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Editor's Page

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Editor's Page

In the first number, we have opened the new volume with a lengthy contribution by R.J. Knight on the sediments of an Arctic fiord adjacent to Baffin Bay. Because of intense interest in the bay by petroleum exploration companies this paper is timely, and serves as the vanguard of another contribution by A.C. Grant already prepared for the next number of this present volume. Knight's paper deals essentially with the complex phenomenon of fluvial, glacial and marine sedimentation in a restricted basin of deposition. In our next number, the paper by A.C. Grant describes the sedimentation in Baffin Bay proper with particular reference to the northern part. In our last issue of MARITIME SEDIMENTS we published an abstract by G.M. Friedman and Seymour Baker on sedimentation in Baffin Bay which carried the study of the surficial sediments to some depth from an examination of cores. Earlier J.I. Marlowe had reported on this latter aspect so that a considerable amount of information on the sedimentation of this arctic seaway is being amassed.

The second paper in this number by R.W. Faas has drawn new inferences on foraminiferal distribution on the Atlantic continental shelf. The presence of a foraminiferal population characterized by low numbers and diversity amidst a highly populated and diverse fauna will offer new insight into the problems of foraminiferal distribution and environmental factors associated with continental shelves.

In our section Current Research we have reviewed an extensive list of projects which is two-fold in nature. Many of the projects deal specifically with bedrock and basinal studies as they reflect on the structure of the eastern Canadian continental margin and its associated natural resources. Other projects are directed toward the study of the modern environment with applications firstly to understanding geological processes as they acted in the past, and secondly, with applications to understanding the nature of organic and industrial pollution and how such phenomena can be monitored and perhaps circumvented. With the resources projects, petroleum exploration will be greatly assisted. However, placer mining, cable and pipe laying, bottom installations, engineering works, dam construction, recreational planning, coastal engineering and many other vocations are dependant on these studies. The environmental studies on pollution need very little impetus, and the threat of oil spills is one that must be faced for the next few decades at least. We have included a thoughtful but carefully framed photograph on page 39 of this issue of a portion of a beach adjacent to Chedabucto Bay, Nova Scotia. Although the oil coating the beach was not responsible for the death of the tree in the foreground, the composition of the photograph is symbolic of the shoreline of the future without the necessary safeguards to prevent such disasters.

Although we have mentioned two major objectives of our current research, it is important not to obscure the innate desire of the scientist in his ceaseless quest for knowledge. So-called mission-oriented projects soon exhaust the supply of fundamental ideas and commonly the initiative to seek novel solutions to vexing problems. With large projects, these processes can be rapid even though the intellectual capacity for such research remains on the scene. Administrative procedures, budgetary requirements, physical restrictions and a lack of moral support may throttle these noble efforts. It is essential that the scientist be placed in an unrestricted environment for him to thrive. If this cannot be achieved, the users of the ideas that should be stemming naturally from the scientist will be the losers. Their well will have run dry. Intelligent supervisors will permit a worker to proceed on problem solving as they know that such freedom to a worker will repay bountifully in rewarding returns to the organization and the man. Mission oriented projects are necessary but they tend to legislate, and you cannot legislate ideas. Freedom of thought and action, together with talent are still the main ingredients of basic research.

For this volume we reluctantly removed the name of Dr. R.M. McMullen from our masthead. Michael served the magazine as managing editor for a period of four years, in which he kept our accounts straight and our invoices flowing. He needled his editor into furious spates of production, an action which derived its original energy from the brisk correspondence of our readers. Now he has transferred to Ottawa where he is chief of an information division in another department of the federal government. Without question, the good wishes of his colleagues and particularly those of a grateful editor go with him on his new appointment. But we are pleased that Dr. Georges Drapeau has picked up the reigns and now we have the magazine moving along once more.

To our prospective contributors we ask that you continue in your designs to send us copy: reports, abstracts, and progress accounts. To the university contributor we ask for resumes of departmental programs and, if possible, abstracts or condensed versions of theses. Our readership continues to grow and this magazine will serve early notice of institutional research and programs.

B. R. PELLETIER, Editor.