North by non-natives had often ignored native rights and that the interests of the native people must be taken into consideration in opening the North to development.

The economy

The economy of the Northwest Territories is of a small scale considering the immensity of the land. Its potential, however, is awesome. The North as a whole is estimated to contain 40 per cent of Canada's non-renewable resources. It now produces 100 per cent of the country's tungsten, 44 per cent of its lead, 26 per cent of its zinc, 20 per cent of its silver and 13 per cent of its gold. Copper and cadmium are also mined extensively.

In 1979, $437-million worth of mining production sales were registered in the Northwest Territories, representing 97 per cent of total commodity production. Some 1,750 persons are employed in the mining industry. (Manufacturing is non-existent and the service sector depends mostly on government salaries.) The search for metals has fallen off slightly in recent years, although uranium exploration has continued at high levels.

Oil and gas exploration boomed in the Northwest Territories during the Seventies. The two most significant explorations at present are Dome Petroleum's offshore Beaufort Sea project and Panarctic Oil's drilling in the Arctic Islands. The cost of exploration runs into hundreds of millions of dollars. Oil production in 1979 (at Norman Wells) was estimated at 340,000 barrels. Estimated gas production for 1979 was 250 million cubic metres, from Norman Wells and Pointed Mountain.

The federal government has a large stake in northern oil and gas exploration. For example, Petro-Canada, a state company, is part of a consortium whose Arctic Pilot Project is expected to produce 7.5 million cubic metres of natural gas a day. The gas will be transported by pipeline 160 kilometres across Melville Island and then by tanker/ice-breaker through northern waters to an east coast port.

The extent of other economic activity pales in comparison to that of mineral exploitation. The net value of commercial fishing, trapping and forest industries is about $3 million, less than the revenue generated by liquor sales.

These renewable resources, however, are of epic importance. The native population lives in a difficult but harmonious relationship with the land and has done so for thousands of years. A minority of that population still chooses to practise a subsistence living and the implications of massive development and modern technology concern these people deeply. While they do not reject twentieth century industrial development they would like to see it strengthen, rather than overwhelm, the native economy and life.