

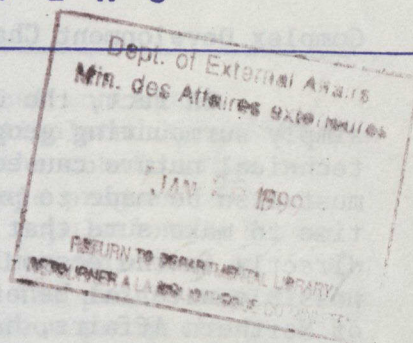
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## IN CANADA'S FAR NORTH, THE BOOM HAS JUST BEGUN

(Written by Mr. Jean T. Fournier, Special Assistant  
to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern  
Development.)

Intensive development of Canada's Far North has long been neglected by the people of Canada, and the Federal Government in particular. Only after the Second World War did Canada, long preoccupied with more urgent problems, begin to take a more active interest in the development of the northern regions and the welfare of the native peoples. When, in 1953, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent announced to the House of Commons the creation of a new department responsible for the development of the North, he observed the vast areas of the North had until then apparently been administered haphazardly. Major changes have since taken place and far more interest has been shown in the North in recent years, not only in Canada but in other industrialized nations. In particular, the announcement of major petroleum strikes in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and at nearby Atkinson Point in the Canadian Arctic, as well as the voyage of the super-tanker Manhattan through the Northwest Passage, have caught the imagination of the public and attracted government attention to the potential of the Arctic regions and the development problems involved.

At a time when humanity is undertaking the conquest of space, Canada's Far North is still largely unknown and many false ideas continue to circulate concerning this region's potentialities. While it may be true that Northern Canada does not possess all the advantages of Alaska and of Russia's Far North, it is wrong to envisage the territories north of the 60th Parallel as an immense frozen wilderness, hostile, bare of vegetation, buried the year round under a thick blanket of snow, and populated by igloo-dwelling Eskimos. The climate of the Arctic regions is rigorous but it is not as forbidding as many believe. In spite of climatic and geographical difficulties, the Canadian North does not constitute a vast stretch of barren land with an economic activity limited to the traditional areas of hunting and fishing and a few Eskimo handicraft co-operatives. In fact, owing to progressive modern technology, especially in transportation, energy and communications, the initial cost of developing northern resources is not nearly as prohibitive as might be supposed. Nevertheless, one should not go to the opposite extreme and consider the Far North as an inexhaustible treasure-house of mineral, petroleum and natural gas deposits, which have merely to be extracted from the sub-soil and sent off to the international markets.

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