

Labrador, and that segment of the ice-capped polar sea that is caught within the Canadian sector.

In superficial area this territory includes some $1\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles. It is divisible into four main sections; the Yukon Highlands, the Mackenzie Valley, the northern portions of the Canadian Shield and the Arctic Islands. Of these the most important in its potential contribution to the national economy is that great mass of ancient and weathered rock which, in the mineral zones of Ontario and Quebec, has added so immensely to Canadian wealth through its contributions of gold, silver, nickel, and other products of the mine. At Yellowknife the great Shield has already provided a basis for the largest settlement in the Canadian North. The barren and inhospitable surface of the Shield provides at once the greatest physical handicap to the development of settled communities and the greatest promise of riches upon which such communities can be established.

The climate of this area varies from the extreme winter temperatures of certain localities in the Yukon and in the northernmost islands to conditions that are quite as equable - if that is the term - as those of such cities as Winnipeg and Ottawa.

Within this region there live to-day some 8500 Eskimos and 6000 Indians. For the most part they are to be found in nomadic or semi-nomadic groups with a cultural position that is a remarkable combination of neolithic and modern life. Here also are more than 14,000 men and women of the white race - if the ethnologists will forgive the employment of this inaccurate but useful term - most of them comparatively recent adventures in the North.

So much for the area, population and climate. But what is the prospect of developing resources in Northern Canada adequate to sustain a considerable population - to make a significant contribution to the economic welfare of Canada?

In a free and democratic country it is impossible to disregard the human element, in the planning of national projects, because of a desire to force the rapid development of a region that may or may not be able to provide a sound base for industry and population. In other words, Russia can employ its people as expendable factors in the gamble on northern development; Canada cannot. The U.S.S.R. has been able, through the use of compulsory labour, to establish a northern sea route along its Arctic shores and to build cities within the Arctic Circle. Canada will not use the same methods and it is possible that similar developments in this country will be long postponed.

This does not mean, however, that the Canadian North will forever remain a land of desolation, devoid of human activity. There is in the world to-day a constant and increasing demand for the kind of mineral wealth that is unquestionably to be found in the northern as well as in the southern reaches of the pre-Cambrian Shield. It may well be that a slower development, based on a recognition of human rights and carried out with some regard to normal principles of economic practice, may in the end prove to be the most effective method of development. This does not mean that we should not study the Russian experience or fail to learn from Russian results. But no gamble on the possibility of quick profits from the North is worth the sacrifice of the liberties of our people.

From the days of Henry Hudson to the end of the First World War the economy of the North was based on fur, and the welfare of the inhabitants rose and fell with the supply and price of beaver, white fox, mink, marten and muskrat. In some areas of the North the age of fur still persists but elsewhere new foundations for the life of the region are being discovered.

Agriculture is a possibility in some parts of the Yukon and in the Mackenzie watershed, but it is likely that developments in this field will be confined to production for local use. There are few places on the