



CANADA

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## CONTENTS

Modern Pioneering in the North.....	1
Meeting on Rhodesia Supported.....	3
An Image of Poverty .....	3
Crime Statistics, 1964 .....	3

## MODERN PIONEERING IN THE NORTH

The following excerpts are from a recent address by Mr. Arthur Laing, then the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, in Vancouver:

...I had the privilege of leading a small delegation on an extensive visit to the U.S.S.R. for 17 days early this summer. We hoped to learn things of use to Canada and our own North, and these hopes were indeed realized. We undertook, in return, to provide facilities for a similar delegation to visit Canada in return....

Let me set the scene for a description of the trip with a few comparative – and sometimes contrasting – facts. 800,000 people live in Russia beyond the Arctic Circle and as many as 6 million north of the 60th Parallel. This compares with a population of some 45,000 in the Yukon and Northwest Territories combined....

The Russians have a much larger total population to support northern development and, as I have already said, a much larger population living in the North itself. They have a longer northern history. Archangel, for instance, has been a gateway to Russia for 900 years and it is not much younger as a settlement than Moscow itself. The latest Ice Age covered a much larger portion of our northern areas than it did in the U.S.S.R. and much more of our soil was scraped away when it receded leaving sand, rock and gravel. It will take thousands of years to form new soil and its lack is a serious restriction on the development of agriculture in our Northland.

### UNTAPPED RESOURCES

The Soviet Union is determined to develop its natural resources so as to provide the basic requirements of

housing and social benefits to its population. This is a tremendous effort that they have embarked upon, and it is being given top priority. Their natural resources are impressive indeed – over 50 per cent of the world's reserves of soft wood, vast hydro-electric potential, extensive deposits of iron, oil, gas, gold, lead, zinc and other metals like magnesium, tungsten, copper, and, of course, bauxite. The impression of a staggering potential is even more evident when it is realized that these resources have scarcely begun to be developed. This is true also in Canada and while the range of resources available in their country is similar to ours they do possess elements not present here.

For development to take place, there must be resources to develop. The renewable resources of Northern Russia include great areas of high-quality timber which will not grow in the less hospitable Canadian North, and important marine fisheries, a bounty resulting from the effect of the Gulf Stream. There is also a long-established reindeer-herding industry and some fur-farming. Agriculture can be carried on farther north than in Canada and there is a greater variety of wild fur.

Both countries are probably rich in non-renewable mineral resources, but Russia has carried out more intensive exploration over a much longer period and, as a result, they have far more to encourage development. The resources we saw and the work they are doing to find out what else they have, is staggering. In Canada the geology seems to be as favourable as in Northern Russia and the distribution of mineral resources should be of the same order. For the most part, however, these resources remain to be discovered.