

Marine Developments

The Canadian Government has been operating a regular annual patrol of the Eastern Arctic since 1922, but marine transport to that part of the North consisted until 1947 of little more than the single Government patrol vessel, plus a few small private freighters operated by firms largely concerned with the fur-trade. In that year a Canadian-United States program was begun to establish jointly-operated weather stations in the islands of the High Arctic. The tremendous task of transporting building materials and other supplies to these outposts and to defence establishments that had been built in the North was carried out, in the beginning, almost entirely by United States agencies.

Canada's responsibilities were rapidly increasing, however, and there was rapidly growing interest in exploring the natural resources of the northern mainland and the islands. At the same time, there was increased emphasis on the improvement of living standards of the native population and extensive Government programs toward that end were being developed by the federal departments concerned. As a result, in 1950, the Ministry of Transport put into service the new ship *C.D. Howe*, designed for Arctic work. Three years later, the heavy icebreaker *d'Iberville* was commissioned to support the Arctic sea-lift operations. Canada began to increase annually the degree of its participation in the supply undertakings to the northern ports-of-call, until it became an all-Canadian project.

Today, the annual Ministry of Transport supply convoys comprise some 15 Canadian Coast Guard vessels and some 18 chartered freighters and tankers. The Coast Guard ships include both heavy icebreakers and shallow-draft supply ships, the latter being able to reach many ports-of-call, particularly in the Hudson Bay area, where shallow water prevents ordinary freighters from operating.

From mid-July until late September and early October, the fleet of supply ships delivers supplies to some 40 Eastern Arctic settlements, including native villages, trading-posts, defence outposts and weather-stations. Because of the short season, the delivery is made by several convoys, each consisting of an icebreaker or two, depending upon the severity of ice conditions, and several cargo ships.

One convoy goes to the High Arctic, with Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island, as a main calling-point. Another may work along the Baffin Island coast, while yet another makes its way to the defence establishments in Foxe Basin, on the west side of Baffin Island.

Other vessels are busy in Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait. At the same time, icebreaker assistance is afforded as needed to commercial shipping plying the route from Churchill, Manitoba, through the strait to Europe.

The Ministry of Transport operates and maintains the marine aids to navigation along the Hudson Bay route and in other Arctic waters, including those in the Western Arctic from Tuktoyaktuk, at the mouth of the Mackenzie River, eastward to Cambridge Bay, on Victoria Island, and to Spence Bay and