazing, part for summer pastures, and part for supply of hay.

- We would need about a 30 to 60 mile boundary fence.

- Catch pens and a holding corral already exist in the area.

- We would need corrals, a well, buildings, etc.

- A campsite could be developed for tourist potential.

- The slaughter-house we are planning could be a portable-type installation. However, there is an abattoir already in existence in the Park which we could utilize if the Federal Government is prepared to make an

agreement allowing us to use it for testing, slaughtering, butchering, and packing which would meet the standard of health inspectors.

- An access road already leads to the area. This would facilitate access to the campsite for tourists and, for our operation, access to the abattoir.

- This Buffalo project could be expanded to serve other settlements at their request and will provide the inception of similar projects to conserve our wildlife, such as the caribou, reindeer, musk-ox, and others, for economic development.

PROPOSAL

We believe we are capable of successfully managing the said operation and we request your help in preparing an ARDA proposal, as well as the technical and financial resources needed to set up this operation.

CONCLUSION

We know that each member on our Council is not only interested in economic development but feels the deep need for emancipation of our indigenous people and their contribution to progressive development in conjunction with conserving something very close to our hearts, our wildlife and homeland, protected as near as possible in its natural state. In conclusion then, we cannot express in words our hope that you will realize the importance of our concern and will carefully consider our proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

THEBACHA ASSOCIATION,
Fort Smith, N.W.T.