

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
7TH COUNCIL, 46TH SESSION
RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL
NO. 1-46



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NEW TOWN LEGISLATION

DISPOSITION

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

NEW TOWN LEGISLATION

New Town / Growth Center

The "New Town" or "Growth Center" idea is used to provide interim powers for areas of rapid development in a political vacuum. For example, a new mine is opened and an unincorporated community suddenly doubles or triples in size. "New Town" status gives the senior government power to regulate this area's development. Perhaps more important are the debenture loans made available to this area which it most likely would not be able to obtain on the open money market.

New Town Legislation Theory

The theory behind "New Town" legislation is to help these communities to develop sound financial practices and adequate political machinery to regulate their own development. Keeping this in mind, there is nothing in the proposed legislation which would be an improvement over the present system. Debenture loans similar to advances and loans offered "New Towns" in Alberta are made available to communities such as Inuvik by the Territorial Government. Priorities for the use of this money are decided by the individual municipalities. Realizing that there are higher costs in the north, senior governments have paid for the initial trunk water sewer systems where they exist. Moreover, the Territorial Government pays 50% of new road construction, something not found in "New Town" legislation.

Regression in Political Development

The most important flaw of the proposed legislation is the regression in political development which it suggests. The established municipalities have the basics of sound finance as well as adequate political expertise to control development. The developing communities are aided by the Area Development Ordinance in controlling growth. All settlements are aided by the Department of Local Government who have experts on staff in the Town Planning area. A major goal of the Territorial Government has been the development of sound local government. Most "New Town" legislation removes certain powers from elected bodies and places them in the hands of appointed officials for the protection and administration of the special funds provided for the unprecedented growth of the "New Town". The administration by quasi-elected officials is, no doubt, politically inferior to the present fully elected system.

Powers of Municipality

The elected council has ample power to control development through zoning, issuance of building permits and sale of lots. Moreover, the municipality can regulate road usage, charge trailer and business licences, institute business tax and community service charges. The municipality has not only the power, but the duty, to charge the full costs of providing services to those that receive them. Neither the Local nor the Territorial Government is in the business of supplying services free to companies seeking to locate in the north.

Recommendation

Since the proposed legislation suggests a regression in the development process, we do not feel that it can benefit the Northwest Territories at this time. In addition, the type of special assistance available under typical "New Town" legislation is already provided for under existing territorial legislation. Therefore, it is recommended that no new legislation be introduced for this specific purpose.