

general effect was reminiscent of the sequence in the film *The Great Dictator*, when Charlie Chaplin found himself in inverted flight.

The light in early evening was red over undulating snow and ice. The shadows were long. The landscape was not flat — there were high hills, even mountain ranges, deep valleys, rolling plains and smooth lakes whose ice-covered surfaces erupted into curious and twisted designs. Because of the uniformity of colour, because of the lack of detail, form was everything.

There need be no monotony in Arctic flight. The steady roar of the engines is so overpowering that all other sounds are excluded and the noise itself is like silence. The form is bold in the infinitely gentle curves losing themselves on the far horizon, or on the jagged rock thrusts of a barren hilltop, or in the blue scratches of cracking ice. The colour is subtle. There are no sharp contrasts, only an endless blending of gently varying pastel shades on a luminous canvas. There are no jarring blotches, only a sense of untouched cleanliness. Though it stretches ceaselessly the picture changes constantly. It is like watching the flames of a slow-burning fire. Although the substance changes little, the forms are infinitely varied. The fascination is the same.

### Arctic Navigation Difficult

Arctic navigation is understandably difficult. The magnetic compass is useless, radio communication is uncertain. Map-reading is now vastly improved over the days before the RCAF did their excellent photographic mapping work but the transfer of data to maps is not yet complete. Astro-navigation is the most reliable but this is impossible during the long twilight. It is a source of great credit to the RCAF navigators that they are able to find their way as well as they do. At Mould Bay the tiny staff had taken time out from its other duties to lay out an ice-strip capable of receiving our aircraft. The weight of the plane is the least of the problems, for the Arctic ice is thick enough to take the heaviest machines. Snowcover is a problem. Ideally, there should be only enough snow — about an inch — to help with traction. More snow slows down the aircraft too quickly; less creates the danger of skidding. It is a tedious and lengthy job to bring a strip to the proper standard. Man-power and mechanical equipment are limited and time is short. Men can work seven days and nights to prepare an ice strip suitable to receive a large aircraft, and then, on the eve of its arrival, see much of their effort wasted by a blizzard. The quality of the strips is a tribute to men who have had no experience in the mechanics of airstrip maintenance, who have other jobs to perform and who work long hours to ensure the safety of the occupants of the visiting aircraft.

Most of the community, bearded and "bushed", came to meet the plane, the first to land in seven months. There were no wild demonstrations but a more subdued excitement — the customary exchanges of news about the whereabouts of other Arctic men, the platitudes about the work, the jokes about life on the station. In all there was little conversation, only intense activity. The unloading had to be completed as rapidly as possible before the aircraft engines cooled.

The most excited element in the local population was the huskies. At all the weather stations there were huskies, brought in by air like everything else. There had been a nasty experience in one of the stations when someone ran into a polar bear without warning just outside his hut. The huskies perform the very valuable function of warning of the presence of polar bears anywhere in the area. The original colony of twenty-five, obtained from the War Assets Corporation, soon multiplied alarmingly, until the dogs posed a serious food problem. Now the population is reduced periodically. As for the remaining huskies, "they never had it so good".

There was an astonishing variety of equipment in a single aircraft on the "spring-lift". Personal kit came down first, thrown casually from a doorway, then, with the