

The Canadian North in the Next Hundred Years¹

The greatest problem in the world today is man; but the problem is recognized by different people in different ways.

Many educators think of it as the education explosion: spiralling enrolments, budget crises, and revolts on the campus; they are obsessed by such questions as: What will students do next? Where is education going? What about the non-student, the anti-student, drugs, LSD, sex, the pill, the new morality? The news media focus their powerful attention on the 1 per cent who fit these categories, and have no time for the 99 per cent who are good, serious students with much to learn and to study in our rapidly changing society.

Many industrialists, urban planners, and government officials look at the problem as the *frightening job of creating a second America by the year 2000*. Others, such as Charles Avila, the President of Boston Edison Company, see the problem as the challenge of the electric age: we are on the brink of a "high energy civilization." Over the next twenty years, the Breeder reactor will produce electric power so cheaply that the cost of billing the consumer and collecting for the power used will be greater than the cost of that power. This means that consumers will pay a flat monthly charge for the amortizing of the capital cost only, regardless of the amount consumed. This will have a dramatic effect on our industry and on our society. We can perhaps get a preview of it if we take a look at the industrial development and community growth in Prince George, British Columbia. This change was foreseeable immediately after the Second World War, but it was twenty-five years before the essential high energy resources became sufficiently abundant.

Marshall McLuhan draws our attention vividly to the electronic environment we are creating, and to its problems. His recent book, *The Medium is the Massage*, is a worrisome work for our generation but a reasonable caricature for the generation now in our schools and universities.

Who is in control? It would seem to be those who manipulate the media, those who design and direct advertising, and those who produce and direct media programs, that is, the press, radio, TV, and magazines. But they have only partial control; they are highly competitive, and competition is the real master.

¹Based on an address to Fellows and Associates of the Arctic Institute, Washington, 18 April 1967.

And what about man the scientist? He is a captive in a maelstrom of activity: seeking research moneys, keeping abreast of new knowledge, retrieving information, publishing, struggling to shorten the time between discovery and use.

It is urgent that the humanist and the social scientist obtain some measure of control over this kind of "high energy" and bring at least some of these developments more clearly into focus.

What has this got to do with the North over the next hundred years? It has much to do with it.

We have at the moment a few angry young men — angry about the North. D. A. W. Judd is one of them; he complains with justification about the piecemeal, sporadic, and costly attempts to develop the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. How well have we done? In 1900, the Yukon had a population of some 40,000; now it has 16,000. Certainly many of the people are living under vastly improved conditions, but not all.

We had the brief "Vision of the North" of the Government in Canada a few years ago. They attempted a giant step forward, without planning or knowledge, so that we perpetrated mistakes such as Inuvik, and the vision became a little blurred.

We have sponsored some research — most of it in the natural sciences and most of it in the summer months. Research has been carried out largely by university professors and their graduate students who traditionally were expected to be on campus from September to May. Simon Fraser University's trimester system will change this; research can and will be carried out at any and at all times of the year. Other universities will adopt this system and year-round research will expand.

Shortly after World War II, the U.S. Weather Bureau and the Meteorological Service of Canada established the joint arctic weather stations which provided year-round facilities in the High North. There have been year-round facilities in the Middle North (see map, p. 263) capable of supporting research for some time, but little such research has been done except by government agencies such as the Meteorological Service.

In the next hundred years these things must change. We must look at man in his environment — in the tropics, in the middle latitudes, in the Middle North, and in the High North. Man must be the focus of our concern. It was not by accident that the central theme for Expo 67 was "Man and His World."

We must now re-order our thinking on the

North. As late as March 1967, a letter sent by the Arctic Institute to universities proposing some new research in the North timidly suggested that "it can and perhaps should include a significant amount of work in the physiological, sociological, and economic fields." I would say that work in these fields must be the *central theme*.

We must set a series of goals for the next hundred years; we cannot afford to drift and let the whims of chance, or expedience, or even adventure determine our course.

First, let us realize that the southern boundary of the Middle North must be pushed resolutely northwards, so that in one hundred years it will be coincident with what is now the northern boundary. To accomplish this, we must make massive use of nuclear power, satellite communications, and all other means in order to produce the electric environment and the high energy civilization in the North. And we must make sure that the research to make this possible proceeds on a year-round basis, and we must give top priority to the Middle North.

The pressures of northward expansion from the populous areas of the south are inevitable; we must get ready for them. Tourism and recreation will be followed by development of communities—slowly for the first fifty years, thereafter at an increasing speed. We must learn now how to develop these new communities, so that we can be ready to provide the environment for man where communication is the medium and the message.

As we spread northwards, networks of high energy—gas and electricity—will cross with networks of renewable resource transportation—water flowing south to the parched throats of the unfortunate humans of the middle latitudes.

We must learn how to create the proper environment for these new communities now. If we do not, the Middle North over the next hundred years will be populated with people who are running away from the new society because they cannot adjust to it and we will have a mammoth social problem. If we do, the Middle North will attract the imaginative members of the next generation—the young and the young at heart. They will have their opportunity to build from the ground up and to create communities to their pattern, and the area will prosper and lead.

We must fill the North with communications and an abundance of energy. These will be practical by the year 2000. I hope we have the courage to carry through. This is no time for timid men. We must start moving our total research frontiers north of the Prince Line now, because we have already travelled

more than six months into our second century.

If we do have the courage to carry through, some other Canadian one hundred years from now will be able to write proudly, perhaps in a bicentennial issue of *Arctic*, that while the first century belonged to the big cities in latitudes 30° to 50°, the second century belonged to what first-century man called the Middle North, with its boundaries now pushed farther north and with its total environment controlled by men with vision, and he will quote another Marshall McLuhan saying, "For those fortunate people in the Middle North, the environment is the vision and the vision the environment."

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Middle North Tour 1967

In April 1966, the Arctic Institute conducted a three-day symposium at the Wingspread conference centre at Racine, Wisconsin, under the auspices of the Johnson Foundation, to discuss the problems of social and economic development in northern regions of the world, and the consequent need for research. The symposium was attended by a group of senior U.S., Canadian, and Scandinavian academicians, representatives of important foundations, associations, and industries. A few of the participants were familiar with the North, but the majority were generally more experienced with social and economic problems in other regions of the world.

It was proposed at the symposium that as a preliminary to launching a comprehensive program of Social Science Studies focused on northern North America, the Arctic Institute might sponsor an extensive tour of selected communities in the so-called "Middle North." This region was defined in general terms as that area lying between the present northern limits of population concentrations and significant development, and the barren "hard" Arctic. The approximate boundaries of this region in North America are shown in the accompanying map (Fig. 1). It was also proposed that the tour group should be composed of individuals with professional and career backgrounds similar to those attending the Wingspread symposium.

With financial assistance provided by a major grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the support of five other U.S. foundations, a DC-4 aircraft was chartered