

lands held by the several Departments of the Federal Government for various purposes connected with federal administration. The Dominion Lands Act (R.S.C. 1927, c. 113) and the Ordnance and Admiralty Lands Act (R.S.C. 1927, c. 58) were repealed in 1950, and the Territorial Lands Act (R.S.C. 1952, c. 263) and the Public Lands Grants Act (R.S.C. 1952, c. 224) were enacted to replace them and became effective June 1, 1950.

The largest areas under federal administration are the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory amounting to 1,511,979 sq. miles or about 40 p.c. of the surface of Canada. This part of the national domain, which is all north of the 60th parallel of latitude, is under the administration of the Northern Administration and Lands Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

THE NORTHLAND—CANADA'S CHALLENGE*

On Dec. 16, 1953, the name of the Federal Department of Resources and Development was changed to Northern Affairs and National Resources. It was an important change, because it marked the first time that a department of government was designated, in its title, as being responsible for administering Canada's Northland. In all the years since Confederation, that responsibility had been submerged in the name of a Branch, or even a Division, of such Departments as Interior, Mines and Resources, and Resources and Development. It was a responsibility administered without fanfare.

Under these circumstances, the Canadian North was something of a blind spot in the eyes of Canadians living south of the 60th parallel of latitude. People did not much care, perhaps because they already had their local interests and a natural preoccupation with developing the southern two-thirds of their country. Where there was interest, it was often sporadic, roused by the romantic poems of Robert Service or novels about the red-coated Mounted Police, and excited by tales of gold-rush days, the discovery of oil at Norman Wells, or of radium at Great Bear Lake. Interest in the North flared up—and died—quickly, leaving only romantic impressions and little precise knowledge.

This change in name of the Department signified a new fact emerging, the fact that in recent years there has been a rapidly growing and much more permanent interest in the importance of that northern hinterland. But no new fact comes into being without the influence of prior events. What is interesting here is the series of events that wakened in Canadians the realization that they owned an important northern frontier.

Perhaps the most important factor in this awakening was simply that Canada, during World War II, had come of age. Until then, Canadians had been busy justifying the existence of the two great transcontinental railways. Time, energy and ingenuity were needed to settle and develop the vast areas opened up by that continent-wide system of transportation. In those years, Canada was like a youth who had not quite grown up. By the end of the second world war, much of the settlement and development of the southern fringe of the country, in which the majority of Canadians live, had been accomplished. Those with vision began to look farther afield—to the North. It was a time of peace and prosperity and Canada was strong enough to tackle new tasks.

* Prepared under the direction of R. G. Robertson, Deputy Minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa.