

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
7TH COUNCIL, 49TH SESSION

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 9-49

TABLED ON JUNE 14, 1973

1218
CANADIAN ARCTIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE

May 29th, 1973.

Mr. S.M. Hodgson,
Commissioner,
Northwest Territories,
YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

GOVT OF N.W.T. YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.
JUN 1 - 1973
No. 1682
FILE / 10-030-034
REFER TO: [unclear]

Dear Commissioner Hodgson:

We have thought a great deal about your letter of March 16 and motion 34-48 passed at the 48th session of the Council of the Northwest Territories. Although your letter was directed to Mr. Kitson Vincent, I am replying to it because I was the Chairman of the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee from its inception until May 22nd, 1973. Since your letter was considered during my term of office, I have been asked by Dr. Thompson to respond to it and to take necessary action related to it.

I would be less than frank if I did not admit that our Committee regrets that a strong sense of antipathy appears to exist among the members of the Territorial Council over the fact that residents of southern Canada are concerned about aspects of northern development. It is true that there is a strong sense of concern, however, it seems to us that there would be reason to welcome it, rather than to deplore it, because surely members of the Council would not want a repetition of a situation in which "irresponsible development" would result in the "pollution mess" which must now be cleared up in many areas of southern Canada. We urge members of Council not to consider organizations such as ours as interlopers but as fellow Canadians who do not want "irresponsible development" to do to the North what it has done to the South.

I would like to be personal for a moment and to speak a little about my personal motivations. I worked for two Governments, Newfoundland and Ontario, before getting into a situation which would allow me to actively work as a citizen, as well as a professional, to prevent environmental deterioration. I joined a university in 1962 and since that time much of this effort has been directed toward problems in southern Canada. I have worked hard to alert a wide band of citizenry of problems which have resulted from development, in many cases as a result of government actions to promote industrial growth, but without adequate consideration to provide protection of the environment.

In Canada, once one gets beyond the major urbanized areas, the most serious pollution problems have resulted from the pulp and paper industry and the mining industry. Neither of these were subjected to adequate environmental controls anywhere in Canada prior to this decade when strong citizen action groups began to form in Canada. I suspect that they are the principal sources of the pollution which reaches Hudson's Bay. I participated in a study for the Science Council of Canada in 1969 which discussed this problem in very frank terms and which made

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.....Mr. S.M. Hodgson,
May 29th, 1973.

recommendations on an approach to solving it. However, as you will no doubt be aware, governments move very slowly unless votes are at stake. Their actions in this area has been no exception. Regulations to control pollution from the pulp and paper industry have just been enacted by the Federal Government and regulations for the mining industry are just being formulated. I am a member of several organizations that are working to help resolve these problems. I assure you and Council that we will continue to press hard to prevent the pollution problems of the South being transferred to the North.

My motivations as far as the North is concerned were expressed in an editorial which I wrote for a northern issue of Nature Canada. I am enclosing xerox copies of that editorial for members of Council and a copy of the issue of Nature Canada in which it appeared for you. I do not know of course how it will be judged, however, it does attempt to express the nature of the concern I feel for the North which Council has termed "gratuitous". Whatever it may be called, I am a citizen of Canada and I maintain my right to reflect my concern for all of Canada, not just for the South where I happen to live at the present time.


I have written in a very personal vein because I think that almost any member of CARC could have written in a similar way; referring to his activities in trying to resolve environmental problems in the South; referring to the other organizations in which he is active which deal primarily with southern matters; referring to his strong convictions that southern mistakes must not be repeated in the North.

But, nevertheless, CARC recognizes the validity of the concern about the pollution of Hudson's Bay. It seems to me that perhaps the greatest area of concern is the fact that there is so little known about the extent or the seriousness of the problem which exists. At the very least, the facts of that situation should have been established by now and made known to all Canadians.

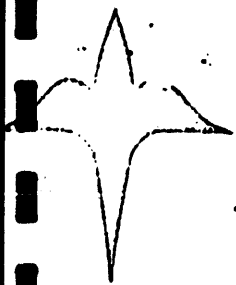
In closing I suggest that the Territorial Council could logically have sent motion 34-48 to Alberta and Saskatchewan as well as to Ontario and Manitoba since both contribute to the pollution of the Saskatchewan-Nelson system.

Under separate cover I am enclosing a copy of Background Study No. 15 of the Science Council. Chapter 10 refers to many of the concerns I have touched on here. I would appreciate it if you will call it to the attention of members of Council.

Sincerely yours,


Douglas H. Pimlott,
Immediate Past Chairman,
and Member of the Committee.

DHP/bjm
encls.



Nature Canada

JULY/SEPTEMBER, 1972

SPECIAL ISSUE: CANADA NORTH OF 60°

EDITORIAL: TOWARD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN NORTHERN DECISIONS

The northern theme of this issue of *Nature Canada* was inspired by the *National Workshop on People, Resources and Environment North of 60°* which was held in Ottawa by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee in late May. The workshop brought together approximately 150 people for three days of intensive work. The working groups included native people from the Northwest Territories and the Yukon and specialists from a wide variety of fields. The topics discussed included aboriginal rights to land and resources, legal problems of environmental protection, the use of fishery and wildlife resources and the potential effects of development of the North on atmospheric, marine and terrestrial environments.

I am Chairman of CARC and in my background report to the workshop I told why CARC had been formed, stated its objectives and told of the problems we had encountered in our attempts to obtain the money that was required to hold the workshop.

The essence of the story was that neither the Federal Government nor any oil, natural gas, or pipeline company could be persuaded to provide any money to support the workshop. This in spite of the facts that it was a job that needed to be done, that the credentials of our Committee were good, that our financial campaign was an intensive one, that we were working in a very low-key manner and that both government and industry were, and still are, making many claims and statements about their concern for the protection of the environment and for the rights and future of the native people in the two Territories.

It became very clear that both government and industry were determined that they were going to continue to do business in the traditional way and that did not include any interference from individual citizens or their organizations. But people are now declaring their right to be involved in the affairs of government more frequently than on election day.

A lot has been done during the past year to further the participation of people in northern affairs. The workshop, and other activities of CARC, were one thing, and there have been other important initiatives. Pollution Probe's national campaign on the North and Jim Woodford's book, *The Violated Vision* (see *Nature*

Canada, first and second issues for a report and a book review) are doing an excellent job of bringing northern questions into perspective. This issue of *Nature Canada* will add another dimension.

The need to open up decision-making processes is very great. The North is too important to the future of Canada to allow the present closed-door policy to persist. Surely we should no longer tolerate the situation of the Government and the primary resource industries making vital decisions on the future and then announce them as a *fait accompli*.

When one talks or writes in such a vein on the North his credentials are almost always questioned. I am no expert on the North. I did get involved as a result of having worked there. However, I am involved primarily because after I experienced a little of the North I couldn't keep from being involved in its problems. I stepped on plants underlain by permafrost for the first time in June 1966. It was at an abandoned Dew Line site on Nadluardjuk Lake. My students and I used Fox B as a base camp for our studies of wolves and caribou for the next five years. My sense of awareness of man's impact on

the arctic environment developed gradually as I talked, read and thought about the things I saw and experienced in that beautiful but austere land.

The visual impact of litter started the process. Fox B was abandoned in 1961. It occupies one of the highest hills in the vicinity. From it we could see the radar domes of Fox 2, the station that is 55 miles to the west. When we lowered our vision we could see a small mountain of oil drums to the north. To the east there was a radar tower. It had broken into fragments when it crashed down the hillside after its guy wires had been released. At one end of the airstrip, to the south, there was a mound of snowmobiles, trucks and tractors that had been put to the torch. Apparently that was the last act before the site was abandoned.

It was instructive to study the mound of vehicles. It showed that the largest of the bulldozers, a Caterpillar D7 or 8, had been used to batter the other vehicles so they could no longer be driven. The bulldozer was then driven to the top of the pile of vehicles, the caps were removed from drums of diesel fuel which had been strapped on and the pile was put to the torch.

Although it is not too evident from the top of the hill, the shore of Nadluardjuk Lake is dotted with petroleum drums, some high and dry, some partially submerged. When we examined them we found that a considerable number contained either diesel oil or aviation gas. They will pose a threat to the wild things of the area for many years because the ones that we did not use will sooner or later rust out and release their deadly contents into Nadluardjuk Lake.

The bits and pieces of the arctic jigsaw puzzle began to fall into place for me in 1969, when I served as a member of a study group on fisheries and wildlife for the Science Council of Canada. Our study of the arctic literature, the Tundra Conference sponsored by the University of Alberta that fall and our contacts with other scientists brought out how little was known about the ecology of northern ecosystems and about methods of protecting the environment from harsh use or from pollution. At the same time, I became aware of the tremendous economic forces that had moved into the Arctic to find and develop its resources. I also learned that the legal framework and the administrative system for the protection of arctic environments was virtually non-existent. That was eight years after the promulgation of the *Oil and Gas Land Regulations*, which had spurred exploration for oil in the North, and two years after the formation of Panarctic Oils had been stimulated by the infusion of capital from the Federal Government.

As more pieces of the puzzle fitted together I realized that the Fox B of 1966 was a microcosm of vast areas of the Canadian North in the 1970s—unless drastic changes took place in the approach of government and industry. Then, I became mentally involved in the North and I decided to join other Canadians who were already at work trying to influence the "inevitable processes" which resulted in battered and burned vehicles mouldering on the tundra; which left drums of diesel oil floating in Nadwardjuk Lake and which spurred exploration for oil and gas years before processes of environmental protection began to be established.

A lot of things have happened on the northern environmental scene since 1969. Those on the favourable side of the ledger are presented in a very positive light in the article by Mr. Yates. The objectives and the priorities stated in the "Policy for Northern Development 1971-81," which he quotes, are difficult to fault. But, nevertheless, conservationists still have a serious lack of confidence in the way that the Federal Government is playing its role as protector of the environments of the North.

A number of the articles in this issue and a letter, article and a review of the book, *The Violated Vision*, in previous issues bring some of the things that are causing the lack of confidence into perspective. They include the way the mining and petroleum industries

dominate all other forms of land and resource use; the inadequacy of the land use regulations, particularly with respect to central activities by the mining industry; and the inadequacy of the ecological research, particularly on fisheries and wildlife in all areas other than the Mackenzie Valley.

But there are two things which particularly affront many people when they are being exhorted to take at face value Government promises that the northern environment will be adequately protected. They are the adamant stand the Government has taken against the formation of the independent Environmental Council of Canada which would report to the country at large. The second is the fact that the Department of the Environment has been virtually excluded from playing a role in environmental protection north of 60°. It seems so obvious that it is the one part of the country, above all others, where it should be directly involved. Instead, the Northern Economic Development Branch (which has had a primary role in promoting the development of the North) of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development administers the legislation and enforces the regulations which are established under the various environmental Acts. It is hard to accept that protection of the environment will be given adequate priority under such circumstances.

Last, but certainly far from least, is the whole question of whether or not Canada

should be assuming the obligation to meet so much of North American petroleum demands on such a short-term basis. Only an unbridled technological optimist can look much beyond the year 2000 and not feel a sense of foreboding about the looming Energy Chasm.

Are we certain enough about the supply and demand picture for oil and gas in Canada to be allowing such a massive investment of foreign capital? The president of Panarctic Oils stated recently that oil and gas from the arctic islands would have to be exported to pay for its development. A headline in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* read "Imperial Oil signs \$4 billion U.S. deal for Mackenzie Gas." Do such arrangements allow northern development to proceed in a way that looks beyond the needs of our generation? Do they really allow consideration of the people, the animals and the land which will hopefully still be in the North after the oil and gas are gone?

Douglas H. Pimlott

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The Canadian Nature Federation is pleased to be able to publish a special issue of *Nature Canada* devoted to "Canada North of 60°." Seven of the eight articles consider fundamental questions relating to the future of these vast northern lands. In many ways this is an exceptional issue for in it we move away from the strong emphasis that we have previously placed on natural history. I hope that readers will agree that the production of this special issue is fully justified and timely in view of government decisions to move with extreme rapidity in expanding northern development. Unfortunately space does not permit coverage of a wider range of questions raised by the government's northern development policies. For example native rights and pollution are areas where many more facts should be brought to public attention. Environmental aspects in themselves are complex and require much more space than we have given to them. It is expected that these questions will be explored on a continuing basis in future issues. To make

room for the material on the North we have reduced our news section from sixteen to eight pages; we will return to a full sixteen pages in the next issue.

The October-December issue of *Nature Canada* will feature articles on the work of renowned Canadian nature artist, Clarence Tillenius, on the role of fungi in the forest floor, on Canadian frogs, snakes and salamanders, on outdoor education and on proposed development schemes in northern Manitoba. Readers can expect the usual balance to be maintained between nature appreciation articles and ones dealing with environmental issues. One last note: could each member please make a special *personal* effort to increase the Federation's membership?

Editor