

year, usually for four weeks at a winter session and for shorter spring and fall sessions. A clerk of council and a legal adviser provide the main administrative assistance. Debates are recorded verbatim.

The Northwest Territories Act gives the territorial council authority to legislate in most areas of government activity except for natural resources other than game; these are reserved to the federal government. Legislation must receive three readings and have the assent of the commissioner. The federal government may disallow any ordinance within one year. The commissioner proposes most legislation but private members' bills are allowed, except for money matters, which are the prerogative of the commissioner. Besides draft legislation, the council gives considerable time to policy papers in which the commissioner or other executive committee members seek advice or authority to take a particular course of action.

Parliament approved legislation in March 1979 for the political development of Northwest Territories. Amendments to the Northwest Territories Act allowed the NWT council to set its own number of members, as long as there is a minimum of 15 and no more than 25 members. Previously Parliament had authority to set the number of members, 15 since 1974. Council has since set the number at 22; an election for the enlarged number was held in October 1979. The council selects its speaker from among its members; previously the commissioner was the presiding officer. Council also nominates up to seven of its members to the executive committee along with the commissioner, who is chairman, and the deputy commissioner. This committee advises the commissioner on broad policy matters and acts as a consultive body for him. Each elected executive committee member is responsible for one or more departments of the territorial government.

The justice minister is the attorney general of Northwest Territories under the Criminal Code of Canada, with responsibility for criminal but not for civil matters or the constitution or organization of the courts (see Chapter 2). Law enforcement is provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The commissioner, council and council staff of Northwest Territories are given in Appendix 8.

## Local government

3.7

Local government in Canada comprises all government entities created by the provinces and territories to provide services that can be more effectively discharged through local control. Broadly speaking, local government services are identified in terms of seven main functions: protection, transportation, environmental health, environmental development, recreation, community services and education. Local government may also operate such facilities as public transit and the supply of electricity and gas. Education is normally administered separately from the other local functions.

Under the BNA Act local government was made a responsibility of the provincial legislatures, a responsibility extended to the territories when their governments were constituted in their present forms. The unit of local government, apart from the school board, is usually the municipality which is incorporated as a city, town, village, township or other designation. The powers and responsibilities of municipalities are delegated to them by statutes passed by their respective provincial or territorial legislatures.

An increasing number of special agencies or joint boards and commissions have been created to provide certain services for groups of municipalities. Local government revenue has been supplemented by provincial grants, either unconditional or for specific purposes. Certain functions traditionally assigned to local government have been assumed in whole or in part by the provinces. Besides encouraging the amalgamation of small units, the provinces have established new levels of local government to provide services which can be better discharged at a regional level. Second-tier local governments now cover the whole of British Columbia and much of Ontario. In Quebec three regional governments have been established.

The major revenue source available to local government is the taxation of real property, supplemented by taxation of personal property, businesses and amusements.