

five elected members of the executive committee head administrative departments. Eventually, they will probably be responsible for all aspects of administration.

Until then, the commissioner retains charge of the treasury and of personnel management. The deputy commissioner is responsible for various internal government services.

The major difference between the status of a territory and the provinces is the ownership of natural resources. As a territory, all the Yukon's natural resources except game belong to Canada as a whole and are administered by federal officials appointed to the Yukon.

The territory has its own member in the federal House of Commons and also a representative in the Senate.

One of the important political issues in the Yukon has been that of Indian land claims. In most of Canada, Indians forfeited their right to land when they signed treaties with the Canadian government. This did not happen in the Yukon because there was so much land and relatively few Indians.

Transportation and communication

The main route to the Yukon remains the 2,450-km Alaska Highway which, as stated earlier, was built by the United States and turned over to the Canadian army in 1946. At that time there was not enough traffic to justify paving the highway, but the gravel surface was widened, straightened and flattened.

Today, much of the Alaska Highway is paved and it remains the best all-weather road into the Yukon.

In the early 1950s, another all-weather road was built, linking Mayo in the central Yukon, to Whitehorse. The road was then extended north to Dawson and formed the basis of today's Klondike Highway. The Klondike Highway has been extended southwards to Skagway, Alaska, but this section is open only in the summer. The highway serves the large lead-zinc mine at Faro as well as the increasing tourist traffic.

The 671-km long Dempster Highway is the Yukon's third main artery, linking Dawson with Fort McPherson and Inuvik on the Mackenzie Delta. The Dempster Highway, Canada's first all-weather road to cross the Arctic Circle, was opened in August 1979.

Despite improved roads, most freight still enters the Yukon by the traditional White Pass and Yukon rail route, from Whitehorse to Skagway. In 1955, the White Pass route introduced what is believed to be the world's first fully integrated ship-truck-train container system. Freight is loaded into trains in standard size containers, which are unloaded at the other end onto trucks and then taken directly to the weekly ship run from Skagway to Vancouver. Once in a container, the cargo need not be disturbed until it reaches its destination, thereby reducing the risk of pilfering and damage. Two such con-