

Interest in the Keewatin District has been further stimulated by the large-scale geological survey undertaken in that area last summer by the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. Helicopters were used to cover a total area of 57,000 square miles and much ground favorable for prospecting was located.

In addition to metals, oil has recently become the subject of intensive exploration in the Northwest Territories. During the last 18 months the wave of petroleum exploration which had rolled northwards in Alberta has surged over the boundary into the Territories. Petroleum and natural gas exploration permits granted or applied for in the Northwest Territories since the fall of 1951 now cover an area of 35,000,000 acres, which is as large as New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island all put together.

Turning now to the future prospects of the Yukon, there are also promising developments in that territory. Spectacular expansion of production is taking place in the Keno Hill region; the figures which I gave you a few minutes ago for the 1952 output of silver, lead and zinc were substantially higher than those for 1951, and I understand that there is every indication that 1953 will show a further big increase. Many interesting base metal prospects are being explored throughout the Yukon, one of the most promising being a nickel-copper discovery at Kluane Lake close to the Alaska Highway. The St. Elias range, in which this discovery lies, gives promise of holding other important copper deposits. There are also base metal prospects at various points in the Selwyn mountains on the eastern boundary of the Territory. Iron-ore deposits exist in this range and are believed to be large; while they are not of immediate economic importance, their long-run value may be great. Exploration for oil is being carried on in the northern section of the boundary between the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Quite possibly, however, one of the most important of the resource developments in the Yukon during the next decade will be in the field of hydro-electric power. You will have read reports of investigations now being undertaken by a Canadian company into the possibility of developing a large volume of power from the headwaters of the Yukon River and certain of its tributaries. Whether this power will be developed in the Yukon or in northern British Columbia is impossible to say at present, because one of the purposes of the survey now being undertaken by the interested company is to determine the best power sites. Equally, it is impossible to predict just where the industrial site will be. However, the power will be both developed and utilized in Canada.

What the potential output of this project will be is another question that must be deferred until the surveys are completed, but statements based on preliminary investigations suggest that it might be of the order of five million horsepower. The power would be available for expanding mineral activities in the area and would give them much encouragement. The major proportion of it, however, would be devoted to various electrometallurgical and electrochemical processes using ore brought in by sea.