

A MAJOR ARCTIC POWER

Canada is one of the major Arctic powers and her Arctic territories may well play a paramount part in the developments of the future in this hemisphere, Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker said in Toronto September 3.

Mr. Diefenbaker devoted major attention to Canada's northern regions in his address of welcome to the representatives of 48 nations gathered in Toronto for the 11th General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics. Text of Mr. Diefenbaker's address follows:

"On behalf of the people of Canada I welcome you, the representatives of 48 nations. The day of isolation, political or economic, for any nation the world over has ended, and the independence of every nation is no longer inconsistent with an ever-increasing interdependence on other nations. These international relationships are most manifest in the realms of diplomacy, trade, and physical science.

"For its fullest development a high degree of international co-operation is necessary in the field of science. That is not to say that individual scientists do not disagree among themselves. Their bond of union is forged in their dedication to the pursuit of truth and their determination that the way of the discoverer and the experimenter in his endeavour to add to human knowledge and a clearer insight into the nature of the physical universe shall not be impeded. The search for truth must not be circumscribed by political, racial or other limiting considerations. No nation can be self-sufficient in scientific matters and collaboration among scientists is vital to the functioning of modern science.

"Canada owes much in the phenomenal development of her natural resources to modern advances in geophysical science. In the ever-expanding oil fields of the west and the mining areas of both east and west, geophysical instruments have given indications of subsurface structures which have led to discoveries vital to our economic life. Our extensive northern areas have difficulties of transportation and communication which have been materially reduced by the aid of geophysics. Air navigation has been made more certain by geomagnetism; new methods of geodetic surveying have made our maps more accurate, and spectacular improvements in meteorology have led to more accurate weather casting.

"It is significant that this gathering, the first in Canada of this world-wide organization, is closely associated with the inauguration of the International Geodesy and Geophysics Year. Canada is generally thought of as only an Atlantic and a Pacific power although in fact she is one of the major Arctic powers and her Arctic territories may well play a paramount part in the developments of the future in this hemisphere.

"The Canadian Arctic until 1953, when the Royal Canadian Air Force completed its photographic survey, was the last unexplored frontier. The romance of the lost Franklin Expedition and the searches made through the years - the long-sought North West Passage - the quest for fur by the Hudson's Bay Company and the solitude of the deathless heroism of the North West Mounted Police (the Royal Canadian Mounted Police of today) - and the exploration leading to newly discovered lands, and now of the history of this nation as scientific explorations have taken the place of adventurous discovery.

"This year's effort by the Union has, because of Canada's Arctic interests, a special significance for Canadians even greater than in the two previous Polar years of 1882-3 and 1932-33.

"When the first Polar year was held Canada had one magnetic observatory in the city of Toronto and none in the northern regions. In that year as a result of international agreement three additional observatories were operated for the duration of that Polar year, one by Great Britain on Great Slave Lake, the other by the United States on Ellesmere Island and one by Germany on Baffin Island.

"In the Second International Polar Year held 50 years after, Canada's greater interest in her northland is shown by the fact that the Meenook Observatory, established in 1916, was classified as 'polar'. An additional observatory operated by Canada at Chesterfield Inlet on the northwest coast of Hudson Bay was established, as was one by the United Kingdom on Great Slave Lake - these two observatories operated during the year, being devoted to various aspects of geophysical research including meteorology, earth magnetism, earth currents, atmospheric electricity and auroral studies.

"Canada has become acutely Arctic-conscious since the end of the Second World War. Of the nearly 100 Geophysical Year stations set up in Canada this year all but five had their origin in this country and many will continue to operate in the years ahead. That Canadian eyes are on the Arctic is evidenced by the fact that a majority of the stations are operated by Canadians, with equipment designed and manufactured by Canadians.

"Gatherings such as this provide for a wider and most intimate exchange of scientific information and experiences and tend to diminish and dissolve unresolved tensions between nations - a paramount responsibility of mankind today if mankind's survival tomorrow is to be assured.

"In declaring this meeting open I express the hope that the deliberations of this Conference will make not only for fruitful contributions to a wider knowledge of the earth's sciences but will also contribute to international goodwill and co-operation for the common good of all mankind."