

Preliminary work is proceeding on the North's first major pipeline, the Alaska Gas Pipeline, which will carry natural gas from Alaska's north slope to the United States. The line will cross about 800 km of the Yukon and will follow the general route of the Alaska Highway. The social, environmental and economic aspects of the pipeline are still under study.

Politics in the Yukon

The Yukon has been a territory since 1898, when it was separated from the Northwest Territories by the Canadian government. It does not have a full provincial government, but is governed by an appointed commissioner and a territorial council elected to a four-year term.

The constitution for the government of the Yukon Territory is based on two federal statutes: the Yukon Act and the Government Organization Act. The former provides for a commissioner as head of government and for a legislative body, the Yukon Legislative Council. Under the Government Organization Act, the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and an appointed Governor-in-Council are responsible for directing the commissioner in the administration of the territory.

The executive level of the Yukon government comprises the appointed commissioner and an executive committee, which is modelled on a Cabinet structure. The committee is composed

of the commissioner, the deputy commissioner and five councillors. Each of the councillors is assigned a portfolio.

The councillors of the executive committee are nominated by the leader of the party with the majority in the Legislative Council. This precedent, set in the election of 1978, will probably be continued.

The Legislative Council is empowered to make local laws and regulations which are subject to federal approval. It consists of 16 members who elect a speaker, and its proceedings vary little from those of the provincial assemblies.

The present council holds a Progressive Conservative majority, elected on November 20, 1978, in the first Yukon election to be run along party lines. Eleven Progressive Conservatives, two Liberals, three New Democratic Party members and two Independents were elected.

The most recent commissioner of the Yukon, appointed in 1979, was Lone Christensen (since resigned). Upon her appointment, Commissioner Christensen received a letter of instruction from the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs detailing the steps to be taken to enable the Yukon to assume full responsible government like that of the provinces. As the executive committee and the administration of the Yukon gain experience, the federal government is intervening less often in the decision-making process. Already the