

Foxe Basin was added to the map following its sighting from the air in 1948 in a region thought to be reasonably well known. Borden Island, discovered 50 years ago by Stefansson, was shown by air photographs to be in fact two islands, the second of which was then named after Mackenzie King. Bathurst Island was revealed as a veritable archipelago and the northern coast of Melville Island was changed almost beyond recognition. Topographical detail has now been added to the maps, with careful contouring replacing such notations as that on Baffin Island "mountains believed to rise to 6,000 feet" In place of geological maps based on random sampling at convenient points along the shoreline, detail can now be provided uniformly over the area. Hydrographic surveys have resulted in reasonably complete charts of all the main routes followed by summer supply ships, and observations made from the smooth surface of the frozen sea have provided submarine topography where even ships cannot penetrate. In such ways, the search for knowledge has reached out into the deeper waters of the Arctic basin.

Study of the remoter parts of Northern Canada is now more comprehensive and there has also been a change in emphasis. Until comparatively recently the need was to know elementary facts about the land and the surrounding seas—in essence, their whereabouts and general character. This first approximation to geographical knowledge was finally completed in the 1950s, to be followed by more detailed surveying and mapping on larger scales. This essential task still continues but it has given way in priority to the carefully planned and all-inclusive scientific survey, similar in scope if not in degree to the established government surveys of Southern Canada.

The monumental *Atlas of Canada* published in 1958 demonstrates more clearly than can words the phenomenal increase in geographical knowledge of the country since the mid-nineteenth century. Its 110 selected sheets cover topics ranging from the routes of the early explorers to the nation's external relations, and reveals not only the state of accumulated knowledge but also the increasingly sophisticated means used in gathering it. Although some of the information used was, of course, assembled during the nineteenth century, a comparison between the Atlas and its predecessor published in 1906 reveals how much has been contributed during the present century. Also apparent is the change in the character of geographical knowledge—using the term in the sense of systematic information which may be displayed areally. To the earlier requirement for topographic maps has been added the need for detailed information on geology, vegetation, climate, soils and a wide range of geophysical phenomena. Also, apart from such physical data, there is arising a great demand for information on the whole range of human, including economic, relationships. Details of population distribution can be mapped with great accuracy (even the whereabouts of the Eskimos is known) as can the location of industries, transportation systems, educational and welfare facilities and a wide range of other essentials to everyday life, from garages to television stations. It has become possible to display the manner in which the land surface of the country is being utilized, whether for forests, pastures, cities, reservoirs, parks and so on and, up to a point, where its improper use has been harmful. Pockets of poverty, rural and urban, can be plotted, as can existing and potential natural wealth.

In other words, the compendium of geographical knowledge about Canada has reached a stage where it is becoming possible to consider the country as "known" in the sense that the older parts of Europe have long been known. This has been brought about by deliberate policy, acting through a complex system of government departments, federal and provincial, charged with gathering information of all kinds and supplemented by important contributions from university scientists.

Almost a thousand years after the first tentative touchdown by Vikings along the eastern seaboard and a century after Confederation, national stocktaking is approaching completion. New knowledge will, of course, continue to pour in at an ever-increasing pace but it will be fitted into a geographical framework which is no longer likely to change dramatically.*

* A description of the current surveying and mapping service of the federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is given at pp. 32-33.