



From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

The North

Welcome to our special full issue on Canada's North, a storied part of the country that is central to Canadian identity. Even if most Canadians have never set foot in the three northern territories, they agree that the North in many ways defines the country itself. From sea to sea to sea, Arctic sovereignty defines Canadian sovereignty.

In summer, the North is the Land of the Midnight Sun. In the dead of winter, there is only a sliver of light in the day. The territories and the Arctic Ocean, on a stand-alone basis, would be the seventh largest country in the world—larger than India. As it is, with 3.5 million square km out of Canada's 8.9 million square km, they make Canada the world's second-largest country. While the North has no shortage of geography, it remains thinly populated, with 115,000 people living in the three territories, half of them indigenous people. Nor does the North lack for natural resources. Since the discovery of diamonds in 1991, the mining industry has become the largest private-sector employer in the Northwest Territories. And with the melting of Arctic sea ice, 12 billion barrels of oil and 150 trillion cubic feet of natural gas will become more accessible.

We begin with a Q&A with NWT Premier Bob McLeod, who tells us why devolution last April was such an historic event for his territory. "We have province-like powers while having the benefits of being a territory," he says. He also explains how consensus government in the NWT and Nunavut is "like a perpetual minority government." And he discusses the challenges of sustainable development in the North, as well as Arctic

sovereignty and his relationship with Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Then David Brock, chief electoral officer of NWT, takes us through the process of consensus government in NWT and Nunavut, where MLAs sit as independent members with no party affiliation, and choose the premier and cabinet from their caucus. But as he also writes: "No one should be fooled into thinking that consensus government extracts the politics from policy making."

NWT Health and Social Services Minister Glen Abernethy writes of the challenges facing northern communities. "Even with a small population of 43,000 people," he writes, "the NWT is a vast and culturally diverse territory."

Terry Audla, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), representing nearly 60,000 Inuit, writes how his people are stewards of the North. He notes that "Inuit have signed five very modern and comprehensive land claim agreements with the Crown that span almost 40 per cent of Canada's landmass and 50 per cent of its coastline."

Pierre Gratton, president of the Mining Association of Canada, notes that while his industry is the largest employer in NWT, "accounting for 16 per cent of GDP by industry," there are many challenges to developing mining in the North, including "infrastructure and a skilled work force." He asks: "How can we turn opportunities found underground into positive outcomes above ground?"

Contributing Writer Geoff Norquay compellingly captures the northern visions of three Conservative prime ministers—John Diefenbaker, Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper. From Dief's "Roads to Resources", to Mul-

roney's support for the creation of Nunavut as the third territory, to Harper's "asserting Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and the successful negotiation of a devolution agreement with the Northwest Territories." With their shared commitment to the North, all three prime ministers also learned that "as with many things in the North, progress takes time."

Contributing Writer Jeremy Kinsman considers the changing nature of Canada's relationship with its Arctic neighbours, notably the US and Russia. Canada's response to the assertive Russian presence in the Arctic has also been complicated by Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea in Ukraine. As an old Russia hand—a former Canadian ambassador, Kinsman brings special insights to the Arctic sovereignty debate.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May writes that we ignore the effects of climate change in the North, not least melting sea ice, at our peril. As she writes: "It is the image of a stranded polar bear on an ice floe that says 'Arctic' to the world."

Looking at the Arctic Council, we have an informed third party assessment by Thordur Aegir Oskarsson, Iceland's ambassador to Canada, on the policy challenges to Arctic stakeholders, including sovereignty, the environment, and sustainable development. This is not a diplomatic note, but clearly something written in the Icelandic ambassador's own voice.

Finally, Bruce Carson writes about the imperative of involving Canada's First Peoples as equity partners and suppliers in developing Canada's immense natural resources in the North.

Enjoy our Canadian northern summer. **P**