

Experimental agricultural work by the Federal Government in the Yukon has gone on intermittently since 1915. An experimental substation operated near Dawson between 1917 and 1925 produced much factual information about land-use possibilities in that area. In 1942, a soil survey was made of lands adjoining the Alaska Highway and of those in the Yukon River basin. The following year an experimental substation was set up at Pine Creek on the Alaska Highway, about 100 miles west of Whitehorse. The location of this station permits extensive experimental work in the fertile Takhini-Dezadeash valley, which contains at least 100,000 acres of arable land. It is estimated that the Yukon has 250,000 acres of potential agricultural land.

Unique Activities.—The economic activities of the Canadian North, both major and secondary, that have been outlined thus far have all had some precedent in the more southerly parts of the country; previous experience and knowledge have been invaluable in extending their development into the North. There are, in addition, two wealth-producing activities that have no counterpart elsewhere in Canada—reindeer herding and Eskimo arts and crafts. Both stem from the need to give the natives some sort of stable outlet in order to balance the up-and-down prosperity of trapping. Both exemplify the trial-and-error method that must be followed when an area like the Canadian North is undergoing the process of adjustment to civilizing influences. For both, the trial proved to be very nearly without error.

In 1922 a Royal Commission recommended that Canada should try herding reindeer in the Northland. The practical beginning of the experiment was in 1935, when a herd of 2,370 Alaskan reindeer was brought to the Mackenzie Delta region. The reindeer thrived on a 24,500 sq. mile reserve and, over the years, have more than tripled in number. As the Eskimo apprentice herders learned the occupation, small herds were branched off from the main one and put in charge of the Eskimos themselves. There are now three such herds.

Eskimo arts and crafts are an outgrowth of the native's ingenuity in fashioning implements for himself from the meagre raw materials at hand. Soapstone and ivory were carved into useful articles such as lamps, harpoon heads and pots, into artistic models of animals and people and model kayaks. The art form existed; the role of civilization was to find permanent markets for it. Government encouragement first took the form of an annual grant to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and later two field workers for the Guild joined the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The future of arts and crafts as a steady source of income for the Eskimos seems assured; everywhere this art form is receiving enthusiastic appreciation.

The Government is constantly on the lookout for new activities that will help the natives bridge the gap between their traditional life and the civilization that is slowly developing around them. Recently, northern service officers have been appointed by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources; living among the natives, they will be able to meet at least one aspect of the challenge of the Northland on its home grounds. Their appointment is typical of the new ideas, new approaches, and new spirit being marshalled to master the whole range of the socio-economic problems of the North.

Political Forms.—Wherever mankind has found it economically profitable to labour, he has settled permanently; and wherever he has settled permanently he has needed political forms to organize and direct his activities. In this basic need