



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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REVOLUTION IN THE ARCTIC

Talk by R.A.J. Phillips, Chief of the Arctic Division, Department of Northern Affairs, for CBC Special Speaker Programme, September 8, 1957.

There is no word in the Eskimo language for "economics". This is just one reason why it's difficult for any of the 11,000 of Canada's Eskimos to understand the strange new forces now surrounding them. But Eskimos don't think in the abstract. Their world is everywhere concrete and immediate. There is food or there is no food. In adversity and success they tend to take things as they come. And this is just as well, for they are at the center of the Revolution in the Arctic.

The absorption of our Arctic frontier is more compressed in time, more expanded in space than any such national process that Canada has known. In our past, the excitement of change was centered in the border lands. Young Canadians of the future may be surprised to learn that the CBC was not on hand when Jacques Cartier landed on our shores. In the mid-twentieth century it was, and so were writers, film crews, administrators, scientists, business men and a modest tourist traffic. A century ago a trader-explorer might, on returning from his voyages, announce the discovery of rivers as long as the Ottawa, of islands as big as Great Britain, and the purchase of 5,000 bales of fur. To-day the Arctic trader may listen by radio to fur quotations on the Montreal market, and receive authority to change the partitions in his warehouse.

In a sense, this marks the end of the frontier, but in a much more important sense it marks the sharing of the frontier by the few who live in it with the many of us outside.

There are many things we southerners are beginning to learn about the northern third of Canada -- the endless wealth, and what it may mean to us and to a world crying for minerals; the problems of transportation; the