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Editor's Page

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Editor's Page

Almost all of this issue of MARITIME SEDIMENTS is devoted to accounts of the modern inshore environment of inlets and harbours along the eastern Maritime region. G.A. Bartlett has summarized the work of himself and his students carried out around Prince Edward Island over a period of several years, and has given us an excellent review of those investigations and their findings. Two shorter companion papers, which were contributed by Dalhousie University, also reflect the interest in marine coastal waters and sediments by area scientists.

Allen and Roda have examined the foraminiferal assemblages in a local estuary, relating these fauna to existing oceanographic factors. And D. Scott, also working in an inlet in the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia has carried out the work in which he has established the physical framework of the environment, and has laid the groundwork for several basic studies to follow.

Our last paper of this issue is by J.-C. Dionne and is a very interesting report on the existence of ancient iceberg furrows on the former floor of an earlier glacial lake. We have many modern counterparts of this phenomena as seen in the grooving on our present continental shelf, inshore marine areas and inland northern lakes and rivers. The author has nicely summarized these modern occurrences, but the interesting aspect of this paper is the exciting possibility of discovering more ancient grooves and related phenomenon that are easily observed forming today.

Now we have another appeal to make to our science writers and, perhaps, our scientists. Our information program, ladies and gentlemen of the geological sciences, is falling behind. On this page a few issues ago we mentioned the need for more illustrative science writing, in order to capture the interest, the imagination and indeed the support of the general public and those agencies and societies that serve it. In the late 1960's and through the early 1970's, the spaceman was the darling of the public. On the day that the first American walked on the moon, the manned submersible BEN FRANKLIN was completing her 2000-mile ocean drift cruise off New York Harbour. Also in that period of scientific adventure, the CSS HUDSON returned from her historic voyage around South and North America, (the first and only ship to do so) including the perilous trip through the Northwest Passage. On her return to Halifax and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, 11 months and more than 50,000 miles later - she was greeted handsomely by local folks and a government minister, but missed the national news due to media coverage of political events. Ironically the giant MANHATTAN, which also sailed the Northwest Passage a year earlier but on a commercial rather than a scientific mission, is remembered better. Perhaps this endurance of newsworthy items is based on the type of reporting. Where newspaper people gather for hard news, they generally have their photographer. When they describe the destruction wrought by earthquakes the first thing appearing in their columns is a location map of the disaster. Once we gave interviews on the disastrous and possibly tragic effects moving ice would have on engineering projects and installations on the sea bed. A staff science writer for the newspaper did the story, but no illustrations accompanied the article. No one discussed the article later. Even weather reports have maps and tables to illuminate the statistics and data gathered by the meteorologists. In a recent 100-page weekend edition of an Ottawa newspaper, no science story (and there were two) was accompanied by illustrations. However, the Children's Pages had several - so did the comic pages, and the sports pages, and the cultural pages (especially the Restricted movies), and the political pages, but still none for science - particularly the earth sciences. So perhaps we should educate our agencies to release properly documented and illustrated stories - by film, slides, tapes, magazine articles (similar to Jacques Cousteau and Scientific American, if we can afford them), and other media. We have our excellent museums but they are somewhat remote; we have our fine libraries but one cannot rub the public nose into them; we have our government agencies who will deliver only when asked; but we do not have an aggressive approach to the public bodies which must be reached and who can help to understand and disseminate our knowledge so that everyone can benefit from our geological discoveries and our advice.