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Annual Report
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To His Honour
J. Percy Page
Lieutenant-Governor in Council
Legislative Building
Edmonton, Alberta

May It Please Your Honour:

The undersigned has the honour to transmit herewith the
first Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Honourable Ira McLaughlin

CHAIRMAN

Northern Alberta Development Council
Neil D. MacLean Building
Grande Prairie, Alberta
February 13, 1964

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

1963 - 1964

MEMBERS

Hon. I. McLaughlin	Chairman and Minister without Portfolio
Mr. A. O. Fimrite	Deputy Chairman and M.L.A. for Spirit River Const.
Mr. J. E. Oberholtzer	Member & Deputy Minister Industry & Development
Mr. R. E. Duncan	Member & Utility Company Manager
Mr. J. Stromstedt	Member & Farmer

Executive Officer

K. H. Easson

Secretary

Mrs. C. Dunlop

Executive Offices Located in

Neil D. MacLean Building, Grande Prairie

Alberta

Phone 532-2281

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NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 6 MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1963

The Northern Alberta Development Council is not an operating department, that is, it does not own or operate equipment, supervise or administer numerous employees or large budgets, yet its duties and its functions as an advisory group covers a 129,000 sq. mile area north of the 55th parallel, or slightly more than half the area of the entire province. Section 4 of the Act to establish the Northern Alberta Development Council largely covers the duties and responsibilities of the Council and states:-

"The functions of the Council are to investigate, plan, promote and co-ordinate practical measures to foster and advance development in northern Alberta and to advise the Government thereon, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing may investigate and recommend on the requirements of the area in the matter of

- (a) industrial development,
- (b) transportation facilities,
- (c) agricultural stabilization,
- (d) metis rehabilitation,
- (e) educational facilities, and
- (f) local administration."

During 1963, northern Alberta's progress, spectacular in some areas, has increased steadily, overall. Agriculture, long established as the basis for north-western economy, has been bypassed by the growth in mineral production, manufacturing, industries and construction, and now accounts for less than one-third of the total net value of production, creating greater stability in the economy of the province.

Agriculture suffered a noticeable drop in production value, quality and quantity during 1963 due to adverse weather and growing conditions; however the drought conditions were of benefit to the northern beekeepers who, this past year, have almost doubled their production with an estimated four million pounds of honey, realizing a producer worth of about three-quarters of a million dollars, including beeswax. This in itself is estimated at slightly over one-third of the entire provincial total, and indications are that this output will show substantial increases in years to come.

The value of construction permits continued to show sizeable increases throughout the north with several large projects such as Shell Oil Company Gas Plant at Worsley, the Vocational High Schools at Grouard and Grande Prairie being completed. New motor motels are under construction or completed at Fairview, High Level, Peace River, Valleyview, and other points, and the demand for residen-

tial property far exceeded the supply in most areas. Grande Prairie continues to hold its lead in the value of permits issued, however a comparison of the following will show the attention being given to other points.

	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>Estimate 1964</u>
Grande Prairie	4.4 million	3.9 million	4.0 million
Peace River	1.0 "	1.5 "	2.0 "
Valleyview	.03 "	.80 "	1.0 "

The reconstruction of the Mackenzie Highway and the steady northward progress of Slave Lake Railroad has brought an influx of people to these areas. Hamlets are springing up in many new locations, causing, in some cases, problems due to sporadic development. The steadily increasing interest in homestead areas, the interest being shown in our resources of minerals and forests, have all contributed to raise northern Alberta's population from 74,000 in 1956 to approximately 90,000 in 1963. This increase in population is not confined to any one particular area north of the 55th parallel as can be seen by the following table of select points.

<u>Centre</u>	<u>Population 1956</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1963</u>
Grande Prairie	6302	8352	10,000 est.
Peace River	2034	2543	3209
Valleyview	973	1077	2000 est.
High Prairie	1743	1756	2305
Fairview	1260	1506	1701
Manning	726	896	1148
Grimshaw	904	1095	1428

Throughout all corners of this vast northern area, many newcomers and long time residents are hard at work creating new and additional occupations. To fully understand the extent of this northern growth, the Council decided to view first hand many of the different areas, and hold public meetings in the larger settlements and towns. Travelling by automobile, aircraft and boat, the Council members held public meetings in the following points:

Fort Chipewyan	High Level	Fairview
Fort McMurray	Fort Vermilion	Grande Prairie
Lac la Biche	Peace River	Beaverlodge
High Prairie	Grimshaw	Valleyview
Manning	Hines Creek	Spirit River

The average attendance by the local populous for meetings was slightly over forty persons, and many hundreds of verbal and written presentations were made. Requests from many other points for public meetings have been made to the Northern Alberta Development Council and these will be visited as time permits.

To gather as much information as possible, the Council members have also visited as individuals and casual groups, many remote and isolated points, utilizing whatever transportation means able to cover the terrain, cooking their own meals and making good use of sleeping bags if necessary.

From the foregoing, the attendance of members at conferences related to the north, discussions with Provincial and Federal authorities, and other interested individuals and groups, the Northern Alberta Development Council have gathered considerable knowledge and data on our northern climes.

It is only natural that throughout an area of this magnitude many social and economic variances can be found, with few localities, if any, free from local problems and anxieties. Representation has been made to the Council in every point so far visited, for increased transportation facilities. In the extreme north-eastern portion of the province, the settlement of Fort Chipewyan desires an all-weather airstrip. Fort McMurray, also in the north-eastern area wishes

one all-weather road, while in the western portion of northern Alberta, the plea is for more roads to newly settled areas, upgrading and paving of existing highways and the construction of new facilities. These and other pertinent matters are under consideration by the Northern Alberta Development Council.

It was apparent from the outset that the social and economic well-being of the people of Indian descent in northern Alberta would require considerable attention from the Council. A survey of one hundred families of Indian descent from many northern communities was initiated. From this information, along with personal observations and discussions with interested parties, a submission was presented to the Cabinet Committee presently investigating the problems of these people in our society.

The rapid expansion in newly settled areas has raised many problems in providing these people with services. No longer are the settlers willing to wait ten or so years before being provided with roads, schools, light and telephone. The Council has had many discussions on these matters with the appropriate authorities, however no easy answer yet has been found other than spending money. The Council did, however, have the opportunity to discuss with the Alberta Power Commission rural electrification problems in new

homestead areas. A recommendation was presented to the Executive Council which would enable farmers in new and isolated areas to be supplied electrical services with greater economy.

During the 1962-63 season, northern commercial fishermen caught 6,328,000 pounds of fish as compared to the entire provincial total of 9,040,000 pounds. Amply endowed with many large lakes, it is possible further exploitation of our fish resources may be possible. Problems of quantity, quality, degree of infestation, and such are being given close study by the Council and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Administration.

The betterment of our highways, the northward push of steel, and the industrial expansion in the far north are all influencing factors in northern Alberta's economy. To the end, the Northern Alberta Development Council is ready to be of assistance to the small businessman or investor desiring further information and statistical data.

Considerable exploratory work has been made by the Council during its short term of existence and to attempt to make practical recommendations to solve all northern problems at this early date is impossible.

Mention has already been made of several situations needing attention, but others including health facilities, specialized dental and optometrical care in isolated areas, the rapid growth in homestead sales, the need for community pastures, the difficulty in obtaining palatable water supplies, are only a few of the current problems for the Council's consideration.

During the course of its travels, the Northern Alberta Development Council has had the opportunity to observe the operation of Northland School Division No. 61 of the Department of Education. Realizing the difficulties under which this division operates, and the additional expenditures involved to bring education to our northern citizens, the Council commends Northland School Division for their aggressive thinking, ideas and operations.

It is difficult to foresee the future or estimate what position northern Alberta will play in the growing economic expansion of the province; however this report would be incomplete unless some of our resources and future possibilities were mentioned.

Northern Alberta has many natural resources both above and below the ground, but the present local market is insufficient to support large scale industry. Eyes therefore must be turned to the more populous centres or to the export markets and the

feasibility and economics of development must be carefully weighed. The Athabasca Oil Sands in the Fort McMurray area and low grade iron ore deposits in the Clear Hills district are under constant review. There is little doubt in the minds of the Northern Alberta Development Council that development of the foregoing resources is imminent and the dollar investments required will play an important part in the entire economy of the province, far less northern Alberta.

Totally confined within the boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park, although well south of the N.W.T. border, lies one of Canada's largest known deposits of high grade gypsum. In years to come these deposits could play an integral part in our northern economy.

Minerals are not alone when the resources of northern Alberta are analyzed. In this richly endowed land our forests form an integral part. Of the various blocks of timber capable of supporting major pulp mills within the province, three are located in northern Alberta in the Grande Prairie, Peace River and Lesser Slave Lake Forest Divisions. The distance from markets and world demand will be the deciding factors in production; however it has been estimated that a world shortage of timber will be evident within the next twenty or so years. It is expected that forest operations will expand rapidly as time goes by.

No single factor has a more decisive influence on our lives than water, a commodity taken for granted, necessary for our existence, yet continually wasted and abused. In northern Alberta we are endowed with huge rivers and lakes, relatively untouched by human hands, which in years to come could be an important source of water for our expanding populous areas. Recent announcements of studies by Utility Companies into the possibilities of hydro sites on the Smoky and Athabasca Rivers to meet the region's growing power requirements, and the preparation of detailed plans for a massive water conservation program for the entire province are welcomed indeed.

Amongst the people of this northern area there is a distinct feeling of anticipation, a belief that major industrial development is imminent; a feeling that increased prosperity is within view; a belief in the resources and potential of their own country. During its so far short duration of operation, the members of the Northern Alberta Development Council have had ample evidence that in years to come, northern Alberta will play a foremost part in the industrialized economy of the province.