

Fourth Annual Geoscience Forums

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The fourth Annual Geoscience Forums sponsored by the Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development were held in Whitehorse, Yukon and Yellowknife, NWT during the week of December 6 to 10. While both meetings are coordinated in timing, both are independently organized and there is little overlap in the programs.

Whitehorse

The Whitehorse session welcomed over 200 delegates with a Sunday night reception and the first major snow-fall of the winter season.

The topics covered in the conference consisted of the mineral exploration activity of the past summer, reports of current GSC and DIAND investigations in the Yukon, reports of DIAND funded university projects in the Yukon and a special session on uranium in the Yukon. Highlights of the talks included Dirk Tempelman-Kluit's (GSC) hypothesis that some of the batholithic sized granitic bodies are allochthonous, thrust over an older ophiolitic allochthon. Colin Godwin's (UBC) controversial identification of a kimberlite pipe in the Mackenzie Fold Belt caused some debate and aroused considerable interest. George Leary (AMAX) presented a comprehensive summary and compilation of the lead-zinc massive sulphide deposits in the Selwyn Basin in a most lucid fashion. A previously unrecognized pattern of metal zoning at the TOM shale-hosted lead-zinc deposit was a major result of Rob Carne's (UBC) summer mapping

project. Jim Morin (DIAND) described the recently discovered MM deposit in the Pelly Mountains. He demonstrated that it is a fairly typical volcanogenic massive sulphide deposit that has undergone severe deformation and metamorphism. Since this is the first deposit of this type recognized in the area, it has aroused the interest of a number of exploration companies.

On Tuesday morning a session devoted to the recently discovered uranium showings was perhaps the focus of attention for most of those present. Jim Morin (DIAND) reviewed the morphology and locations of the uranium bearing diatreme breccias; Gary Delaney (Univ. Western Ontario) described the stratigraphy and the relationship of the breccias to the surrounding rocks; I. R. Jonasson (GSC) presented a review of uranium geochemistry; W. Goodfellow read from the recent open file report on a geochemical reconnaissance program in the northern Yukon, and Barry Smee (GSC) presented a brief talk on some Tertiary uranium deposits which he recently visited in southern British Columbia and the northwestern USA. Dirk Tempelman-Kluit (GSC) concluded the sessions with a most unusual hypothesis concerning the origin of a few uranium showings that contain significant amounts of rare earths. He proposed that a fossil nuclear reactor at these locations could account for the rare earth contents. However, since these showings seem to be spatially related to alkaline syenite bodies, some process related to alkaline magmatism seems more probable. In the afternoon, an excellent slide show on uranium minerals with a taped commentary by H. R. Steacy (GSC) was presented. This was necessary due to the lack of travel funds for the Ottawa-Whitehorse trip.

The banquet and reception on Monday night was well attended and the meal was excellent, most unusual for a rubber-chicken affair. The after-dinner speaker was Dr. John Naysmith, the federal government Indian Land Claims negotiator for the Yukon. Many of the mining people in the audience found the talk very controversial and several heated arguments ensued. This type of political talk is inappropriate for a geological meeting.

The majority of people returned to Vancouver on Tuesday afternoon but about sixty people continued on to Yellowknife on Wednesday morning.

Yellowknife

A cold (-30°C) windy morning awaited the 185 delegates to the sessions at the Yellowknife Inn that ran from Wednesday afternoon to Friday noon.

On Wednesday night the "Charles Camsell Geological Society" sponsored a soiree with guest speaker Reg Olson of Trigg-Woollett who presented a well organized and stimulating talk on the geology of the iron formation at Strathcona Sound on Baffin Island.

The sessions started off with an amusing and somewhat muddled presentation of the exploration activity in the Slave and Bear provinces. Jim Gill of Texasgulf presented a very well-arranged story on the regional geology and mineralization of the Takiyuak Metavolcanic Belt and Dick Hyde of McMaster presented the results of the DIAND mapping project in the same area. Results of these independent mapping projects had differences in detail and emphasis but it was heartening to see the essential similarity of the maps. One astonishing comment made by Bill Kerr (GSC) in his talk on Tectonic Framework of the Somerset Island-Boothia Peninsula area was to the effect that metamorphism would have dispersed any sulphides of economic importance. It is quite appalling that anyone could still believe this and George Mannard of Texasgulf corrected his misunderstanding. Geri Eisbacher (GSC) gave his usual rapid-fire first-class presentation; this time on the 'Tectonic Framework of the Rapitan Basin'. Fred Krause (Univ. of Calgary) presented his concept of 'Shelf to Slope Transition in the Sekwi Formation' in a very credible and well-documented manner. One of the most pleasant surprises of the meeting was the talk by Bob Hewton (Rio Tinto) on the carbonate-hosted Pb-Zn mineralization of the Gayna River area. The talk was well-polished and superbly presented. The meeting ended mid-day on Friday and most people headed down south that afternoon though there was an underground trip for fifteen people to the Giant Yellowknife Mine.

Concluding Remarks

A poll was taken of the attendees on whether they thought that a session in Whitehorse and in Yellowknife was desirable or whether the two meetings could be consolidated. As there are really two separate audiences with no more than 20 per cent overlap, consolidation of both forums into one meeting would not seem warranted. An astute Vancouver geologist noticed that Forum participants filled a Boeing 737 on the trip up to and returning from Whitehorse and wondered if it might not be easier to fly the (fifteen) Whitehorse geologists to Vancouver and have the meeting there! In summary, the meetings in both towns were quite good and of equal quality to any meeting held down south (of 60°N) and well worth attending for those with specific interests. The meetings will continue in Yellowknife for 1977 but may not be held in Whitehorse again until 1978.

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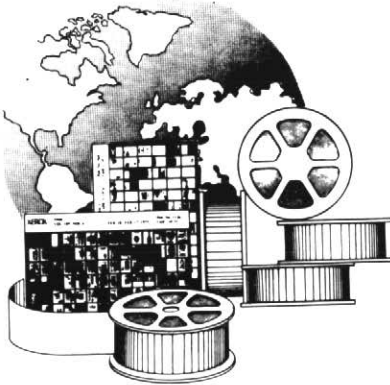
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