

EDITORIAL

“Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed, if we ever permit the last virgin forest to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases, if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction, if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean stream and push our paved roads through the last of the silence . . . so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical, and individual in the world.”
(C. H. Templeton, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Board of Canada)

These words are taken from the transcript of proceedings of a meeting held between the Environmental Protection Board and the Berger Commission of Inquiry. The Commission has been appointed by the Canadian government to hear what the northern Canadian people have to say about the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. The hearings are receiving wide publicity in Canada and for the first time, through the medium of television, the general public is being exposed to strident native criticism. This is one of the contemporary issues of international relevance that future issues of *Polar Record* will be reporting more fully. We shall also be carrying more information on the equally emotive discussions that have been taking place on the question of mineral resources in Antarctica; the recent discovery of gaseous hydrocarbons in the Ross Sea area has heightened the urgency of these talks.

Many of those who are making their voices heard in protest against such far-reaching developments as the construction of a pipeline or a drilling rig are only asking for more time—time to fill in the gaps, sometimes enormous, in our basic scientific knowledge, time to train those who are to work in an area of delicate ecological balance how to cause the least possible damage to the surrounding environment, and time to settle the political issues too. The harvesting of krill in the Southern Ocean is another subject that would seem to require far more scientific data before any large-scale activity in the area should be endorsed. *Polar Record* will attempt to provide some of the basic information that is so obviously needed in this and other controversial areas, as well as discuss the problems involved.

This issue includes the second and final part of Roy Fletcher's guide to current published meteorological data for northern lands, an authoritative review of marine benthos of Arctic and sub-Arctic continental shelves, a description of aerial survey techniques used in northern Canada to estimate the numbers of barren-ground caribou, and a concise account of the study of global atmospheric pollution in Antarctica. In the field work section Dr John Coates reports on the Komi ASSR—he is probably the first westerner to have been given study facilities in the Republic. The number of drilling operations in the Arctic is increasing rapidly; in the notes section we present up-to-date information on the number of wells that have been, or are being drilled on the Alaskan North Slope, and on the offshore petroleum concessions

that have recently been granted by the Danish government for west Greenland. Again, future issues of *Polar Record* will contain more information of this nature.

A new column starts with the present issue. Entitled "In Brief", it rounds up some of the smaller items of polar news which might otherwise pass unnoticed.

We have been working out ways of improving the appearance of the journal and keeping down the printing bills. The January issue, the first of the new volume, will also be the first to carry the new format that we have chosen. Any suggestions for further improvement of the journal will be most welcome.