

closed along the rivers, causing a severe blow to the local economy. The thousands of cords of wood to fuel the steamboats had provided employment for many residents along the rivers. Native people cut the wood and white residents, usually contractors who owned trucks and sleighs, hauled wood from the forest lots to the landings. Hundreds of natives were left without the \$ 5 they got for cutting one cord of wood. Anyways, the days of the river steamers were numbered. The highway was completed to Whitehorse late in 1951, and all ore shipments from Mayo went directly by truck to the railhead. Soon after, Whitehorse became the capital and Dawson's population dwindled to about 800 persons, reducing the need for boat service. By summer 1953, there were only one or two boats in service, the rest left on the ways, never to run again.

Minto Detachment was busy enough with the usual administration work associated with the natives and increasing traffic on the highway. A coal mine operated by the United Keno Hill Mines was opened at Carmacks to provide fuel for the electric generating plant at the mine site. Convoys of ore trucks returning empty from Whitehorse loaded coal at Carmacks. The Government

highway maintenance camp was also located there to service the highway between Pelly Crossing to the north and Braeburn Lake to the south. It was evident that Carmacks would be the larger centre and demanded more attention. The Force purchased property there, a few yards away from the old North-West Mounted Police log building erected



**Minto Detachment in 1953, with Mayo Highway through centre of photograph.**

around the turn of the century, known as Tantlus Detachment. In fact, the constable in charge of Tantlus Detachment, Frank Goulter, had retired in 1905, and at the age of 102, still resided in Carmacks when I went for a visit in August, 1978.

Before the ice bridge went out at Carmacks in the spring of 1954, the Minto Detachment buildings were loaded onto low-bed trucks, hauled to Carmacks, and placed on log cribbing foundations. A well provided water in the kitchen and the building was hooked up to the village electricity. The only thing left behind was a greenhouse, which I had built of rough lumber and scrounged windows. Today all that remains are the gable ends of that structure, grown over with aspen trees. ■



**First land police transport, early 1952.**