Northwest Territories

The Northwest Territories comprises:

(i) all that part of Canada north of the Sixtieth Parallel of North latitude, except islands wholly within the Yukon Territory, the Province of Quebec or the Province of Newfoundland, and

(ii) the islands in Hudson Bay, James Bay and Ungava Bay except those islands within the jurisdiction of Manitoba, Ontario or Quebec.

The Northwest Territories are constituted under an Act of Parliament that provides for a commissioner of the Northwest Territories appointed by the Governor in Council. The Commissioner administers the Government of the Territories under instructions given from time to time by the Governor in Council or the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. There is a Legislative Council consisting of elected members and members appointed by the Governor in Council. The Commissioner in Council has power to make ordinances for the Government of the Territories respecting such matters as direct taxation within the Territories, the raising of revenue, establishment and tenure of territorial offices, maintenance of municipal institutions, licenses, administration of civil justice, education, public health and generally all matters of a local nature. The administration of the Territories comes under the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The seat of government is at present at Ottawa. There are two District Administrators in the field, at Fort Smith for the Mackenzie District and at Ottawa for the Yukon and Franklin districts in the Eastern Arctic. The District Administrator is assisted by Regional and Area Administrative Officers at various places throughout the Territories.

Municipal Government

In addition to the Federal Government and the separate governments of the provinces and territories, there are also various units of local government. These may take a number of different forms, such as cities, towns, villages, counties, townships, etc. Their powers are laid down by legislation enacted by the appropriate provincial or territorial government. In some cases the powers are found in special charters or statutes creating a particular city, town or other form of government. In most cases, however, the form of local government and the powers and responsibilities attached thereto are to be found in municipal acts or other general statutes applicable throughout the province or territory. The qualifications of elector as well as the qualifications for holding office are similarly regulated either by a special act or charter or by general legislation establishing such forms of government.