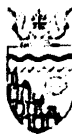


**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
7<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 49<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 22-49**

**TABLED ON JUNE 21, 1973**



GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
CANADA

TDA#

22-49'

Tabled on June 21, 1973

Decentralized Correctional Services

1. Background

The impetus for the subject of this paper arises from a number of developments within the correctional services of the Territories in the past few years.

The inmate population at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre and its work camp had grown so rapidly that enlargement of the Centre was necessitated to provide additional space for the custody of inmates, their care and treatment. In addition provision was made for the segregation of first offenders from more experienced offenders, and for the retention of persons who receive penitentiary sentences.

Although many sentenced persons require a rigid type of atmosphere, the question had been raised whether the Yellowknife correctional facilities provide an environment which is meaningful to the Eastern or Western Arctic offender. Whatever difficulties these persons have had at Yellowknife have been compounded by the tremendous distance from their familiar environment, with its attendant trauma of dislocation from home, family and friends, and the dearth of correctional staff who speak the native tongues of the offender in custody.

The renovations of the Yellowknife Centre were predicated on the premise that decentralized correctional programs would be established in appropriate regions, and the function of the Centre would be principally to receive and contain those offenders who could not live in the open atmosphere of a regional correctional facility.

2. Objectives

The objectives of decentralized correctional facilities, in the view of the Department of Social Development are:

- (a) permitting the offender to continue or obtain gainful employment;
- (b) the maintenance of family and social contacts, and often the resolution of problems bearing on eventual rehabilitation of the subject;
- (c) the limiting or avoidance of possible language barriers if the offender were to be dislocated;
- (d) reducing of the travel and escort costs resulting from incarceration in the Yellowknife Centre.

Attainment of the objectives includes recognition of the fact that selected inmates can and do operate under conditions of minimal custody, therefore each offender should be subjected only to the degree of custody he requires. In addition, the offender in a regional facility is exposed to the opportunity of continuing his participation in local work or training programs in his own community after discharge from custody. This further serves to facilitate his re-entry into the community, where after-care workers, either of Government or volunteer services, can continue to work with the offender.

### 3. Criteria

The incidence of offenders who are suitable candidates for such a program, in the Baffin and Inuvik Regions and south of the Great Slave Lake, is large enough to make the program financially feasible when all the costs are considered.

Decentralized facilities should be situated where the unexploited resources are available, to permit a well-rounded program for the offenders:

#### (a) Education/Employment

Adult education/Basic Training in Skills Development  
Vocational and academic education;  
On-the-job training, or similar opportunities;  
Work release opportunities;  
Development of hunting and trapping skills.

#### (b) Leisure (Recreational/Social)

Positive leisure time opportunities;  
Opportunities for cultural pursuits; eg: hunting, trapping, native games, handicrafts, etc.;  
Athletics and individual sports;  
Conjugal visits.

#### (c) Spiritual

Opportunities for involvement in church activities;  
Alcoholics Anonymous groups;  
Pastoral counselling.

(d) Assessment and Support Services

Probation and social workers to:

- (i) assist in decision making as to retention of offender in his own region, or transfer to the main Centre in Yellowknife;
- (ii) develop a treatment plan for the individual offender;
- (iii) counsel the offender during the assessment period and thereafter as required.

(c) Health Services

Medical, dental, etc.

(f) Other

- (i) the availability of suitable property and premises;
- (ii) the potential for the recruitment of local residents as employees and to volunteer their services for the program;
- (iii) community acceptance of an "open" facility;
- (iv) the willingness of the Courts and the R.C.M. Police to cooperate and adapt their approach to the use of such facilities for offenders.

4. Plan for Implementing Decentralized Correctional Programs

A. Baffin Region

The incidence of offenders from the Baffin Region, the doubtful correctional values of dislocation and the high costs of transportation suggested that this region be given first consideration in the decentralization of correctional services.

The study which ensued, and which is still underway, revolved around the involvement of the Inuit and local agencies and services in developing the kind of programs which will have a reasonable chance for success.

The study has shown that a decentralized correctional program is feasible in the Baffin Region and, after considering the criteria set out above, the logical location for the program was Frobisher Bay.

The next steps include: (a) recruiting key staff (Program Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator); (b) renovating and furnishing an existing building to create the living accommodation needed; (c) developing operating procedures; (d) recruiting and training of remaining staff; (e) putting centre into operation.

Although it is advocated that community correctional services be developed, that is not to say that the Yellowknife Centre will no longer be required. There will still be individuals who require the high control, high intensity care available at Yellowknife, but such an individual could be transferred back to his own region when he demonstrates an ability to assume responsibility for his behaviour.

#### B. Inuvik Region

In the opinion of this Department, the logical course of action is to follow a similar approach in developing decentralized programs for other areas requiring such services. Extensive consultation at the local level is essential and this will commence in the Inuvik Region in early August.

It is anticipated that the staff organization and financial requirements for a decentralized program in the Inuvik Region would be similar to those in the Baffin Region.

#### C. South Great Slave Lake

In the opinion of the Department, a decentralized facility in the area south of Great Slave Lake would be a logical next step given the points of origin of offenders in the Yellowknife Correctional Centre at present.

One possibility would be to move the present Correctional Work Camp from Yellowknife to a suitable point in the area under consideration since this may well prove to be more economical and administratively feasible than to erect new or convert existing facilities.