

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

PROVINCE



OF ALBERTA



FORT CHIPEWYAN

ANNUAL REPORT 1964

To His Honor
J. Percy Page
Lieutenant-Governor in Council
Legislative Building
Edmonton, Alberta

May It Please Your Honor:

The undersigned has the honor to transmit herewith the second Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Honourable Ira McLaughlin
CHAIRMAN

Northern Alberta Development Council
Neil D. MacLean Building
Grande Prairie, Alberta

Date: February 15, 1965

Northern Alberta Development Council

January 1 - December 31, 1964

MEMBERS

Hon. I. McLaughlin	Chairman and Minister without Portfolio
Mr. A. O. Fimrite	Deputy Chairman and MLA for Spirit River Const'y.
Mr. J. E. Oberholtzer	Member and Deputy Minister Industry & Development
Mr. R. E. Duncan	Member and Utility Company Manager
Mr. J. Stromstedt	Member and Farmer

Executive Officer

K. H. Easson

Secretary

Mrs. C. Dunlop

Executive Offices Located in the
Neil D. MacLean Building, Grande Prairie
Alberta

Phone 532-2281

Phone 532-2582



Northern Alberta Development Council members on tour. Left to right, John Stromstedt, Hon. Ira McLaughlin, J. E. Oberholzer, K. H. Easson (exec. officer) and A. O. Fimrite. Mr. R. E. Duncan was missing when this picture was taken

THE COUNCIL

The Northern Alberta Development Council is not an operating department, i.e. it does not own or operate equipment, supervise or administer numerous employees or large budgets, yet has the responsibility of fostering increased economic development within the one hundred and twenty-nine thousand square mile area of the province north of the 55th parallel.

Section IV of the Act to establish the Northern Alberta Development Council largely covers the duties and responsibilities of the Council and states:

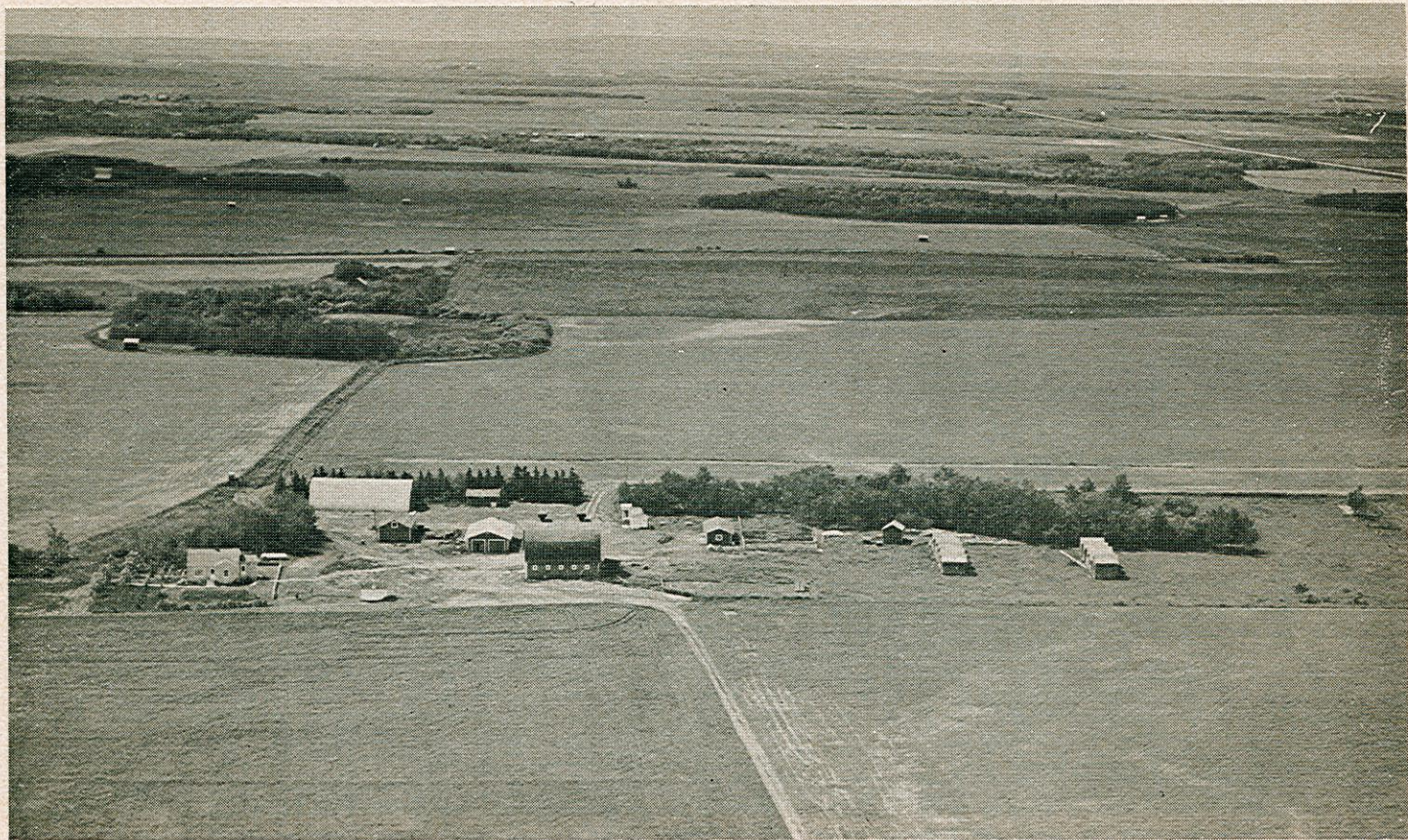
"The functions of the Council are to investigate, plan, promote and co-ordinate practical measures to foster and advance development in northern Alberta and to advise the government thereon, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing may investigate and recommend on the requirements of the area in the matter of

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) industrial development | (d) Metis rehabilitation |
| (b) transportation facilities | (e) educational facilities, and |
| (c) agricultural stabilization | (f) local administration. |

Although this has been the first full year of operation for the Northern Alberta Development Council, it was soon discovered that the duties of the Council involved investigation into areas not specifically designated under Section IV of the Act. Since its inception, the Council has been called upon to aid and investigate health and medical facilities in the northern areas, town planning, sewage and water problems, matters pertaining to our natural resources of fish and wildlife and many others. The matter of Metis rehabilitation could not be discussed unless the desires of Indians and Treaty Indians were taken into consideration. In its function as an advisory group to the government, the Northern Alberta Development Council has and is being called upon to act as a liaison party in various matters affecting northern Alberta.

Public meetings were conducted by the Northern Alberta Development Council during the year at Athabasca, Valleyview and Beaverlodge. Representatives of the Council attended or were delegates to meetings in Dawson Creek, B.C., Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Berwyn, Peace River, High Level, Fort Vermilion, Fort McMurray, High Prairie, Rycroft, Manning, Keg River, Beaverlodge, Hythe and Fairview.

In addition to extensive travelling throughout the area, members of the Council visited Fort Smith, Pine Point, Hay River and Yellowknife, all within the Northwest Territories and Hudson Hope in British Columbia as it is realized that adjacent areas have a definite influence on our total northern development.



Fertile Agricultural Land near Grande Prairie

AGRICULTURE

For the second year in succession, agriculture was seriously affected by the adverse weather and growing conditions, resulting in low grain grading qualities. The financial loss suffered due to the drop in grade however, has possibly been offset by the quantity harvested and it is expected the agricultural production value will be somewhat ahead of 1963 when it was estimated at \$46,000,000.00.

The acquisition of Crown land in the Peace River area and north continued to hold its appeal for the public and one has only to detour slightly off the travelled highways to see the enormous amount of clearing and breaking under way in homestead areas. Districts attracting the greatest interest from homestead applicants appear to be the Valleyview and Snipe Lake areas on the 55th parallel, the Hawk Hills district just north of the 57th parallel and the LaCrete - Buffalo Hills region between the 58th and 59th parallels.

During the past year, the Northern Alberta Development Council has, on the request of the Department of Industry and Development Statistical Branch, completed a study on the fertilizer consumption and rate of growth in northern Alberta, completed a study and forwarded a subsequent recommendation to the Department of Agriculture on the establishment of additional community pastures in northern Alberta, emphasized to the Department of Agriculture the need for the establishment of additional District Agriculturalists in two specific points in northern Alberta, attended and took an active part in two meetings of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists in Fairview and Grande Prairie, indicated to the Department of Agriculture the need for the establishment of a water resources engineer in the northern area.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

A contract arranged with Mr. R. N. Harvey, Business Consultant of Edmonton, to conduct an economic survey of an area encompassed approximately by the 23rd baseline on the north to the 18th baseline on the south, east to Range 12, West of the 5th Meridian and west to the British Columbia boundary has been completed. Copies of the survey can be obtained from the offices of the Northern Alberta Development Council in Grande Prairie.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife were requested to test the degree of infestation, quality and quantity of fresh water fish in the Precambrian Shield area of northeastern Alberta. The results of the study are necessary to ascertain the future and expansion of our inland commercial fishing operations in that area.

A most significant development in Resources Policy during 1964 was the decision by the government of the province to permit the extraction of oil from the Athabasca tar sands by Great Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. According to the schedule the Great Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. project will be in production by the end of September 1967, contributing substantially to the entire economy of western Canada and specifically to this portion of north-eastern Alberta.

Daily recovery by Great Canadian will include 376 tons of sulphur and 2,962 tons of coke as well as 45,000 barrels of synthetic crude. The giant bucket wheel excavators will dig over 100,000 tons of sand per day, enough for a pile taller than a ten storey building. Transporting this total by rail will require 87 gondola cars per hour or 2,100 per day, enough to make up a train nearly sixteen miles long. More than enough water for a city the size of Windsor, Ontario will be required and about \$16,000,000 annually will be contributed to Alberta's economy through payroll, operating costs, royalty payments and taxes, etc. It is also expected that indirectly this project will give rise to new and expanded businesses and services in the Fort McMurray area and other parts of Alberta.

Discussions were held with a commercial fishing concern interested in establishing a filleting and freezing plant on the shores of Lake Athabasca. No conclusive decision has been made and the matter is still in abeyance.

Information was supplied to several individuals and concerns interested in the natural resources of northern Alberta. However, inquiries other than from residents of northern Alberta are somewhat sporadic and it can be concluded that the functions of the Northern Alberta Development Council are still largely unknown to a large segment of our population.

Our Executive Officer was appointed to the Industrial Development Board, attending one conference in Banff. Other conferences attended by members of the Council were the Pacific Northwest Trade Association meeting in Prince George, B.C. the Third National Development Conference in Edmonton and the fourth Annual Northwest Canadian Trade Fair in Edmonton.

CONSTRUCTION

The value of construction permits continued to compare favorably with those of previous years, however in terms of dollars and cents, shows considerable increase due to the development of the Athabasca tar sands by Great Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. Many new motor hotels, motels, and other commercial type buildings are under construction or have been completed during the year in centres throughout the northern part of our province. However, as in other areas, the construction of residential property ebbed during the summer months. The completion of the Alberta portion of the Great Slave Lake railway has brought about the construction of grain elevators at High Level and other northern points, reducing the truck haulage distance by farmers to a terminal point by, in some cases, over one hundred and twenty miles.

A comparison of the following table will indicate the steady growth of select points north of the 55th parallel:

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED 1962-1964 (Millions of Dollars)

	1962	1963	1964
Grande Prairie	4.4	3.90	2.90
Peace River	1.10	1.50	2.10
Fort McMurray	.20	.20	2.00
High Level		.30	1.20
High Prairie	1.00	.30	.90
Valleyview	.40	.80	.80
Fairview	.30	.30	.70
Slave Lake			.60

POPULATION

It is interesting to note that approximately 48.5 per cent of the population north of the 55th parallel and estimated to be between 94,000 and 95,000 persons is under the age of 20 years, indicating the confidence born of success and progress by the people of northern Alberta.

As in the past and indicative of the future, northern Alberta has its boom towns. Three specific points are worthy of mention, all having been publicized throughout the province by various types of news media, namely Fort McMurray, Slave Lake and High Level. The first two, Fort McMurray, Slave Lake are dependent on oil for their expansion and it remains to be seen whether the current boom condition will settle down with the establishment of permanent facilities and services or not. In the case of High Level, however, this hamlet, whose population has increased from 350 persons

in 1963 to a figure estimated to be over 750 as of today, depends for its economy on the interest in virgin homestead land, lumbering, service industries and its importance as a highway junction point. The economic diversification which has sparked the growth of High Level is indicative of what may happen to other communities in the years to come.

The growth of communities in northern Alberta can be seen from the following comparison:

Centre	Population 1956	1961	1963	1964
Grande Prairie	6302	8352	9707	10708
Peace River	2034	2543	3209	3318
High Prairie	1743	1756	2305	2400 est.
Valleyview	973	1077	1306	2142
Fairview	1260	1506	1701	1777
Fort McMurray	1110	1186	1186	1700 est.
Grimshaw	904	1095	1428	1515
Slave Lake	315	468	600	1365
Manning	726	896	1148	1189
High Level		105	350	750 est.

METIS REHABILITATION

On the recommendation of the Northern Alberta Development Council, the government of the province of Alberta established a Community Development Branch, primarily aimed at providing a service to people of Indian descent whereby they can help themselves.

Three pilot projects have been established and community development officers appointed to each place. The first point was Fort McMurray, followed closely by Fort Chipewyan and towards the end of 1964, the town of Slave Lake. In conjunction with the community development program, the government has made available \$150,000 to guarantee loans to selected people of Indian descent for housing projects.

While it is too early to ascertain the success of these pilot projects, indications from the Fort McMurray area point out the need for similar programs within many settlements and districts in the northern region. It is expected additional projects will be initiated this coming year.

Of special interest to the Council are the attempts by Mr. I. Glick of Calling Lake to establish some form of localized industry to provide supplementary employment income for people of Indian descent in the Calling Lake, Anzac and other regions of north-

eastern Alberta. Under the trademark MEENSA PRODUCTS (meensa being the Cree word for berries), some 8,000 jars of jam, pie filling and sauces were produced all with a pronounced and distinctive wild berry flavor. In production also are artifacts of native design including moosehide moccasins, mitts, beaded jackets, silk work, diamond willow carvings and many others.

Interest has been expressed by a number of organizations, commercial institutions and others in this development and although it is too early to say what the results will be, the outlook appears bright.

EDUCATION

The Northern Alberta Development Council has had the opportunity to observe the operations of Northland School Division No. 61 of the Department of Education, and again commends this Division on their efforts to bring education to our northern citizens.

During the course of the year, our Chairman participated in the opening of new schools for the Northland School Division at Keg River, Atikameg and Fort Chipewyan, and also participated in the opening of the school at High Level. Members of the Northern Alberta Development Council were also asked to play an active part in the explanation of the new provincial community development program to teachers from throughout Alberta at a joint conference early last spring.

The Council has also submitted various recommendations and reports to the appropriate authorities on education in the north and although realizing that additional expenditures are necessary to bring education to many of our northern residents, the Council believes the outcome will more than justify the expenditures involved.

It is necessary however, to realize that improved education does not necessarily improve significantly the plight of the poverty level child as these children have many distractions — hunger, sickness, crowded living and poor studying conditions — so that in many instances they cannot take advantage of what school has to offer. Many of these disadvantaged children will drop out in their early high school years, however it is hoped that through the efforts of the provincial community development program, Northland School Division and its vocational training courses and other agencies, the abject poverty under which many of these people are living, will, in years to come, be steadily dissipated.



Bridge construction across the Athabasca River at Fort McMurray to serve the Great Canadian tar sand development

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Transportation facilities continue to be the major key to unlocking the wealth of the resources in northern Alberta and is a matter foremost in the minds of all the northern residents. Of prime importance is the construction and maintenance of highways followed by the need of all-weather landing strips in the remote areas.

Unfortunately, this past summer saw unfavorable climatic conditions which hampered the highway construction program to the extent that only a partial completion of the projects were accomplished. Recommendations on the construction and upgrading of several highways in the northern area have been submitted to the Department of Highways and it is the Council's hope that in the year 1965 favorable conditions will exist, enabling the completion and construction of necessary highway transportation facilities.

The need for market roads into established and new homestead areas continues to be a pressing problem. It is estimated that over 150 mile of gravelled market roads are required to provide passable highway transportation facilities in each township of developed agricultural land in the northwestern part of our province. With the rapid expansion and interest being shown in the agricultural land of northern Alberta, it is possible that special funds may be necessary to provide these required services.

A misconception common to the more southerly parts of the province is that the roads and highways in northern Alberta are of substandard quality. While in some cases this may be true, highway construction standards in the northern area during the recent years has differed in no way from other parts of the province. With northern Alberta's sparse and widely scattered population however, it is necessary to construct many miles of highway through completely uninhabited territory to achieve the same results as ten miles of highway construction would accomplish in our more populous southern areas.

The completion of the Alberta portion of the Great Slave Lake railway has provided a new avenue of cheap transportation within reach of many of our northern residents. In traversing the north Peace region this new line has indirectly been responsible for the erection of sawmills and a planing mill to exploit our northern forest wealth. The clearing of farm land has been greatly accelerated and grain handling facilities are either under construction or have been completed in previously remote points. It is expected this railway will enhance opportunities for investment in the basic resources of our country and provide new employment for its people.



Statue of 12 Foot Davis at Peace River town

AIRSTRIPS

Of major importance to the residents of northern Alberta, especially those in isolated communities, is the need of all-weather airstrips. The provincial department of Lands and Forests has airstrips in many communities, however these landing fields were constructed by the Forestry Department for use during fire suppression and other activities and are not generally suitable for use by other than the smallest aircraft.

In conjunction with the Federal Department of Transport, economic and feasibility studies were conducted on the potential of establishing an all-weather airstrip at Fort Chipewyan, and improving the airstrip at Fort Vermilion. In the case of Fort Chipewyan, an all-weather airstrip suitable for twin-engined aircraft would reduce freight rates by approximately 7 cents per lb. The Research Council of Alberta were requested to find a suitable gravel deposit adjacent to the proposed site of this airstrip, without which construction costs would be exorbitant. A suitable and ample supply approximately one-half mile from the site was proven.

The entire matter of airstrip construction in northern Alberta is presently under study as the Federal Department of Transport is only able to provide limited financial aid towards the construction of these necessities.

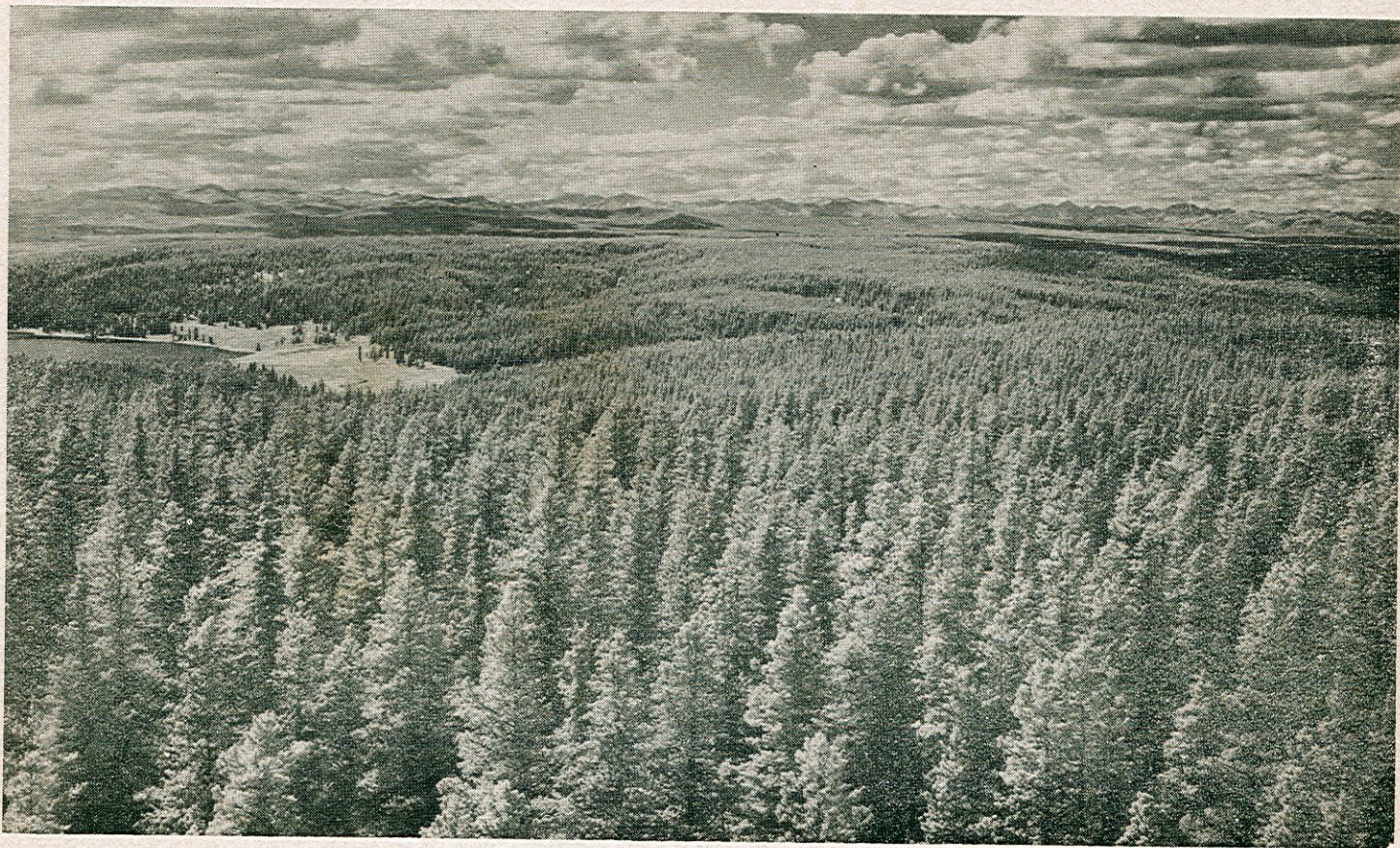
TOURISM

Northern Alberta has literally been untouched by tourism and the many features of the northern area need wide publicity to become major tourist attractions. Tourist accommodation except in the more settled area of northern Alberta, is still of a limited nature and the traveller must be willing to accept this at the present time.

From the results of a survey by the Grande Prairie Tourist Information Centre, there are indications that an increased number of tourists are spending their holidays in the Peace River area, whereas in previous years this district was strictly a stopover en-route to the Alaska Highway. As accommodation, camping facilities and highways improve, it is expected northern Alberta will attract greater numbers of tourists in the years to come.

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

During 1961 the Northern Alberta Development Council was called upon to assist and aid on specific matters involving the communities of Fort Chipewyan, High Level, Slave Lake and Fort McMurray. Problems involving water and sewage, planning, fire



Forest stand south of Grande Prairie

MUNICIPAL MATTERS (continued)

protection and others were discussed with the appropriate government officials and several matters were solved. Other problems are still under investigation.

HEALTH

The health and medical facilities available to residents of our northern area, especially those in isolated communities, continues to be foremost in the minds of Council members. The difficulties encountered in providing these facilities to so few people in widely scattered communities will not be overcome overnight. Various solutions to this problem are under study and an on-the-spot examination was made of various communities by the Honourable Dr. J. D. Ross, the Honourable I. McLaughlin and various medical advisors.

It is the sincere hope of the Northern Alberta Development Council that a solution to these most pressing problems will be forthcoming.

FORESTRY

The forest resources of our northern area are attracting more and more interest as the years progress. Northern Alberta contains one of the last sources of accessible timber of quality and size in the North American continent.

Two large saw and planer mills are under construction in the vicinity of High Level and when completed should give employment to between 300 and 400 persons. In other points, expansions to present facilities and the construction of new plants herald a healthy outlook for the future of our forests and the economy of the north.

The wet weather played a big role in the past season, minimizing the fire incidents to one of the lowest in the past twenty years.

FIRES AND AREA BURNED BY DIVISION

Division	Number of Fires			Area Burned - Acres		
	1962	1963	1964	1962	1963	1964
Grande Prairie	26	40	13	85	120	52
Peace River	36	97	38	463	5463	3124
Slave Lake	27	94	53	300	822	963
Lac la Biche	11	66	42	1156	9884	3327
Athabasca			29			3702
Total	100	297	175	2004	16289	11168

The Northern Alberta Development Council appreciates the new pulp and paper lease policy as announced by the Minister of Lands and Forests.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Last year witnessed a surge in oil and gas exploration in northern Alberta and the first major oil discovery in Alberta since 1958.

The discovery of oil in the Slave Lake area has given rise to speculation that other major discoveries will be shortly forthcoming. This is further substantiated by the eagerness with which oil companies are bidding on Crown land north of the 55th parallel.

OIL AND GAS WELLS DRILLED NORTH OF THE 55TH PARALLEL

Year	WILDCAT WELLS				Development Wells		Total Wells
	Oil	Gas	Dry	Total	Drilled		Drilled
1959	1	3	68	72	44		116
1960	1	4	71	76	31		107
1961		7	54	61	29		90
1962	1	4	71	76	22		98
1963	8	8	69	85	68		153
1964	20	6	97	123	176		299

The industry in the northern part of the province has been generally small relative to the whole and has until recently, shown little evidence of increasing its participation. With the larger areas of virgin land remaining for future exploration in northern Alberta however, indications are that a more important future lies ahead.

ESTIMATED RESERVES OF CRUDE OIL AND GAS NORTH OF THE 55TH PARALLEL

Year	Thousands of Barrels		Billions of Cu. Ft.	
	Reserves - Oil	Province	Reserves - Oil	Province
	Recoverable	Total	Marketable	Total
	Virgin	% of	Virgin	% of
1959	126,236	3.0	1576.0	5.4
1960	139,580	3.1	1673.0	5.0
1961	152,663	3.2	1783.0	5.3
1962	173,828	3.4	1638.0	4.6
1963	211,910	3.9	1655.0	4.5
1964	328,975	5.4	2275.0	5.5

SUMMARY

No clear picture can be obtained as yet of the economic potential of the vast area north of the 55th parallel in Alberta. While intensive exploration of resources has taken place within this area recently, much remains to be learned.

An increasing interest is being shown in the northern areas by the provinces and the Federal government, and the Northern Alberta Development Council has had ample indication that in years to come Alberta will be foremost in the nation's endeavor to develop their northern regions.

THIS IS THE RAW MATERIAL

This sample of oil sands came from Great Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. lease number 4, located about twenty-five miles north of Fort McMurray, Alberta. This lease covering about 4,000 acres is only 600 miles south of the Arctic Circle.



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