

GENERAL REPORT OF THE LAND USE SUB-COMMITTEE

The sub-committee on Land Use had the following members of the main committee on it: Cam Ogilvy, Chairman; Bob Cathro, Jack Patterson, Denis Watson, Murray Morrison, Ron Hawkes and Bill Irvine, Secretary. Dave Gee, Chief of the Land Management Division, was also invited to sit on the sub-committee. Dr. Herman Dirschl, Environmental Advisor (Land Use) and Dr. V. Ruzicka of the Geological Survey of Canada, each attended one meeting of the sub-committee, and their technical advice is appreciated. The sub-committee addressed itself to Policy Statements (3), (4) and (5) dealing respectively with "Mineral Tenure", "Access" and "Land Use Policy Environment".

The sub-committee identified three topics of concern:

- (1) Special constraints and/or withdrawal of lands
for single or limited use purposes such as Parks, etc.
- (2) Land Use Regulations
- (3) Thelon Game Sanctuary

I Special Constraints and Withdrawals

The sub-committee was especially sensitive to any perceived danger that tenure of and access to Mineral Rights in the North would be reduced or eliminated by constraints on land use or withdrawals of land for single or limited use purposes such as Parks, Sanctuaries and I.B.P. Sites. The unilateral advance of one proposal without due consideration to the possible effects on other interests could be detrimental to the orderly development of the Territories. The sub-committee believes that there is a need for a broader evaluation of government proposals for such constraints or withdrawals.

The sub-committee therefore recommends the creation of two independent bodies, one in each Territory, possibly under Section 19 of the Territorial Lands Act, which would be composed of representatives of both the private sector and government. Through public participation these bodies would review the proposed Land Use, examine the direct and indirect impacts and consider other development and conservation options available.

The independent bodies would have as their mandate the authority to examine specific development and conservation proposals and to make recommendations to the Minister. They would thus function as advisory bodies and would augment existing government processes.

Appointments of Government Representatives to these bodies would be made by the Minister, and from the private sector by the Minister through recommendations of the Commissioners in Council.

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II Land Use Regulations

The land use sub-committee endorses the principle of environmental protection. However, it has recently voiced concern at (a) delays caused by the administrative and consultative processes, and (b) regulatory requirements, including permit conditions.

To ensure that delays and restrictions are appropriate to (a) specific land use operations and (b) local environmental protection requirements, the following recommendations are made:

(1) A study should examine zoning of northern lands on the basis of ecological sensitivity (ecological zoning). It is important that the application of Land Use Regulations, both in terms of their actual needs for Land Use Permits and the severity of their terms and conditions, be properly tailored to the Requirement for ecological protection in any given area. Pilot projects should be commenced in the least sensitive districts, such as non-Arctic Yukon.

(2) Class B Land Use operations to proceed by simple prior notification to the proper authorities, and information to nearby communities. This would be subject only to restrictions under special programs such as caribou monitoring, where there can be sensitive time periods.

(3) Class A Land Use operations to require application for a Class A permit. Where this operation is deemed not to affect the livelihood of nearby communities the maximum time to obtain a permit from the date of application would be ten days. Where the operation is deemed to have some effect on the livelihood of nearby communities, there may, at the discretion of the engineer, be consultation, with the maximum time for issuance of a Class A permit to be forty-two days. A directive to this effect should be issued to the regional officers.

(4) It is recommended that Section 8 of the Territorial Land Use Regulations should be revised to increase the undertakings on territorial lands that define Class A Land Use operations, such as a campsite for 400 man days and fuel storage facilities of 80,000 litre capacity, ~~be substantially increased.~~

(5) It is strongly recommended that Section 28 of the Territorial Land Use Regulations be repealed, and that no arbitrary changes be made by administering officials, raising Class B Land Use operations to Class A operations.

(6) Practical training of Land Use inspectors in the objectives and methods employed in Land Use operations should be undertaken so that Land Use Policies will be furthered.

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III Thelon Game Sanctuary

The Thelon Game Sanctuary occupying an area of slightly over 25,000 square miles, was established in 1927, mainly as a haven for a diminishing herd of mainland muskox. In 1930 this sanctuary was withdrawn from prospecting and exploration. In 1956 it was reduced in size, nearly 6,000 square miles being removed from the southwest side of the sanctuary because the muskox were not frequently that part, and because the geological survey of Canada stated that the area removed was of mineral interest.

The sub-committee feels that the following points must be taken into account in any determination of the future status of the Thelon Sanctuary:

- (1) The muskox population greatly increased from 1927 to the last count in about 1972, and may still be increasing. Recently some muskox have strayed outside the sanctuary, and Inuit are being licensed to hunt them outside of the boundaries. This suggests that the original aim of the sanctuary has been fulfilled.
- (2) Recent important uranium discoveries in and near the base of the Dubawnt Sandstones in the Eastern Northwest Territories have brought into focus the uranium potential within the Thelon Game Sanctuary. The geological survey of Canada has outlined three areas within the sanctuary, where the Dubawnt Sandstones outcrop, as being excellent targets for uranium exploration.
- (3) In a 1978 study prepared by the International Uranium Evaluation Program it was estimated that by the year 2025, for the world, a cumulative total of 20 to 23 million tons of uranium as metal will be required. Current Canadian reserves (1977) in all categories, at \$50 per lb. of metal are 415 thousand tons of metal. Obviously the impending exhaustion of fossil fuels poses a problem for all mankind and countries with potential uranium resources owe it to the world to permit the search for these resources.

The sub-committee recommends that the status of muskox and other wildlife in the Thelon Game Sanctuary be ~~updated~~ ^{re-evaluated}, so that an intelligent decision can be made as to whether the sanctuary can be ~~opened up~~ ^{re-opened} for mineral exploration and development. ~~This should be done, and any necessary decision made, through the Northwest Territories Government, which administers the Thelon Game Sanctuary, through the Superintendent of Wildlife.~~