

Ottawa, or some other Canadian destination equally close to the United States border. To Canadians, of course, this isn't "the North" at all; yet we use much the same logic when, from a look-out in Toronto, we view Abitibi or Sudbury or Kirkland Lake as northern communities. Out in the Peace River country of Alberta and British Columbia, people hold very specific views about where the North begins and does not begin. They are quite emphatic that it is the land lying beyond their country, in the direction of Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie Waterway. In fact, these Peace River people are very sensitive on the subject. It is one of their long-standing complaints that both the Federal and the Provincial Governments have neglected their area as though it formed a part of the forbidding North, beyond the frontier of economic interest.

Finally, my third question - Do we go up north or down north?

This question may at first seem foolish - the obvious answer is up north, of course, because the conventional map in our offices and classrooms is based on a conic or Mercator projection, and shows the northernmost lands and islands far towards the top of the map or even cut off beyond it. With such a map, up north inevitably suggests a remote and isolated location, far removed from the centre of all activity.

Until quite lately, indeed, the North was remote and isolated. Today, however, we see it in a new perspective. We have learned that the shortest intercontinental air routes follow great circles, that from San Francisco and Vancouver to London or Paris, and from New York to Tokyo or Moscow, the shortest and fastest routes traverse the polar region. In this aid-minded age the Arctic has moved from the periphery of things to the centre; it is becoming in fact one of the great aviation crossroads of the modern world.

In recent months, too, certain events have focused still more attention upon the most northerly reaches of Canada. Headlines in your newspapers have described the stampede of applicants requesting permits to explore for oil and gas in Canada's Arctic Islands, islands that as we now know, actually lie closer to the hungry markets of industrial Europe than do the oil fields of our western provinces or those of the Middle East and Venezuela. This dramatic oil-rush has opened before us a new horizon, one which offers vistas of Arctic ports and submarine tankers, and raises the prospect of a day when the frozen polar ocean will become a mediterranean sea for international commerce. Equally suddenly, our Arctic Islands have lost their remoteness; the land as well as the latitude has moved from the periphery of our map to its centre.