

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 42ND SESSION**

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BRIEF RE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES GAZETTE

As Publisher of News of the North, I respectfully request Members of the Northwest Territories Council to consider the following submission which may assist in deciding what to do about printing and publishing official notices such as might appear in the Northwest Territories Gazette.

At present there are four community newspapers in the North and one which has been trying to accomplish a combined community-territory wide job. Recognizing the difficulty of this last objective, I have decided in principle to split it into two papers: Yellowknife News covering the community of Yellowknife and News of the North which will concentrate on Territorial wide circulation and editorial coverage.

This we believe is imperative to the goal of territorial unity. In fulfilling this objective, News of the North falls into a totally separate category from other papers in the North.

The proposal to publish a separate Gazette could well eliminate the possibility of attaining this objective.

So long as economics support it, News of the North favours the Gazette being published in all papers. Should this prove impractical we believe there are five alternatives: The four mentioned in the study:

1. Publish a Gazette in the Government duplicating facility.
2. Proceed with present arrangements, but expand on the items entered in the Gazette.
3. Request tenders from printers within the Northwest Territories for production of a monthly publication, and appoint a publisher on the basis of the best tender.
4. Rotate appointment of a printer within the Territories.

Plus a fifth not considered because apparently no one in the publishing business was consulted. That recommendation is:

That some notices continue to be published in all papers, but that company incorporation notices be published in the one and only paper covering the whole N.W.T.

The suggestion that the Gazette be tendered for job printing appears to be impractical for the following reasons:

1. Lack of revenue would prevent expansion of any paper or Territorial wide coverage by News of the North.
2. Revenue on a highly competitive tendered job printing would be of small benefit even to the winner.
3. And most important - the public at large would not be adequately reached.

During the past three years the News of the North has pursued a deliberate policy of product improvement, sometimes consciously at the expense of short-term profits. I have pursued a policy designed to do the best possible job compatible with staying in business over the long haul.

During the past three years the News of the North has very substantially increased in size, quality, and content, as Members of the Northwest Territories Council will appreciate. Circulation has increased by more than three times and the number of pages has nearly doubled. Our legal advertising rate is now 50¢ per agate line compared with 25¢ before, but this increase in rate is much less than would be warranted by the increase in circulation, let alone the change to computer typesetting and excellent quality control or rising costs elsewhere.

Much of the product improvement which has taken place is certainly attributable to an increase in all forms of advertising revenue, which in turn is attributable to product improvement.

News of the North is now reaching nearly every single community in the Northwest Territories as a result of a deliberate policy of developing a territorial newspaper. More than half our circulation is now outside Yellowknife. This is, I believe, a worthwhile policy and we have been finding public response to it most encouraging. Our paper has the editorial objective to print news of the North, about the North, or as it affects the North. We find that the public wants to know what is happening, feels it has a right to know what is happening and is prepared to subscribe on a regular basis for this information.

A good part of why people buy and read newspapers is because they also want the advertisements which are aimed at them. People want news and public announcements and commercial advertising all in one package and this is the basis of the newspaper industry.

This is why I maintain that the Government of the Northwest Territories is right to distribute public information through the newspaper industry. No other means of distributing information can match newspapers for efficiency in transmitting information into people's minds and especially not a free handout.

I believe that News of the North alone serves the purpose of providing a newspaper for all the Northwest Territories.

NEW TERRITORIAL PAPER

We have already been looking at the efficiency of our operation in disseminating the information and advertisements that our readers want. We have been looking at our costs and the mechanics of production. We find that, in providing for the Yellowknife market and in providing for all the Northwest Territories, we have been serving two quite different functions. This has led me to look for printing equipment to make it possible to put out two newspapers weekly, one for Yellowknife and one for the entire Northwest Territories.

The only thing not finalized to put this program into operation is financing of the equipment (which has been selected) and I am expecting to succeed in this with a view to publishing a separate Yellowknife newspaper from the early part of 1971.

I intend to continue the News of the North as the newspaper of the Northwest Territories.

On this basis, I propose that Members of the Northwest Territories consider publishing all official notices in the News of the North, and in local newspapers, including our own Yellowknife newspaper, only those notices which have specific reference to the individual community.

As a member of the public myself, (albeit prejudiced!) I should very much regret to see official notices of the Northwest Territories buried from public view as are those of the federal government in the Canada Gazette. I feel that official notices must not only be public but be seen to be public. The federal government has (for this reason) recognized that in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon there is a special need for publishing election notices in our newspapers. The Government of the Northwest Territories likewise has shown particular interest in the past in disseminating information and I am sure that it is intended to continue this policy, especially if it can be done economically.

On the basis of cost, the News of the North seems to be by far the best buy in the Northwest Territories. For the same cost it seems that you get nearly three times the distribution of the paper with the next highest circulation. We run just about \$1.00 per inch per thousand copies sold, which is the only equitable basis for considering cost.

Our rate is artificially low by newspaper standards rather than the rates of other papers being exceptionally high, but we have been able to hold the rate down by improving productivity of our operations. In particular, for notices of incorporation or registration, we have established a flat rate of \$10.00 for members of the Northwest Territories Bar Association on the basis of our being paid by the 15th of the month following publication. This seems to have been working well for all of us.

There may be a case for assisting local community newspapers in the Northwest Territories, but I suggest that this is a different subject altogether from the present one.

Our case for requesting Council to continue and expand official advertising in News of the North rests on our record over the past three years in improving our product and in moving towards a territorial newspaper.

Should members wish, I should be pleased to appear before the Northwest Territories Council.

Signed:

[Handwritten signature]
9/6/1970