

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 59/18 THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANADIAN NORTH

A paper given at the annual meeting of the Ontario Geography Teachers Association, Toronto, on March 31, 1959, by Mr. John L. Jenness, Chief of the Economic Division, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

... I have been asked to discuss present trends and future possibilities in the economic development of the Canadian North. By way of introduction, I should like to raise three questions.

First, what is the Canadian North?

Is it that part of Canada north of the 60th parallel where the Federal Government alone has jurisdiction - the part known to all of us as the Northwest Territories and Yukon? Or do we mean the area which lies beyond the boreal forest - the treeless tundra whose southern boundary follows no single parallel of latitude, but extends instead from the delta of the Mackenzie River to Churchill in Manitoba, thence across Ungava to some point on the coast of Labrador? Or again do we mean by "Canadian North" merely the area north of rail, which in Ontario and Alberta would mean north of Moosonee and Waterways respectively, but which in the Yukon would have to be beyond Whitehorse, the northern terminal of a railway that starts at tidewater in Skagway, Alaska?

The Canadian North can mean any one of these, I think, depending upon whether you approach the area from the vantage point of administration, of climate, or of transportation. Economists, indeed, may offer yet a fourth definition, but I shall return to that later when I come to my central theme of northern development.

Now for my second question. Where does "the North" begin?

The answer will depend in part, at least, upon our point of departure. To the United States tourist, going north may involve no more than a visit to Niagara Falls,