

improve the economy of the Mackenzie Delta still suffering from cutbacks in exploration activities during the past few years.

Boost for land claims

Coincident with this approval will be the relinquishment of some three million acres of Imperial Oil holdings in areas sensitive to the COPE land claims. As further encouragement to land claims I am deferring for one year the granting of new oil and gas permits in the Mackenzie Valley and Delta. In these decisions, I am striving for balance — development needs on the one hand and the sensitivities of land claim negotiations on the other.

Similarly, in the Baker Lake area, mineral exploration will resume but under a land use regime designed to protect caribou and other wildlife essential to the economic and cultural needs of the people of Baker Lake.

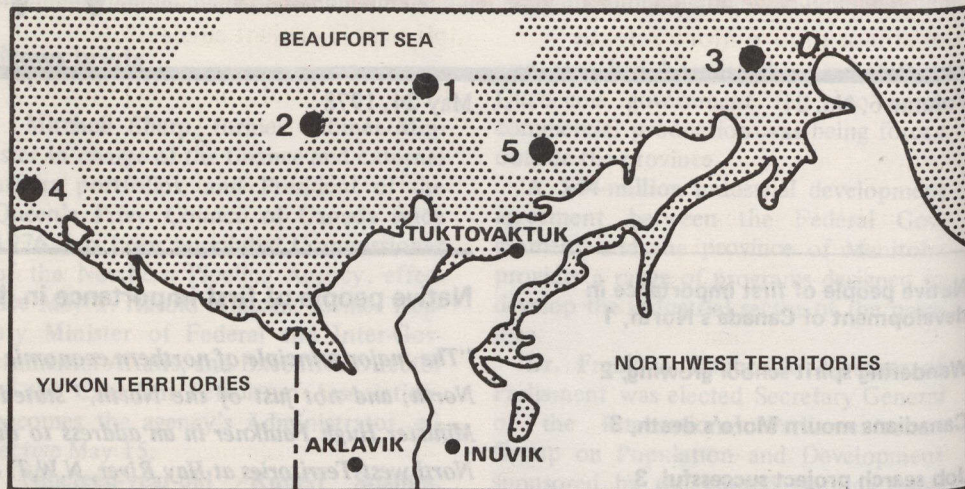
In this area, studies carried out for my Department have indicated that the value of caribou and other wildlife represents between 45 and 55 per cent of earned income, or roughly \$6,400 per family in the area. Obviously, protection of this important resource must have priority — while at the same time, important mineral exploration, with employment potential and possible contribution to Canada's energy needs, must also continue.

Each of these situations has in common the need for balance and a sensitivity to local needs and concerns. In the same way, the Liard highway project I announced several months ago, in addition to short-term economic benefits, will eventually be the base for longer-term economic development. As a start towards involving local people in determining that development (which I regard as essential) the Hire North Committee has been reorganized so that community delegates are in the majority.

Cheaper electricity

A more recent Government decision, which I am pleased to announce today, concerns the high cost of electricity in the North, particularly in the diesel communities. I realize that this has been a longstanding issue for some time. On previous occasions, I have stated that I would take a package of proposals to my Cabinet colleagues for their consideration. I have done that.

As a result, I can announce today that the Government will financially assist the



Possible locations to be drilled during the extended 1978 season.

Northern Canada Power Commission (NCPC) with a cash infusion of \$7.5 million. In addition, the Government has asked NCPC to submit plans for future power development and a request for funds to undertake the necessary studies.

Most importantly, the Government has approved a subsidy for non-government domestic consumers of electricity in diesel communities. The subsidy, which will cost in the area of \$1.8 million annually, will equalize costs between diesel and hydro communities in each territory up to 8,500 kWh annually. The practical effect of this federal subsidy will be to reduce current electricity costs in diesel-powered communities such as Fort Simpson and Inuvik. Savings to the consumer should amount to several hundred dollars annually. This approach is entirely compatible with my concern to strengthen the viability of the smaller communities

of the North.

As well, keeping in mind the need for development to be more responsive to local needs, I have instructed officials of my Department and NCPC to undertake a feasibility study on the possibility of establishing the headquarters of NCPC within the North.

There will of course be other Federal Government financed projects in 1978 to boost the economy — such as road reconstruction at Fort Smith and Hay River, and the Fort Smith and Frobisher Bay hospitals — but these are projects to meet specific needs and are not in themselves an economic strategy.

The Government's decisions I outlined earlier do represent a modest beginning of a strategy of balanced development and are indicative of the challenge we all face in planning northern economic development....

Wandering spirit school growing

The Wandering Spirit Survival School is Toronto's newest alternative to meet the educational needs of Metro's growing native peoples' community.

The school is named after the famous Cree war-chief, Wandering Spirit, who fought during the 1885 Riel Rebellion to protect his people's way of life.

The Wandering Spirit Survival School started operating out of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto in September 1976. Initially, it was a private volunteer school that was intended to help children of native ancestry strengthen their self-esteem by providing them with knowledge of their own cultural heritage. Since

it joined the Toronto Board of Education, Wandering Spirit's enrolment is open to any child of elementary school age.

The school's objectives are:

- To provide a structured setting for the elementary education of native children through a system that stresses progress rather than failure.
- To provide an opportunity for native people to learn about the influences which shape their lives and to study their history, spiritual values, customs and language, as taught by the elders of the native community, so they can survive as a people within the mainstream society.

The school's curriculum meets the requirements set forth by the Ontario Ministry of Education.