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ESKIMO ADMINISTRATION: II. CANADA

By

DIAMOND JENNESS

Published May 1964
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THE ARCTIC INSTITUTE OF NORTH AMERICA

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PREFACE

In the spring of 1960 I sketched a plan—more ambitious than I then realized—for three volumes outlining the diverse histories of the Eskimo administration in Alaska, northern Canada, and Greenland, and concluding with a brief essay that would appraise the merits and the weaknesses of the different methods adopted by the United States, Canada, and Denmark in those three regions of arctic America.

The first volume of the trilogy, describing United States' administration of its Eskimos in Alaska, appeared in 1962 as *Technical Paper* No. 10 of the Arctic Institute of North America. This second volume, a study of Canada's administration of her Eskimos, follows the same general pattern as the Alaskan one; but because I am more familiar with the Canadian record, and at one period of my life was able to view it from the inside, the narrative is more detailed and considerably longer.

The third volume of the proposed trilogy I have now postponed, believing that a history of the Greenland administration should be preceded by a short account of Newfoundland's administration of her Eskimos on the Atlantic coast of Labrador. That account I am now preparing.

The Canadian Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources which, through its Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, supported the Alaskan study, has supported this Canadian study also; and many of its senior officers have contributed valuable information and advice. So too have some officers in the Canadian Department of National Health and Welfare. I would have liked to mention these civil servants by name, but have been asked to preserve the anonymity in which they work for the government and people of Canada. I can only thank them, therefore, *en masse*, and express my admiration of their earnest efforts to develop Canada's far north and promote the welfare of all its inhabitants, whites, Indians, and Eskimos alike. They have taught me much, and although I have not always accepted their opinions, I carry away the deepest respect for their integrity and high-mindedness.

DIAMOND JENNESS
January, 1963

CHAPTER 1

Government myopia (Pre–1903)

Two thousand years before Christ, and perhaps even earlier, the ancestors of the people we know today as Eskimos wandered unchallenged along the shores of the Canadian Arctic and roamed the tundra beyond the limit of trees. In the sixteenth century, when Europeans first disembarked within the Gulf of St. Lawrence and claimed all eastern Canada as their own, the Eskimos covered a much wider territory than their descendants occupy today. At one time they controlled the long peninsula of northern Newfoundland, where we can still uncover their stone arrowheads in the potato patches of the fishermen, and observe the outlines of the cooking-pots they carved from the soapstone cliff in Notre Dame Bay. Probably they retreated from that island before Jacques Cartier sailed through the Strait of Belle Isle to Quebec, but for nearly two centuries after his day they haunted the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence from that strait to Mingan. James Bay too once saw their kayaks. Whether they ever controlled its entire coastline is still uncertain, but there is good evidence that they skirted its eastern shore and fished in the waters of the Eastmain River. Even Churchill came within their summer range; right down to the seventeenth century they journeyed there to hunt the white whales off its river mouth, and to gather wood for tent-poles, spear-handles, and other purposes. During the twentieth century several hundred Eskimos still roamed the Barren Lands west of Hudson Bay as far south as the edge of the forest, which nature seemingly decreed should be a boundary between them and the Indians. In the Western Arctic others ascended the Mackenzie River up to old Fort Good Hope; for from the banks of the river near that historic landmark they obtained the chert which they chipped into blades for tools and weapons. Before the coming of Europeans, indeed, Eskimos held the ascendancy along the whole of Canada's northern coastline—not only in the districts just mentioned, but at Nain, at Chimo, and at Coppermine. Everywhere the Indians recognized the regions beyond the tree-line as Eskimo territory and feared to encroach on their domain.

It was the firearms introduced by white men that disturbed this balance between the two peoples, just as they destroyed the equilibrium between all American aborigines and the animals they hunted for their daily food—most notably, of course, the equilibrium between the prairie Indians and the buffalo. With firearms obtained from Europeans Montagnais warriors from the St. Lawrence valley, and Micmac Indians from the Maritimes, drove the Eskimos out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and, with the help of white men, beyond the Strait of Belle Isle.[1] Cree Indians supplied with guns by the fur-traders expelled them from the Eastmain River north to about Great Whale River, and Chipewyan Indians, similarly armed, frightened them away from the Churchill

[1]Tradition states that about 1760 an overwhelming force of Montagnais Indians and French settlers attacked and routed them in Battle Harbour.

district to beyond Eskimo Point. In 1771, Samuel Hearne's Chipewyans massacred an entire group of Eskimos at Bloody Falls near the mouth of the Coppermine River; and eighty years later the Eskimos of the Mackenzie River delta avenged their eastern brethren by butchering a party of Indians near Fort McPherson.

Like most primitive peoples who hunted and fished for their livelihood, the Canadian Eskimos moved in small bands within a fixed radius, frequenting favourite haunts, but rarely tying themselves down to definite localities. All their major settlements today have arisen within the last hundred years, many of them on sites that were seldom or never occupied in pre-European times. The following are some of them.

Settlements

Chimo: Moravian missionaries from the Atlantic coast, planning to extend their activities into Ungava, selected this locality in 1825; but five years later the Hudson's Bay Company, fearing commercial competition, quietly forestalled them by itself building a trading post on their site.[1] It abandoned the post in 1842, but re-opened it in 1866 and has maintained it to the present day.

Frobisher: This settlement began with the construction of an air-base in 1942, although the Hudson's Bay Company had operated a trading post elsewhere in Frobisher Bay since 1914.

Pangnirtung: Nineteenth century whalers had operated a shore whaling-station on Kekerten Island, near the mouth of Pangnirtung Fiord, but it was not until 1921 that the Hudson's Bay Company set up a trading post within the fiord and founded the present settlement. The government established a police post there in 1923, and the Anglican Mission erected a small hospital in 1929.

Pond Inlet: Scottish whalers frequented this area throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, and in 1903–4 one of their vessels, the ketch *Albert*, wintered in the inlet. About 1912 Captain Henry Toke Munn established a trading post, which he sold in 1921 to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Chesterfield: In 1911 the Hudson's Bay Company laid out a site here for a trading post, but did not erect the building until the following summer. In that same summer, 1912, the Roman Catholic church established beside it the first Roman Catholic Mission in the Eastern Arctic, and in 1929 built a hospital.

Cambridge Bay: The Hudson's Bay Company opened a post here in 1923, closed it in 1925, and re-opened it in 1927. In 1929 the Canalaska Trading Company also established a post, and was joined a year later by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Anglican Mission.

Coppermine: The Hudson's Bay Company opened a post here in 1927 near the ruins of a small cabin in which the trapper Charles Klengenberg had spent the winter of 1916. In 1929 the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches established rival missions on opposite sides of the trading post, and in the same year the government erected a six-bed hospital, which was closed two years later.

Herschel Island and *Tuktoyaktuk*: The Herschel Island Eskimos who survived an influenza epidemic in 1928 moved to Tuktoyaktuk. Herschel Island itself was visited but not settled before 1888, when the whaling fleet first began to winter in Pauline Cove. The Anglican Church opened a mission there in 1896.

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[1] M'Lean, 1849. Turner (1894, p. 167) writes "About the year 1825 a vessel ascended the Koksoak river for the purpose of selecting a new missionary station. Nearly opposite Fort Chimo is a beacon, yet standing, erected by the people of that vessel." Could this beacon have been the "board with an inscription similar to that put up at George river" which the Moravian missionaries Kohlmeister and Kmoch set up in 1811 on a promontory at the mouth of the Koksoak? (Kohlmeister and Kmoch, 1814, p. 77).

Aklavik: In the first decade of the twentieth century there existed at this place, which was then called *Sinik* ("Sleep"), only a log cabin that served as an overnight resting-place for persons travelling from Herschel Island to Fort McPherson, the northern terminus of the Hudson's Bay Company steamer that plied the Mackenzie River. In 1912 the Company erected a small trading post on the site, and about 1923 made it the terminus of navigation in place of Fort McPherson because it was nearer the ocean. The Anglican Church opened a mission in 1919 and a hospital in 1926. In 1926 also the Roman Catholic Church opened a mission, and erected its own hospital one year later.

Not one of these settlements, or others I might have mentioned, existed before the arrival of Europeans. Indeed, if we except the several hundred natives of the Mackenzie River delta, very few Canadian Eskimos ever built permanent homes prior to European contact. They banded together during the winter months wherever seals were plentiful, and built temporary dwellings of snow in narrow straits, and off headlands where tides and currents cracked the sea ice and piled it high in broken ridges; but as fast as one locality ceased to yield enough seals for their daily food, they deserted their expendable villages and moved to other sealing-grounds. When spring came round the families dispersed, and in small groups of one, two, or three, wandered away to search out the seals in the open sea, to fish for char and trout in the lakes and rivers, and, in midsummer, to roam over the land in pursuit of the caribou that furnished them not only food, but warm furs for winter clothing. Today the wanderers have uneasily settled down in permanent villages, not one of which is located in a place of their own choosing. It was the white men who chose the sites, most of them for three reasons: because they were readily accessible by sea, possessed safe anchorages, and centred in areas sufficiently well populated to yield the trader an abundance of furs and the missionary a bountiful harvest of souls. But should fate ever cut off the villages from the civilized world and compel their inhabitants to rely once more on the local resources only, one and all would have to be wholly or partly evacuated, because their immediate environments cannot provide enough fish and game to support their populations more than a few days or weeks.

The Eskimos first encountered Europeans about the year A.D. 1000, when some Icelanders pushed westward from newly colonized Greenland and, skirting the coast of Labrador, apparently, met and fought with a mysterious people they called Skraelings off the shores of "Vinland" (Wineland)—a land which one scholar identifies as northern Newfoundland,[1] another as the Gaspé Peninsula. The Icelanders soon retreated from America or perished, and for another five hundred years no more transatlantic adventurers sought out the Skraelings' homes. Then, in the sixteenth century, European fishermen, following in the wake of the Cabots, began to pursue the cod that frequent the waters off eastern Canada, and to settle along the shores of Newfoundland and on the southern coast of the Labrador Peninsula. More numerous and better armed than the Icelanders, these new invaders ruthlessly drove the Eskimos northward, and encouraged the eastern Indians to do likewise. The Eskimos in reprisal raided the whites at every opportunity, and for two hundred years the trade contacts that occurred sporadically between the two races frequently terminated in bloodshed. Finally, in 1765, Jens Haven, a Moravian missionary who had learned the Eskimo language in Greenland, met four hundred Eskimos from the coast south of Hamilton Inlet in Chateau Bay, placed them in communication

[1]Very likely the Norse site excavated at L'Anse aux Meadows by Helge Ingstad in 1962.

with the English governor of Newfoundland, and negotiated a peace treaty. Within twenty years Haven's Moravian Society then established three missions among the Labrador Eskimos—at Nain in 1770, at Okkak in 1775, and at Hopedale in 1781; and it founded a fourth mission in 1829 at Hebron. Each mission contained a dwelling for the missionary and his family, a church, a trading store and a workshop; around this nucleus the migratory Eskimos gathered and built wooden houses for the winter months. Thus arose the villages that line the coast of eastern Labrador today; and thus also the unbroken peace that the region has enjoyed since the historic meeting in Chateau Bay.

Except on this Atlantic coast of Labrador the Eskimos rarely rubbed shoulders with Europeans until the nineteenth century. It is true that from the mid-seventeenth century onward numerous fur-trading posts sprang up along the southwest shore of Hudson Bay and its continuation into James Bay, but this was Indian territory, not Eskimo, and the sailing ships that navigated the strait and bay to provision the posts did not touch at other places. Around 1750 the Hudson's Bay Company tried to strengthen its relations with the Eskimos on the east side of Hudson Bay, and in 1756 it opened a trading post at Great Whale River; but conditions in the area must have been very unsatisfactory, for the post was closed and re-opened several times during the next hundred years, and has operated continuously only since 1852.[1] The northern half of Hudson's great inland sea continued to be a *mare ignotum*; and although the explorations of William Baffin in the bay that bears his name had long drawn Dutch and Scottish whalers to the waters of southwest Greenland, the shores of Baffin Island itself remained uncharted, and the arctic coastline and archipelago beyond it were not yet disturbing men's dreams. Two grim sentinels, Cold and Silence, guarded the retreats of the Eskimos and repelled every European adventurer who tried to storm their gates.

Only in the nineteenth century did Europeans breach the walls. In the first half of that century the romantic search for a Northwest Passage to the Orient, and later for the vanished expedition of Sir John Franklin, familiarized both Old and New World mariners with the American Arctic and with the hardy people whose courage and ingenuity had overcome the terrors of its climate. It lured the whalers too into the Arctic's eastern and western seas. Scottish vessels operating out of Pond Inlet monopolized the whaling in Baffin Bay, American vessels dominated Foxe Basin and the waters around Southampton Island, and nationals of both countries, following the example of the Englishman Penny,[2] erected near the mouth of Cumberland Sound small shore-whaling stations that employed, or established intimate relations with, about 500 Eskimos. American vessels alone frequented the continent's Western Arctic, where for half a century they confined their operations to the Bering and Chukchi seas: only from 1888 onward did they follow the fast-diminishing whales around Point Barrow into the Beaufort Sea and winter at Herschel Island near the mouth of the Mackenzie River. The demand for baleen ("whalebone") fell away soon after 1900, whaling in the North American Arctic, already declining, became no longer profitable, and by 1910 virtually ceased. In 1913 one surviving vessel, the *Belvedere*, became locked in the ice near the Alaska-Canada boundary and made its way to Herschel Island the

[1]Information from Hudson's Bay Company.

[2]Penny, an English captain, set up the first sedentary whaling-station in Cumberland Sound in 1840 (King, 1905, p. 28).

following summer; but its captain's mind dwelt less on the whales in the ocean than on the furs he purchased from the Eskimos on the coast.

The Scottish whalers who operated out of Pond Inlet never became as intimate with the Eskimos of north Baffin Island as did their fellow-countrymen and the Americans with the Baffin Islanders farther south, because they practised a slightly different method of hunting the big sea mammals. They used steamers in preference to sailing vessels, and neither wintered in the Arctic as a rule, nor enlisted Eskimos in their crews. Each steamer cruised around until it sighted a whale, when the captain lowered his small boats and directed the chase from his "crow's-nest". The Americans employed steamers in the Western Arctic, but in the Eastern only sailing-vessels, which they provisioned for two years so that they could spend the winter in Hudson Bay. There they hired Eskimos to man some of their small boats and search out the whales, using the mother-ship as a shore station; and they continued to employ most of the natives throughout the winter, the men to hunt for fresh meat and the women to make fur clothing. The shore stations near the mouth of Cumberland Sound, each of which was staffed by one or two white men, also hired large numbers of Eskimos for the spring and autumn whaling seasons, and retained a score or more in their service throughout the entire year. They issued to each family a weekly ration of 4 lb. ship biscuit, ¼ lb. coffee, 2½ lb. molasses, and 4 plugs of tobacco; and they distributed extra tobacco, ammunition, and clothing, as largess whenever the hunters brought in a whale. Furthermore, they insisted that their employees hunt seals and narwhals as before to obtain their daily supply of meat, and consequently neither undermined the diet of the natives nor completely disrupted their aboriginal economy. Nevertheless, they did gravely modify that economy by supplying the Eskimos with steel gins, and by encouraging them to devote at least a part of the winter to trapping foxes, animals that in pre-European times had been virtually worthless. Moreover, they shuttled a large group of natives from the south coast of Baffin Island, first to Southampton Island, later to Repulse Bay, inaugurating by this action a dangerous policy which found favour later with the Hudson's Bay Company, and, even quite recently, with the Canadian government.[1]

In the southern half of Baffin Island, therefore, and on the western coast of Hudson Bay, the whalers pressed more directly and heavily on the Eskimos than farther north; and before many years had passed they forced the aboriginal culture to buckle. Metal pots and pans ousted the cooking-pots of stone; garments of cotton and wool overlay and underlay the native garments of fur; and summer tents of canvas replaced the tents made from seal and caribou hides. The Eskimo hunters threw away their self-made bows and arrows to equip themselves with firearms, abandoned their hunting kayaks, and their umiaks or

[1]Low says that the Big Island natives who were moved to Southampton Island quickly killed or frightened away with their rifles the caribou in the neighbourhood, and directly brought about the destruction of the local Eskimo tribe, the primitive Sagdlingmiut, who, in 1900, numbered 68 persons, armed only with bows and arrows and spears. The entire band died of starvation and disease in 1902. Low adds, "The white men belonging to the whaling station [on Southampton Island] have now been quartered at Repulse bay, and a number of the Big island natives have also been taken there; it is likely, therefore, that they will spread disease and disaster among the Aivilliks and Nechilliks of that region. Some regulation should be made to prevent this unauthorized movement of the natives, or similar wholesale slaughter will again occur." (Low, 1906, p. 138.) Mathiassen believes that the Southampton Islanders perished, not from starvation, but from a disease, perhaps typhus, that the whalers introduced; he records that four children survived (1927, p. 284).

travelling boats, and adopted the clinker-built whaleboats that the ships' captains left behind when they sailed away. A new generation of Eskimos arose that lacked the ancient skills and hunting lore of its parents, a generation that had lost its autarchy and could hardly survive without contact with the civilized world. "There can be little doubt", wrote Commander Wakeham in 1897, "That those [Eskimos] who have been brought up about the [whaling] stations would be badly off were these closed and abandoned;" and A. P. Low, who visited Cumberland Sound seven years later, remarked:

> "Each station [Blacklead, Kekerten, Cape Haven] has from four to six boats; consequently nearly every able-bodied native is employed in them during the whaling season. . . On the whole, the whalers may be taken as beneficial to the Eskimos, and now that the latter have long been dependent upon the whalers for guns, ammunition and other articles of civilization, there is no doubt that many would perish should the whaling stations be closed without other provision being made for the accustomed supplies." (1906, p. 10).

Only two or three years after Low printed these words, the whalers closed their stations, and sent their ships no more to Canada's Eastern Arctic; but traders and missionaries quickly stepped into the breach and warded off the threatened disaster. Foremost among them was the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been legally empowered by its charter (received from King Charles II in 1670) to exclude every outsider from Hudson Bay, but had carefully refrained from interfering with the whaling ships operating in the northern part of that inland sea and around Baffin Island, because the waters in which they navigated were perilous and the chances of profitable trade very uncertain. No sooner had the whalers disappeared, however, than the company expanded into the vacuum they had left behind: from a jumping-off outpost established at Cape Wolstenholme in 1909 it pushed into Lake Harbour in 1911, to Chesterfield in 1912, Cape Dorset in 1913, Frobisher Bay in 1914, and other places later. Following much the same policy as the whalers, it made no effort to introduce a dollars-and-cents economy among the new converts to the fur-trade, but promoted a special barter system that used tokens in place of coins: and for its unit of value it set up, not the beaver skin familiar throughout woodland Canada, but the fur of the white fox.

Low has left us a vivid description of this barter system:

> "The months of January and February are passed by the Eskimos on the journey to the trading post, where a short stay of a few days is made to dry the fox-skins caught during the winter, and to trade these along with deer and other skins in the shop. There is no cash used in these transactions; the skins are handed over to the trader, who values them from a standard of a white fox skin. When the amount has been made up, he hands to the native a number of tokens representing the value of his hunt in fox-skins. The usual tariff is about as follows:—
>
> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | White fox | = 1 skin | Mink | = 1 skin |
> | Blue fox | = 2 skins | Marten | = 2 skins |
> | Cross fox | = 5 to 15 skins | White bear | = 4 to 10 skins |
> | Silver fox | = 15 to 40 skins | Deerskin | = ½ skin |
> | Otter | = 4 to 8 skins | | |
>
> The Eskimo trades back, over the counter, the tokens received for his hunt. The first purchase is a supply of tobacco; next comes ammunition, tin kettles, knives, files &., until his stock of tokens is used up. The immediate profit on the goods supplied is very great, but when the cost of transport and the maintenance of the post are taken into account the profit, which appears enormous at first, is found to be not excessive, considering the precarious nature of the fur trade, with its fluctuating market and the chances against good hunts." (1906, p. 152).

We have now followed the developments in Canada's Eastern Arctic down to the opening years of the twentieth century. In the Western Arctic no white men other than Sir John Franklin's party and one or two other explorers encountered the Mackenzie delta natives until 1840, when the Hudson's Bay Company erected a trading post on the fringe of their territory at Fort McPherson. At that time an estimated 2,000 Eskimos were inhabiting the coastline from the Alaska-Canada boundary to Baillie Island, Eskimos who had virtually no experience of white civilization and who regarded the neighbouring Indians as hereditary enemies. Small quantities of iron and tobacco had long been seeping into their communities from the arctic coast of Alaska, but in almost every respect they were still living in the stone age; and when their Indian foes began to acquire firearms from the white traders they eagerly sought similar weapons for their own security. Their need was the Hudson's Bay Company's opportunity, and the Company used it wisely to bring about peace between the warring natives, and to direct the energies of both peoples into the trapping of the smaller fur-bearing animals, hitherto of little value in this region except sometimes for food.[1]

For nearly half a century after the erection of Fort McPherson, this remote corner of Canada's Arctic remained isolated and without history. Then, in 1888, the American whaling industry, having depleted the waters off Alaska's west coast, irrupted through the northern ice barrier into the Beaufort Sea to pursue the cetaceans in Canadian waters also. At that period the expanse of ocean between the mouth of the Mackenzie River and Banks Island was a virgin realm, baleen (whalebone") was selling for about $5 a pound on the open market, and one large bowhead whale could bring its captor as much as $10,000. As in Hudson Bay, the whalers came equipped to spend a winter in the Arctic, and they discovered a reasonably safe harbour at Herschel Island. Fourteen vessels wintered there in 1893–4, fifteen vessels two years later when the Anglican missionary Whittaker took up his residence in the delta. During the season of open water from July to early September, each vessel ceaselessly scoured the ocean in search of whales without disturbing the daily life of the Eskimos on the neighbouring coasts. But when winter drew near and the bays began to freeze over, they retreated to the shelter of Herschel Island[2] and hired large numbers of natives, some to gather driftwood which would conserve the vessels' stocks of coal, others to hunt the herds of wild caribou and supply the whalers with fresh meat. Each captain's word was law to his crew; and the captains conferred at need to settle disputes between their crews.

During the long, severe winter, officers and sailors lived on their vessels, with the exception of some petty officers who built log cabins for themselves on shore, or arranged to sleep in Eskimo homes. Very few of the commanders brought their wives; the majority hired or kidnapped Eskimo women from the coasts of Alaska or Siberia. As for the crews, they frequented with the local Eskimo women, whose moral code permitted them the same freedom as prevailed among the Polynesian islanders in the days of Captain James Cook.

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[1]Whittaker says that the Eskimos who traded at Fort McPherson in 1850 had not yet learned to trap foxes, but offered for barter beaver castors (the scent glands of the beaver, a favourite fox-bait), lines of whale (i.e. beluga) skin, whale oil, which was used along the Mackenzie River for lighting, and a few pelts (1937, p. 218).

[2]In some years a few ships wintered at Baillie Island.

Whaling ships churned the waters of the Beaufort Sea until about 1906, when the price of baleen fell to 40 cents and less, and the pursuit of the bowhead ceased to be profitable. By that date not only had the number of whales and caribou gravely diminished, but the number of Eskimos also. A little earlier influenza and other diseases introduced by the whalers had produced a similar diminution in the population of the Eastern Arctic (Boas, 1888, p. 426); but there, for some reason which is not yet clear, the whaling captains had carried only limited stocks of intoxicating liquor, and had restricted its consumption very largely to their own crews. In the Western Arctic, on the other hand, they not only distributed liquor to the Eskimos with full hands, but taught them how to make it by distilling molasses or potatoes from one 5-gallon coal-oil can to another. Within a year it converted Herschel Island, and indeed most of the Mackenzie delta, into a hive of debauchery:[1] drunkenness and immorality prevailed everywhere, strife and murder became everyday events, and diseases previously unknown to the Eskimos began to sweep away old and young like flies. Syphilis took root among them, increasing the death-rate, especially of infants, and causing apparently widespread sterility. Then in 1902 some Indians who had contracted measles in Dawson City conveyed it to Fort McPherson, whence it reached the Eskimos of the delta, carrying off nearly 100 persons, about one-fifth, Stefansson estimated, of the surviving population. This population continued to decline after the whalers departed, though the decline was masked by a stream of immigration from arctic Alaska, set in motion by the depletion of the caribou in that region. By 1930 the population of Canada's Western Arctic had fallen to about 200, and of that number not more than a dozen—if as many—could claim descent from the 2,000 inhabitants Sir John Franklin had encountered in this region a century earlier.

We may reasonably select the year 1900 to mark the close of one era in arctic Canada and the opening of a second. The public enthusiasm for its geographical exploration that had characterized the first half of the nineteenth century waned with the discovery of Sir John Franklin's fate and the realization that the far north could never offer a commercial route to eastern Asia. Peary's efforts from 1898 to 1909 to reach the north pole, Sverdrup's explorations from 1898 to 1902 among the islands adjacent to northwest Greenland, Amundsen's search from 1903 to 1907 for a Northwest Passage bordering the mainland, and latest of all, Stefansson's journeys and discoveries from 1914 to 1918 in the western half of the arctic archipelago—these appear today almost anachronisms in those turn-of-the-century years that witnessed the conquest of the atmosphere by the aeroplane and the depths of the ocean by the submarine. The whalers who had accompanied or followed up the early nineteenth century explorers had killed off most of the whales in the waters of Canada's Eastern and Western Arctic, had unconcernedly decimated the Eskimo inhabitants of both regions, and had destroyed their independence by replacing with manufactured goods the tools and weapons, the stone cooking-vessels and the skin boats that they could make from local materials with their own hands. Now at the century's end, having shattered the aboriginal economy, the whalers were departing, and the Eskimos, no longer possessing their ancient skills or food resources, had to build their economy on a new base or perish.

[1]Archdeacon Stuck described Herschel Island during the whaling period as "the world's last jumping-off place, where no law existed and no writs ran" (Whittaker, 1937, p. 235).

Fortunately, in this hour of crisis, trapping offered them the needed economic base; for in a rapidly industrializing world, fine furs had ceased to be the prerogative of the increasing numbers of rich people, and were steadily growing in favour among the middle and lower classes also. Fur-farming was still in its infancy, and the science of chemistry could not yet produce those synthetic furs it parades before the public today. All over the world, therefore, man was pursuing the wild fur-bearing animals, and the trapping of the white fox (to a lesser extent also the muskrat, which is plentiful in the Mackenzie delta) profited from a rising market that gave no hint of fickleness or decline. So the whalers, before they abandoned the Eskimo to his fate, supplied him with steel traps, and taught him to look to the small arctic fur-bearers for the income he needed to obtain the guns, the ammunition, the cloth and all the other goods of civilization that he could no longer do without.

In this new economy which the whaler-turned-trader and the fur-trader proper introduced to the Arctic, the missionary played an exceedingly important role. His primary task, of course, was to Christianize the Eskimos, to wean them from their ancient and often harmful superstitions, and teach them the "truth" of his own religion. But a wise and devoted missionary could do far more than this. He could strengthen and restore their spiritual equilibrium, which had been profoundly shaken when the world of their ancestors crumpled under the impact of white civilization and left them drifting, bewildered and without guidance, in an unfamiliar and swiftly changing universe. Their own leaders could not help them. The stout old hunters skilled in the lore of the chase, and the shamans or medicine-men who had influenced, or believed that they had influenced, the supernatural world, they too were adrift, now that their age-old prohibitions and taboos, their hoary incantations and prayers, had lost all efficacy. But the understanding missionary, who knew something both of the old life and the new, could become their anchor; he could counsel them in their troubles and interpret for them the perplexing unknowns. Man does not live by bread alone. He resembles a complex machine in delicate balance. Destroy his morale, break down the cohesion of his psyche, and you may degrade him to an automaton or condemn him to swift extinction.

So the early missionaries (Peck in the east, and first Stringer, then Whittaker, in the west) rapidly took their places alongside the other pioneers of the Arctic. They learned as quickly as possible the Eskimo language in order to perform their religious duties. With that knowledge they became the natives' advisers, not in spiritual matters alone, but in their relations with the trader and other white men who could not understand their tongue. In the absence of government schools, too they became the educators of the Eskimos: they held classes for the children and taught them to read and write. The first missionary to approach the arctic coast of the mainland, the Oblate father Emile Petitot,[1] compiled a grammar of the dialect of the Mackenzie delta Eskimos; but he lived among them only a few weeks—not long enough to break down their illiteracy. Thirty years after his time, when the whalers were still wintering at Herschel Island, the delta became the Promised Land for many Alaskan natives, some of whom had learned in Alaskan government schools, or from other Alaskan

[1]Petitot visited the Mackenzie delta in 1868. In 1858 a Moravian missionary named Warmow had been sent to Baffin Island to find out what openings existed there for missionary work. He spent the winter on the north shore of Cumberland Sound in a whaling ship.

natives, to read and write in their own tongue, using the letters of the English alphabet. One adult then taught another, and children taught their parents, until by the first decade of the twentieth century the Mackenzie Eskimos too were corresponding with one another from one end of the delta to the other. The missionary of that time, Whittaker, availed himself of their simple literacy to extend his religious teaching: he distributed among the families of his diocese numberless letters, prayers, and hymns in the Eskimo tongue, mimeographed in English characters. Less than twenty years later, the wave of literacy rolled on eastward when both Alaskan and Mackenzie natives, moving into Coronation Gulf, began to teach the same English characters to the Eskimos of that region so that they too might exchange their thoughts in their own written tongue.

In the Eastern Arctic literacy assumed a different expression which it has retained down to the present day. About 1839 a Methodist missionary, James Evans, invented a syllabic system of writing to facilitate his work among the Cree Indians. His system quickly spread throughout the woodlands of northern Ontario and Quebec, and although the Indians have now abandoned it, a sharp-eyed traveller may still occasionally observe its syllabic signs carved in the bark of some tree. In 1876 the Anglican missionary, E. J. Peck, took over a mission (established in 1854?) on the east coast of Hudson Bay at Little Whale River, and for the benefit of the Eskimos in that region transcribed into Evans' syllabic script parts of the New Testament that had been translated into Eskimo by a Moravian missionary on the Labrador coast. In 1894 Peck moved to Baffin Island, carrying his syllabic texts with him, and opened another mission at the Scotch whaling station on Blacklead Island, near the mouth of Cumberland Gulf. From Blacklead Island, and from the east coast of Hudson Bay, the new art of writing diffused north, south, and west. Low tells us that in 1903,

> "The Eskimos of Ungava bay and the south shore of Hudson strait are still without knowledge of Christianity, beyond what has been spread by the southern Christian natives. The Eskimos as a rule take kindly to Christianity, and follow its precepts in a manner which shames the average white Christian. All are exceedingly anxious to learn to read the books printed by the Church Missionary Society. These books are printed in a syllabic shorthand, very easy to read, and are supplied from Great Whale river on the east side of Hudson bay, and from Cumberland gulf. A great many Eskimos have never come in contact with the missionaries; notwithstanding this, there are only a few of the Labrador natives who cannot read and write, while the natives of Baffin island are rapidly reaching the same state. Every native who learns to read, and who possesses a book, becomes the teacher of the uninstructed; in this manner education is spreading rapidly. A good example is found in the natives of the northwest coast of Hudson bay, several of whom have learned to read from the Big island natives on the Scotch whaler, who were in turn instructed by visiting Eskimos from Cumberland gulf." (1906, pp. 139–40).

Missionary and trader thus worked both separately and together to unite the Canadian Arctic with the world of civilization: the trader purchased the furs and supplied the economic needs of the Eskimos, while the missionary attended to their spiritual wants and provided the first rudiments of an education. Meanwhile the federal government stood completely aloof. From time to time faint rumours concerning the activities of the whalers filtered through to Ottawa, but the authorities disregarded them because they were carrying more important burdens than the remote and useless Arctic. As long as no other country attempted to gain a foothold in that region they were content to forget it and push on with the development of the southern provinces of the Dominion.

"In the early days of Confederation the question of official declaration of ownership over the various islands of the northern archipelago was not regarded as an affair of pressing importance, and likewise the official demarcation of the extreme northern and eastern boundaries of the Dominion of Canada was tacitly left in abeyance. However, in 1874 the potential danger of delay materialized in connection with southern Baffin island, in an incident which though trivial in itself, culminated in the important Imperial Order in Council of 1880. By this order the Dominion officially assumed the title and ownership of all British possessions to the north of what was then Canada.

"The incident to which reference is made is recorded as follows: on 10th February, 1874, Lieut. Wm. A. Mentzer, of the Corps of Engineers of the United States Navy, addressed an application for a grant of land in Cumberland Sound, twenty square miles in extent, to Mr. George Grump, Acting British Consul at Philadelphia." (Millward, 1930, p. 9; cf. Smith, 1961).

This Order in Council of 1880, which Canada accepted as constituting a valid title to her arctic islands, may have been binding in the British Empire, but carried no force in foreign countries. It is today accepted internationally that neither discovery (which was the main basis, presumably, of Britain's title), nor propinquity, nor any unilateral proclamation can by itself confer possessory rights in perpetuity to any territory. To receive international recognition possession demands the acceptance of two responsibilities, continuing interest in the territory,[1] and a concern for the welfare of its inhabitants. Down to the very end of the nineteenth century, however, Canada completely neglected her Arctic, and gave no thought at any time to the condition of its Eskimo inhabitants. Once, and once only, did she raise a finger in the region, in 1897, after pressure from prairie farmers seeking an outlet for their grain through Hudson Bay had forced her to investigate navigation conditions through that semi-inland waterway and to chart a channel through Hudson Strait. In that year she instructed the commander of her survey vessel to proceed to Cumberland Sound and there to proclaim Canada's jurisdiction over Baffin and other islands north of the mainland. The Commander duly carried out his task. He landed at the Scotch whaling station on Kekerten Island in Cumberland Sound, hoisted the Union Jack in the presence of the agent of the whaling company, a few Eskimos, and some members of his crew, and declared that

". . . Baffin Land with all the territories, islands and dependencies adjacent to it were now, as they always had been since their first discovery and occupation, under the exclusive sovereignty of Great Britain." (Millward, 1930, p. 34).

This was an official gesture, of course, but a gesture only, which in no way committed the federal government to any positive measures that might require the expenditure of public funds. At that time, indeed, no further measures were projected. It was as if Ottawa had invested herself for a moment with the mantle of the witch of Endor, exorcised the spectre of foreign interference in her Arctic with an incantation and a majestic wave of her flag, then settled back into her armchair again to forget the region and its Eskimos.

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[1]Cf. "So far, the correspondence shows that the application of a United States officer for a grant of land in Cumberland sound prompted the offer of the Imperial Government to transfer all the territories 'adjacent' to those of the Dominion, to the Canadian Government, or, in other words, to annex them to Canada if Canada were willing and 'prepared to assume the responsibility of exercising such surveillance over them as may be necessary'; and that Canada was willing to receive the territories so annexed and to undertake the responsibility." (Millward, 1930, p. 10).

CHAPTER 2

Wards of the police (1903–21)

Naturally, no amount of flag-waving or chanting of rhetorical spells could exorcise for ever the spectre of foreign intervention. It arose again in Canada years after the hoisting of the Union Jack in Cumberland Gulf, and this time it was clearer and less fleeting. A Norwegian expedition that sailed north in 1898 under the command of Otto Sverdrup to explore the islands that now bear his name raised the Norwegian flag on their uninhabited shores and claimed them for King Oscar. The shock drew the Canadian government straight up in its armchair. Hastily it summoned the veteran geologist and Labrador explorer, A. P. Low, and appointed him to lead a counter expedition that would reaffirm more sternly than before Canada's sovereignty over its Arctic.[1]

> "The Dominion government, in the spring of 1903, decided to send a cruiser to patrol the waters of Hudson Bay and those adjacent to the eastern Arctic islands; also to aid in the establishment, on the adjoining shores, of permanent stations for the collection of customs, the administration of justice and the enforcement of law as in other parts of the Dominion.
>
> "To perform these last duties, Major J. D. Moodie, of the Northwest Mounted Police, was appointed Acting Commissioner of the unorganized Northeastern Territories. Under his command were placed a non-commissioned officer and four constables of the Northwest Mounted Police, as a nucleus of the force that in the future would reside at these stations.
>
> "The *Neptune*, the largest and most powerful ship of the Newfoundland sealing fleet, was chartered as the most suitable vessel for the cruiser work. . . .
>
> "Early in June, 1903, I had the honour to be appointed, by the Honourable Mr. Préfontaine, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to the command of the expedition to Hudson bay and northwards, on board the *Neptune*. . . ." (Low, 1906, pp. 3–4).

The *Neptune* expedition set up a police post in 1903 at Fullerton Harbour, a wintering station for whaling vessels on the west coast of Hudson Bay about sixty miles northeast of Chesterfield Inlet (Fig 1). In this harbour it spent the winter, and the following summer, after putting in at Port Burwell, the southern gateway to Hudson Strait, to land supplies for a second police post,[2] it cruised northward around Baffin Island and deposited documents proclaiming Canada's

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[1]For the political controversy surrounding Canada's claim to sovereignty over part of the arctic archipelago see Fairley (1959, pp. 273 *et seq.*). Herschel Island and Canada's Western Arctic were involved in this controversy through the activities there of American whaling vessels, and repeated appeals for police support from the six-foot, 200-pound Anglican missionary Rev. (later Bishop) I. O. Stringer, who had been upholding the law with his fists whenever the whalers' crews refused to heed moral suasion.

[2]It removed the supplies a few weeks later.

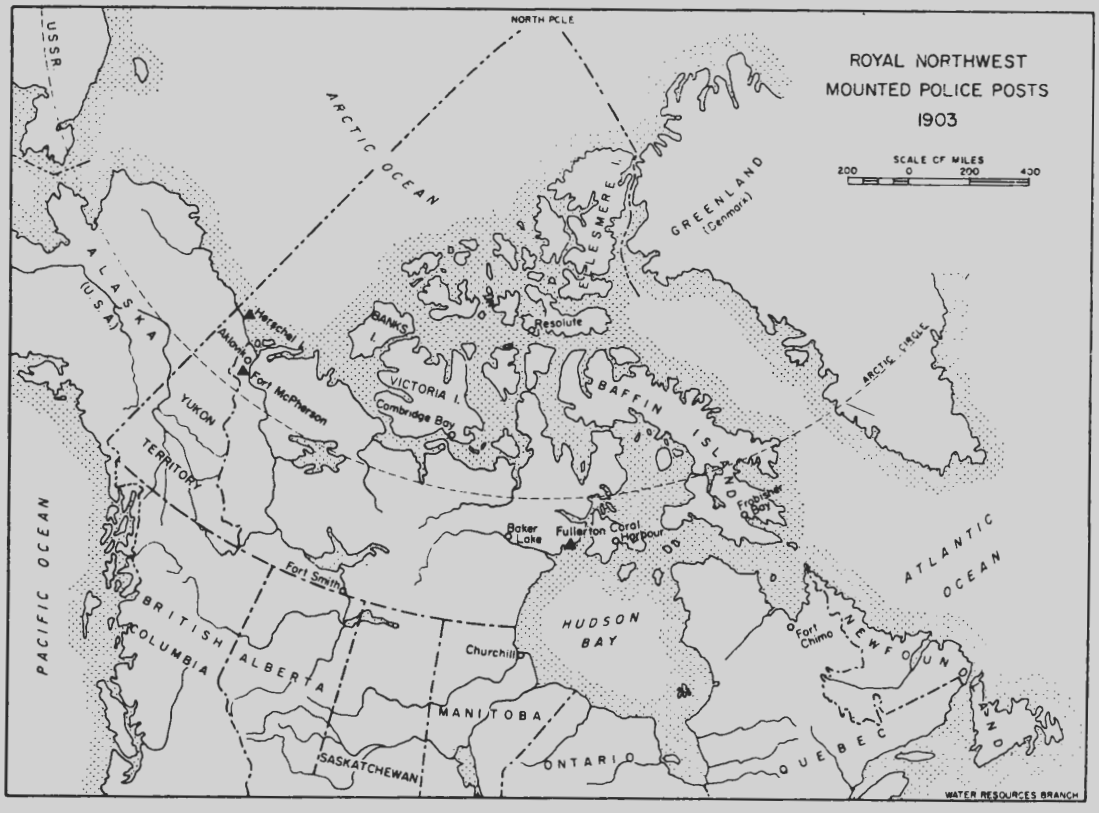

Fig. 1.

sovereignty on several headlands in the arctic archipelago,[1] one being Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island which Sverdrup had made his base.

In the same year 1903 the government set up two police posts in Canada's Western Arctic also, one at Fort McPherson, at that time the northern terminus of navigation on the Mackenzie River, and the other at Herschel Island, to which the American whaling ships still retreated for the winter months. The two policemen stationed on this island had orders to inspect their cargoes, collect any taxes that might be due, and confiscate all liquor.

[1]The proclamation deposited at each headland, as recorded in Bernier (1909, p. 14) ran:

Northwest Mounted Police.

To Agents in charge of Whaling and Trading Stations, Masters of Whalers, &c., and all whom it may concern:

Notice.

A detachment of the Northwest Mounted Police has been sent into Hudson Bay for the purpose of maintaining law and order and enforcing the laws of Canada in the territories adjacent to the said Bay and to the north thereof.

Headquarters have for the present been established at Fullerton. This has also been made a port of entry for vessels entering Hudson Bay and adjacent waters. All vessels will be required to report there and pay customs duties on dutiable goods before landing any portion of their cargoes on any place in the said territories.

Duty [on goods] imported into Canadian territories lying to the north of Hudson Bay will be collected for the present by a Canadian cruiser which will visit those waters annually or more frequently. Any violation of the laws of Canada will be dealt with by an officer of the police accompanying such cruiser.

By order,

J. D. Moodie,

Commissioner of Police for Hudson Bay and Territories to the North thereof.

(Fullerton is in N. Lat. 63°59′, W. Long. 89°20′.)

By establishing these three police posts Canada for the first time openly served notice on the world that she was accepting the responsibilities of sovereignty over the arctic mainland and the islands beyond it, was integrating that region with the rest of the country, and would enforce there her laws. But what plans she entertained, if any, for the welfare of its Eskimos she wrapped in silence.

Presumably she had no plans, since otherwise she would have devised some more constructive method of exercising her authority and carrying out her responsibilities than the setting up of police posts, after the manner of a military occupation. Twenty years earlier the United States, when faced with a similar situation in northern Alaska, had patrolled the region with a revenue steamer each summer to maintain law and order among whalers and Eskimos impartially; and she had dotted the coast, not with needless police posts, but with government schools, believing that the only policy consonant with the dignity of the United States was to educate and train her Eskimo wards until they could be wholly absorbed into the social and economic life of the nation. Denmark had adopted a different but equally enlightened policy in Greenland. To protect that country's Eskimos from exploitation and possibly extinction, and to help them attain a level of civilization equal to that of her citizens in Denmark without dissolving them in the Danish nation, she had closed its ports to all outsiders, made its external trade a government monopoly, and unsupported by a single policeman along its coast had built up a school and public-health system that within two centuries trebled the numbers of Greenlanders and equipped them to take over the full administration of their internal affairs. Canada, on the other hand, first set up three police posts among her Eskimos to inaugurate the reign of law and order, then supported the non-commissioned officer and eight constables who manned those posts, not by building schools or hospitals to promote the social and economic welfare of the natives, but by adding yet another police post[1] in the hitherto virgin region from Coronation Gulf to the Magnetic Pole. "A minimum of crime has been reported from the Arctic during the past twelve months", she announced year by year, with only occasional variation. But there was also a minimum of education and of medical care. Not a single school in the whole region except those at the mission stations, which concentrated on religious instruction and rarely carried a pupil beyond the second or third grade. Not a single hospital or doctor nearer than Fort Simpson far up the Mackenzie River, at least 700 miles from the nearest Eskimo settlement; and in those days no aircraft was flying that could bridge that distance.[2] And the Eskimo population, ravaged by measles in 1902 and by influenza in 1918, showed no signs of increasing, despite its apparently high birthrate, because it was suffering from a chronic malnutrition that lowered the resistance of the adults to introduced diseases and induced a high rate of infant mortality.

[1]At Tree River (then called Port Epworth) in 1919.

[2]Anglican missionaries in 1902 erected a one-room hospital on Blacklead Island, the whaling station in Cumberland Sound; but they abandoned it a few years later when the whaling station closed down and the Eskimos moved elsewhere. I should mention also that each summer a Department of Indian Affairs doctor descended the Mackenzie River as far as Fort McPherson (from 1918 to 1923, and probably 1927, right down to Herschel Island). He vaccinated several hundred natives, some of them Eskimos, during the smallpox scare in 1911.

What brought about this state of affairs in Canada, so unlike the conditions that prevailed at that time in Alaska and in Greenland? Without question it was the erroneous policy of the federal government, which accepted the responsibility for law and order in the Arctic, but refused to shoulder the other responsibilities that go with sovereignty. When it passed the Northwest Territories Act of 1905, it gave the reins of authority to a Commissioner in distant Ottawa—Lt. Col. F. White, Financial Comptroller of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police—a commissioner who could look for guidance only to the reports of his policemen and to the Council of four civil servants ("or less as seemed advisable"), no one of whom could claim any significant experience of the Arctic and its Eskimos. At no time was it the function of the Commissioner to originate new policies, or to study the resources and plan the development of the vast territory over which he was given control. His instructions called on him to uphold Canada's sovereignty in the northland, to maintain order, and to enforce the laws of Canada—a negative task which made his administration as static and unprogressive as police-run states generally are. Like the laws of the Medes and Persians, such an administration can endure only in a land that never changes: and no such land exists, as King Croesus reminded Cyrus the Persian from his funeral pyre.

Sterile as was the administration to which Canada thus committed her Arctic, the task was very far from routine, particularly for those policemen who were stationed at isolated posts in the far north where parades could be forgotten and informal fur clothing replace the scarlet coat so familiar throughout southern Canada. The men were not automata, but human beings living among other human beings; and as the sole representatives of the government at their Eskimo-surrounded posts—occasionally the only white men—they were called upon to perform a multitude of tasks, many of which had never been listed in any police manual. They patrolled their districts and arrested law-breakers, enforced the game regulations, collected the customs duties wherever they were leviable, served as justices of the peace, postmasters, and census officers, searched for the missing, and treated the sick wherever no doctor or nurse was available. At least two of them made long and arduous journeys that added to our geographical knowledge of the Arctic. They were in fact the government's handymen, available for any and every task.

Here is one example:

> "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police reported [in 1921] that, in the Coronation Gulf district, infanticide, particularly in the case of females, was practiced by some of the Eskimo. When a tribe was on the march, and a female child was born it gave the parents more or less trouble, and quite frequently the infant was destroyed. As a result a number of Eskimo tribes were reported to be decreasing. This condition led to an appropriation of $1,500 to be expended in the purchase of wearing apparel, flour, needles, thread, and similar articles, which will be distributed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to Eskimo parents with children under five years of age, as an inducement to retain and bring up their children. This condition of affairs is limited to the Coronation Gulf district."[1] Rept. Deputy Minister (Can. Dept. Int. 1921–22, p. 19).

[1] I cannot resist adding a footnote. About this time, Dr. Helen MacMurchie, Director of Child Welfare in the federal department of Health, asked me what could be done to check infanticide in the Coronation Gulf area from which I had recently returned. I pointed out that the government could do very little until living conditions changed: that as long as the Eskimos there knew no food except meat and fish, a woman had to breast-feed her baby to

(Continued p. 22)

In a land, accordingly, where the climate demanded that men be men, the reputation of the police deservedly stood high. Nevertheless, they and their Commissioner were only the instruments of a policy (or lack of policy) which they neither planned nor formulated, and perhaps never wanted: they merely carried out the broad functions assigned to them by the Minister of the Interior, the Prime Minister, and ultimately parliament. The latter were all preoccupied with other matters—a northern transcontinental railroad and the further opening up of western Canada, in Europe the increasing power and aggressiveness of Imperial Germany, and then the First World War. Compared with these continent-shaking events what was happening in the Arctic seemed unimportant; and as long as Canada's sovereignty remained unchallenged, the development of that region could await an indefinite future. As for its Eskimos, whom the authorities considered wards of the federal government but not Indians, and accordingly not the responsibility of any one department,[1] they could safely be entrusted for a period to the fur-traders and the missionaries.

The question of sovereignty seemed to present little difficulty. The government purchased a sturdy Newfoundland sealing-vessel, the *Arctic*, appointed to command it a veteran French-Canadian sea-dog, Captain J. E. Bernier, and sent him north every summer from 1905 to 1911 to cruise among the arctic islands and display the Canadian flag. It empowered him to stop and investigate any vessel he might happen to encounter in those waters: in addition, to explore the coastlines, make the usual navigation soundings, and carry out whatever scientific studies lay within his power. But in 1911, with war becoming more and more imminent, it relieved Bernier of his command after his summer cruise and down-graded the *Arctic* to a light-ship in the St. Lawrence.

While the government thus upheld the sovereignty of Canada, traders and missionaries expanded over the Arctic, the trader blazing the trail, as a rule, and

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the age of about three, as well as carry it on her back during the summer months atop the family bedding and household goods. Consequently she could not possibly raise two children spaced less than three or four years apart. Not tradition, but necessity compelled the destruction of the later-born. Nevertheless, conditions were gradually changing with the coming of Europeans. The Anglican church had just stationed in the area a missionary whose wife was a trained nurse. If the government would send her a few cases of powdered milk, she might be able to rescue and care for one or two babies during the summer wanderings of the parents in pursuit of the caribou, and return them to the mothers in the autumn when the hunting season had ended.

Some months later a burly policeman who had just completed his two years' stint in the Coronation Gulf area dropped into my office to acquaint me with the latest developments.

"A strange thing happened just before I left", he said. "The supply vessel brought my fellow-policeman and myself several cases of dried milk, and with them these instructions which we were to post on the barracks' wall:

1. Hold the baby in the crook of the left arm.
2. Tilt the bottle to an angle of 45°.
3. If the baby chokes . . . ."

"You obeyed your orders, of course", I said. And he answered:

"No, we gave the milk to the missionary's wife"; which was exactly what shrewd Dr. MacMurchie had anticipated.

[1] "Prior to the year 1924 the Indians located in the Northwest Territories were governed and came under the Department of Indian Affairs by virtue of the Indian Act.

"The Eskimos, however, were not looked upon as Indians, and though aborigines residing in the N.W.T. they were apparently considered wards of the Dominion Govt. but not the responsibility of any one department. The care of the Eskimo, though not authoritatively so, was assumed by the Commissioner of the N.W.T. . . ." (Memo. to Deputy Commissioner N.W.T. 28 September 1939, in files).

the missionary and the police following after him, a sequence that led to the ironic interpretation of the letters H.B.C. ("Hudson's Bay Company") as "Here Before Christ". By 1920 all three organizations were well represented in arctic Canada, both east and west; and they were gradually diffusing through the previously undisturbed central region between Baillie Island and the Magnetic Pole, where isolation had preserved a few hundred Eskimos from the groping meshes of the fur trade and allowed them to maintain their old stone-age economy unchanged. The police stood apart from the other two organizations, being unchallengeable in their special sphere; and very few points of friction separated the trader from the missionary;[1] but each of the two latter faced severe competition in his own domain. The Revillon Frères Company of Paris matched post for post with the Hudson's Bay Company along the western and northern shores of the Labrador Peninsula, and even invaded the west coast of Hudson Bay by erecting stations at Baker Lake and Repulse Bay; an ex-Klondiker, Captain Henry Toke Munn, partly financed from England, set up a trading station in Pond Inlet to help finance his prospecting in the north of Baffin Island; at least two ex-whaling captains in the Western Arctic converted their vessels into mobile fur-trading posts; and many free-lancing white trappers turned to trading when they could find the capital, and returned to trapping when fortune frowned. It was indeed a general free-for-all in which the weaker competitors were relentlessly driven one after another to the wall.[2] The economic depression of the early 1930's accelerated this elimination process until by 1936, when the Revillon Frères finally withdrew from the Canadian field, the Hudson's Bay Company had acquired a virtual monopoly of the fur trade throughout the Arctic; but the number of new posts it was forced to open between 1910 and 1920 alone testifies to the intensity of the struggle.[3]

The competition in the missionary field did not lend itself to this simple solution, although it involved two denominations only, the Roman Catholic and the Anglican. The former had pioneered in both the Western and the Eastern Arctic: it had sanctioned Petitot's brief incursion in 1868 into the delta of the Mackenzie River, and in 1872, aided by the Hudson's Bay Company, which feared the establishment of a Moravian trading mission in Ungava Bay, it had sent to Fort Chimo another Oblate father, Charles Renaud, to secure a foothold in the region of Hudson Bay. But in neither the west nor the east did it follow up its advantage, although it dug deep roots among the Indians of the upper Mackenzie River, and also among the Naskapi and Montagnais Indians in the interior of the Labrador Peninsula. Both arctic regions lay wide open, therefore, when Peck established his Anglican missions in the east (Little Whale

[1]By 1940, however, one Anglican and thirteen Roman Catholic missions were holding fur-trading licences (Finnie, 1942, p. 59).

[2]One man was eliminated about 1920 by the Eskimos themselves. He stepped off the Mackenzie River steamer in the delta with an outfit of trade goods that had cost him $1500, and, discovering that the Eskimos had become devotees of poker, decided to win their furs and retain his outfit by giving them a few lessons in the engrossing game. The unsophisticated natives were as willing as Mark Twain's "heathen Chinee", and within a few weeks they stripped him of all his belongings. The destitute trader then sought haven with the police, who fed him through the winter and shipped him south the following summer when the river steamer reappeared.

[3]Wolstenholme, 1909 or 1910; Lake Harbour, 1911; Aklavik and Chesterfield, 1912; Cape Dorset, 1913; Stupart Bay and Frobisher Bay, 1914; Herschel Island, 1915 (?); Bernard Harbour, Baker Lake, and Port Burwell, 1916; Coats Island and Repulse Bay, 1919; Port Harrison, 1920.

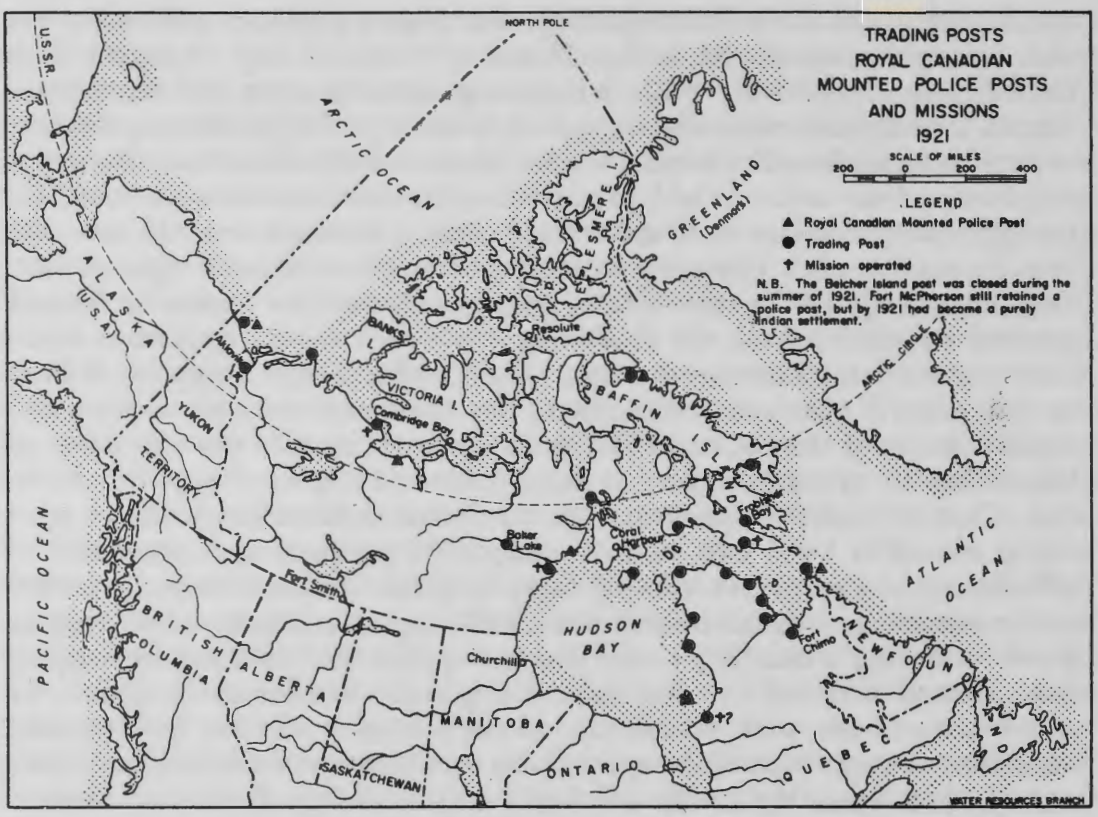


Fig. 2.

River, 1876; Fort George, 1885; Great Whale River, 1890 (?), and Blacklead Island, 1894), and his co-religionist Stringer started a preaching crusade in 1894 in the whaling community at Herschel Island. About the turn of the century Stringer's successor, Whittaker, opened a temporary mission at Kittigazuit, on the eastern side of the Mackenzie delta;[1] and in the south of Baffin Island, in 1909, the Anglicans erected an outpost at Lake Harbour. Three years later, in 1912, the Roman Catholics moved from the Mackenzie River basin into the Eskimo field, and Father (later Bishop) Turquetil opened their first mission at Chesterfield, on the west coast of Hudson Bay. Then in 1913 Fathers Rouvier and Le Roux, travelling north from the Dismal Lakes, tried to gain a foothold for their faith among the still primitive Eskimos of Coronation Gulf; but they tragically lost their lives near the mouth of the Coppermine River at the hands of the very natives they had hoped to Christianize. Without delay the Anglicans invaded this virgin field from the Mackenzie delta, and in 1916 planted a mission at Bernard Harbour, near the western entrance to Coronation Gulf; whereupon the Roman Catholics, moving by sea in the same direction, also set up a temporary mission at Letty Harbour, not far from Cape Parry. Then followed an undeclared truce for a few years while both churches consolidated their positions, and recruited volunteers in Canada, England, France, and Belgium for new advances.

[1]Bishop D. B. Marsh says that Anglican missions were established at Great Whale River and Little Whale River in 1882, at Herschel Island in 1896, and at Kittigazuit in 1908 (1957, p. 15).

By this period—the end of the second decade of the twentieth century—first the whalers, then the traders and the missionaries, had completely shattered the ancient Eskimo culture over most of the Eastern and Western Arctic, and were launching an assault on the still primitive central region. Outside that region high-powered rifles had largely superseded the bows and arrows and the sealing harpoons; and with those old weapons had gone the ancient hunting skills. Fewer Eskimos now could track down the breathing holes of the seals in the ice that mantles the winter sea; fewer could harpoon a seal from a kayak, or approach it within harpoon range as it drowsed in the sun on the surface of the ice. With the introduction of rifles they had forgotten the art—no longer needed—of driving whole herds of caribou into snares or ambushes, or into lakes and rivers where the hunters could pursue the swimming animals in their kayaks and slaughter them with lances. The kayak itself had almost disappeared, and even the big skin umiak that the Eskimos had used for travelling; for now they were demanding boats with outboard motors, and schooners powered with diesel engines. The inherited lore of centuries was fading, and the younger generation of natives neither valued the knowledge and skills of their forefathers nor cherished any desire to cling to the ancient ways. In many districts—for example, the east coast of Hudson Bay—they could not have clung to them even had they wished, because rifles had exterminated or driven away nearly all the caribou, which had provided meat for food, and skins for bedding and winter clothing. What was past was past and could never return. For good or ill their lot was now cast with the white man's. They could survive perhaps the denial of the woollen and cotton clothing, the watches and the gramaphones that he sold them in his trading store; but they could no longer live without his guns and ammunition, his steel axes and steel knives, his kerosene lamps that lighted and warmed their homes, and his flour, baking-powder, rice, tea, and other foods that sustained them during the long cold months when the trapping of foxes left them little time or opportunity to hunt larger game. Trapping had become a vital necessity to their generation; for whereas the early whalers had required little but labour in payment for their goods, the traders demanded furs, particularly fox furs, which had been valueless in the aboriginal economy. So from November until March most Eskimos abandoned the hunting of seals at their breathing-holes in the sea ice, renounced the comfort and support of their relatives and friends and the amenities of village life, and spent their days in the solitude and isolation of their individual trapping cabins and tents. It was sheer economic need that drove them into this new occupation, an occupation that was changing the whole pattern of their lives.

Changing too were the thoughts of the Eskimos. Their ancient notions of the universe did not fit this new world that was crowding in on them and demanding new attitudes and new adjustments. Naturally, they could not envision the far-off homeland of the white man, his teeming cities, his factories and railroads, and his thousands of square miles golden with wheat and corn. Descriptions and even pictures of these things meant almost nothing to them, for as yet no more perhaps than half a dozen Canadian Eskimos had ever travelled south and beheld them with their own eyes. To be told, further, that there was no goddess at the bottom of the sea who controlled the supply of seals, no malicious goblin that cracked the solid ice beneath their snow huts, no

hostile ghost that barred the traveller's path with a blizzard or enveloped him in dense fog, no wicked sorcerer who possessed the power to strike his foes with sickness—none of these beings in the visible or invisible world, but one God and one only, a good God who ruled the whole universe and loved all mankind, the Eskimo equally with the white man, despite the pain and starvation, the sickness and the death that seemed present everywhere—such a religion was incomprehensible to this first generation of converts. They regarded the missionary's prayers as magic spells, his hymns as incantations similar to those they had chanted in their dance-houses during days of stress and hunger, and the command "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" as a new taboo that silenced their guns each Sunday from morning until evening, even when their cooking-pots were empty and a flock of ducks settled on the water near their camp. The missionary might well be aware of all this and still have confidence in his mission. The children he was teaching in his elementary school would understand his religion more fully, and in the meantime he was bringing a message of hope to the older people, who would surely know more happiness if he could deliver them from the superstitious fears that, like a baleful incubus, had haunted the nights and days of their forefathers.

Everywhere and in every way then the Eskimos were changing. In the veins of increasing numbers coursed European blood that modified their forms and their features. European-style clothing was replacing their garments of fur, especially in those regions where caribou were scarce or lacking: only the fur parka, in altered cut, remained an indispensable winter garment, because it was lighter and warmer than any which civilized man had invented. In most regions light tents of canvas had ousted the heavier and more cumbersome tents of seal- or caribou-skin; and many of civilization's baubles littered both tents and winter homes, whether these latter were built of snow or of driftwood. The community dance-house had disappeared, except in the Central Arctic, but in half-a-dozen settlements rose a little church, symbol of a new outlook and a new faith. Even the language was changing, for more and more English words were creeping into the Eskimo's vocabulary and a few of its complex grammatical inflexions were dropping out of use.

Throughout all this ferment the federal government maintained law and order in its northland, but otherwise played only a passive role. Once, however, in 1912, it took a hard look at the region, when Vilhjalmur Stefansson was seeking support for a scientific expedition to the Coronation Gulf region and the arctic islands beyond it, and seemed assured of finding the necessary funds in the United States. Then the government, loth to see another foreign nation exploring its Arctic, decided to sponsor his explorations itself, and in 1913 despatched a well-equipped expedition on what it planned to be a three-year voyage of discovery and research. That expedition achieved considerable success in the scientific field, though its progress was marred by a tragic disaster that cost the lives of several men. In the administrative field too it produced an important aftermath, for it led to the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the possibility of establishing a reindeer and muskox industry in arctic Canada, on the lines of the reindeer industry in neighbouring Alaska.

This was not the first time Canada had displayed an interest in the success of the domesticated reindeer that Dr. Sheldon Jackson, the father of Alaskan education, had imported from Siberia between 1891 and 1902 for the benefit of

the Eskimos in that territory (Jenness, 1962a, p. 12). As early as 1900 a Canadian lawyer had written to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior:

> "Your work in Alaska, through Dr. Jackson, appears to be ideal in every respect. At three different points I have written Canadians to look carefully into his work, and find that it is as highly prized in the mining camps as among scientists. Our coast line from 142 degrees to the mouth of the Nelson, some 3000 miles, is without a single school, and I hope to do something for the poor Eskimo through schools and the reindeer." (U.S. Bur. Ed. 1901, p. 25).

The success of the Alaskan experiment induced the celebrated Labrador missionary, Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, to attempt a similar experiment in northern Newfoundland. In 1908, with funds provided by the *Boston Transcript* and the Canadian Department of Agriculture, he purchased 300 Lapp reindeer at $51 a head and landed them on the ice off Crémaillière near St. Anthony. By 1911 this herd had increased to 1,200, by 1913 to 1,500, although 50 animals with two Lapp herders had been sent to the Peace River district, and others had been slaughtered to supply meat for the St. Anthony hospital. The Lapp herders, however, did not like the Newfoundland environment and returned to their homeland, Grenfell himself went to the battlefront in France with a medical unit, and the local Newfoundland fishermen poached so heavily on the untended herd (mistaking the reindeer perhaps for wild caribou) that in 1916 only 230 animals could be tracked down and rounded up. The survivors of these 230, to the number of 150, Grenfell landed with Canada's consent at Rocky Bay, on the Labrador coast, whence Canadian herders removed them to Anticosti Island. There disease appears to have attacked and weakened them, for they disappeared very rapidly (Grenfell, 1919, pp. 193 *et seq.*).[1]

It was Stefansson himself, the chief advocate of a Royal Commission, who promoted the next attempt to introduce reindeer into Canada. He resigned from the Commission in 1920 before it had completed its investigations, obtained from the government a grazing lease on a large tract of land behind Amadjuak Bay, on the south coast of Baffin Island, and sent a companion in his arctic explorations, Storker Storkerson, to study its terrain. Storkerson returned with a favourable report, whereupon the Hudson's Bay Company transported 620 reindeer from Hammerfest, in northern Norway, and landed them with their Lapp herders in the selected bay, although it contained no inhabitants, and only one ruined cabin, the abandoned shack of some prospector. The herders quickly remedied the lack of housing, but could not remake the terrain, which proved to be deficient in reindeer food. Storkerson, it seems, had found an abundance of moss, but it was of two species, the Icelandic and the *Cladonia rangiferina*, which, not being a botanist, he had failed to distinguish. The Icelandic abounded everywhere, but the *Cladonia* was scarce, and the latter alone contained adequate nourishment for reindeer:

> "We soon found that the pastures would not permit us to keep a large herd under restraint; if we did, they would starve to death. Consequently, we had to divide them into flocks and let them spread over a wide area, after the style of the caribou. . . . Sometimes the caribou would come and mix with our reindeer—more often the reverse—and that was the last we would see of them." (Mikkelborg, 1949–50, p. 37).[2]

[1] The Finnish geographer, V. Tanner, who had considerable experience in the reindeer industry of Finland, has expressed his personal opinion that "Dr. Grenfell's idea was excellent in principle, and I am sure that sooner or later new experiments in this matter must be made and will have practical success." (1947, vol. 2, p. 794).

[2] Cf. Hinds, 1958, pp. 217–22.

So this experiment, like Grenfell's, ended in failure, the reindeer perished or vanished among the caribou, and all or most of the herders were repatriated to Norway.

Yet though Stefansson's experiment thus miscarried, his scheme to introduce reindeer herds among the Eskimos of northern Canada rested on a sound economic base. He knew that firearms had almost exterminated the caribou herds in northern Alaska, and that very few deer were migrating as before close to the Mackenzie delta; he knew, too, that trading posts were springing up all along the coast from the Mackenzie delta to Hudson Bay; and he rightly feared that the day might come when there too the caribou would diminish and the Eskimos lapse into want. The importation of domesticated reindeer had rescued them from this peril in Alaska, and proved amazingly successful down to his day, as he himself had witnessed; and now that the Lomen brothers and other Alaskan businessmen were interesting themselves in the enterprise, what had begun as a simple project for providing the Eskimos with food promised to become a highly profitable meat-exporting industry with an assured market in the United States. True, it was encountering a few difficulties, but no one at that time considered them insurmountable, or foresaw how grave they would become in the next decade. All in all, Stefansson's reasoning seemed entirely logical, and nearly every witness who testified before the Royal Commission supported his proposal to import some reindeer into Canada, although not all of them shared his rosy vision of a big meat-packing industry.

One witness, nevertheless, sounded a warning note:

> "Mr. D. Jenness, Ethnologist, who spent one year in Alaska and two on Coronation gulf with the Canadian Arctic Expedition, was not sure that it would be at all an easy task to convert the native Esquimaux into efficient herders. While intelligent and trustworthy, they have been for generations hunters and fishermen, and as long as game, fish and seal are plentiful they will not, in his opinion, turn away from that life for the more humdrum life of herding. If, however, game became scarce, they would, he thought, develop into herders as they had done in Alaska." (Royal Commission, 1922, p. 33).

The Royal Commission closed its hearings in 1920, but did not issue its report until 1922. It recommended, among other things,

1. That small experimental reindeer herds be established in a number of such localities as may, after searching Departmental investigation, be found most suitable;
2. That close studies be made of the wild caribou;
3. That special attention be paid to prevent wasteful slaughter of caribou either by natives or other agencies;
4. That the muskox be conserved.

It was a statesmanlike document. The historian of forty years later can praise it without reservation.

CHAPTER 3

A shackled administration (1921–31)

In 1920 the first Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Lt. Col. F. White, died, and the government appointed W. W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to take his place. This change by itself would have made little difference had not the Imperial Oil Company in August of the same year struck oil near Fort Norman. The news spread rapidly, and the government, fearing a stampede down the Mackenzie River as soon as navigation opened in 1921, hastily revamped the Department of the Interior to cope with the emergency. It set up within that department a special Northwest Territories Branch to administer the natural resources of the region, and appointed as its Director a mining engineer, O. S. Finnie, who had been Gold Commissioner in the Yukon. At the same time it increased the membership of the Northwest Territories Council from four to six, of whom four were officials in Cory's own Interior Department, one the Deputy Minister of Mines, and the sixth the Assistant Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The new Northwest Territories Branch immediately set up an administrative office in Fort Smith, and sub-offices in Norman and Resolution, to handle the expected rush of miners and prospectors down the Mackenzie River. Before it could settle in and build up a staff, however, a fishing dispute between Denmark and Norway concerning the latter's rights in northeast Greenland[1] revived the question of Canada's sovereignty over the Sverdrup Islands in the High Arctic, which the Norwegian Sverdrup had discovered between 1900 and 1902 and claimed for his country. The government moved quickly. It summoned the 70-year-old Captain Bernier from his well-earned retirement, recalled his old vessel, the *Arctic*, from its station as a lightship in the St. Lawrence, refitted it, and on 18 July 1922 sent it north once more with Bernier as Captain, but under the command of J. D. Craig, an official of the Interior Department, to re-affirm Canada's jurisdiction over all the islands west of Baffin Bay and Smith Sound. On board it carried an inspector of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and eight constables, who had received orders to establish and man two posts, one at Pond Inlet, where a police officer had been quartered for a year at the Hudson's Bay Company's trading station, and the other at the uninhabited Craig Harbour in the southeast corner of Ellesmere Island.

By setting up these two posts the Canadian government served notice on other nations that henceforth it was actively controlling two of the main gateways into its Eastern Arctic, Jones and Lancaster sounds; and during the next

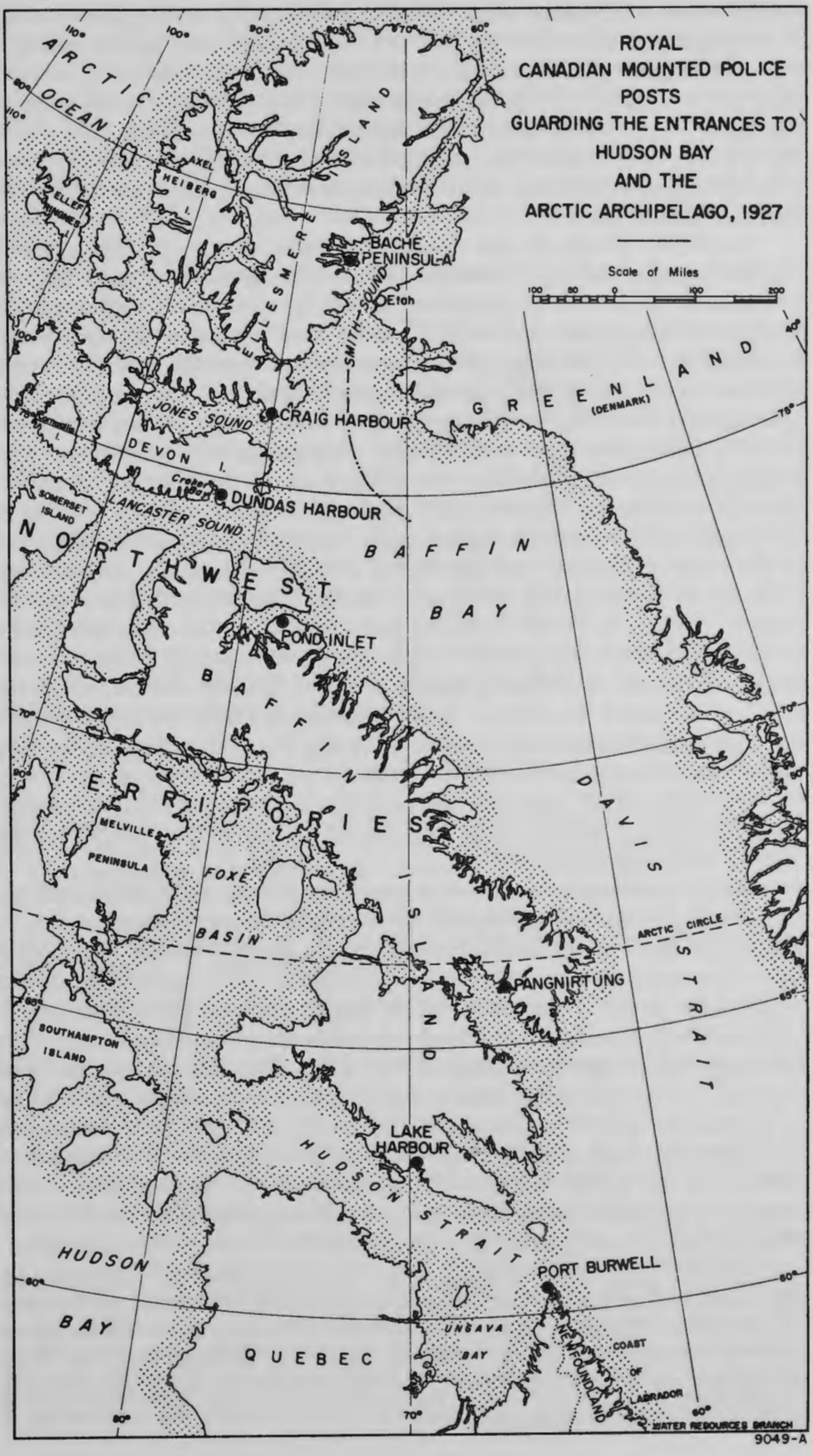
[1]The dispute was referred in 1931 to the World Court of Justice at The Hague, which upheld Denmark's title to sovereignty over that part of Greenland in a judgment issued 5 April 1933.

five years, it deliberately strengthened that control. In 1923, to try an Eskimo accused of murder, it sent to Pond Inlet a stipendiary magistrate and an entire court, the first regularly constituted court ever to sit in the Eastern Arctic. In the same year it opened another police post in Pangnirtung Fiord, and, with the consent of the Danish government, recruited two Eskimo families from Etah, in northwest Greenland, to serve at the police post in Craig Harbour; for the Etah natives had long been accustomed to hunt muskoxen on Ellesmere Island, and were therefore very familiar with its topography and game resources. A year later it established a fourth police post in Dundas Harbour, on the south side of Devon Island at the entrance to Lancaster Sound; and in 1925, on the last voyage of the veteran ship *Arctic*, it arranged for a patrol from Craig Harbour to visit Axel Heiberg Island during the winter and plant the Canadian flag on that western outlier of Ellesmere Island. In 1925 also it endeavoured to set up a police post on Bache Peninsula, half-way up the east coast of Ellesmere Island in Smith Sound; but heavy ice blocked the passage into that sound, forcing the *Arctic* to land at Dundas Harbour the two Eskimo families it had taken aboard at Etah to serve on Bache Peninsula. In 1926, however, a more powerful vessel chartered from the Job Sealfishery Company of St. John's, Newfoundland, succeeded in reaching the peninsula and setting up Canada's most northern police post up to that time, a post that temporarily replaced Craig Harbour and controlled the northern half of Ellesmere Island. Finally, in 1927, the government completed its cordon by putting in a sixth post on the north side of Hudson Strait at Lake Harbour, where it could complement the Port Burwell post on the south side of the strait established in 1920 (Fig. 3).

While the Royal Canadian Mounted Police thus sealed the main entrances to Canada's Eastern Arctic, Ottawa eliminated the likelihood of any controversy with Norway over the Sverdrup Islands by purchasing from Sverdrup himself a photostat copy of his exploration diaries, and by reaching an understanding with his government to bury for ever any question of sovereign rights based on his discoveries. Then, with this issue safely interred, and with police posts stationed at the most strategic points in the Arctic to handle all administrative problems, the Northwest Territories Council sat comfortably back to let events take their course, and to handle only such incidental problems as might arise from one day to the next.

However, the Director of the new Northwest Territories Branch, O. S. Finnie, was by no means happy to sit back and eat the fruit of the lotus. He realized, as did a few other Canadians, that territorial rights carry obligations; that it was the duty of the federal government to civilize the Eskimos and to safeguard their health and welfare; and that it was shamefully evading its responsibilities when it shuffled off those tasks on the traders and the missionaries, neither of whom possessed the means to carry them out. He knew that Knud Rasmussen, the Greenland explorer who had commanded a Danish expedition to Hudson Bay from 1921 to 1923, had been shocked by the deplorable condition of the Eskimos along its western shores and in the hinterland; and that only international courtesy, and the feeling that they had been guests on Canadian soil, prevented him and his colleagues from exposing the situation at that time. Finnie would have liked a free hand to remedy the conditions there and in other parts of the north, to improve the health of the Eskimos, and to educate and train them so that they could work for the development of the Arctic on an

Fig. 3.


ROYAL
CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
POSTS
GUARDING THE ENTRANCES TO
HUDSON BAY
AND THE
ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGO, 1927
Scale of Miles
100 50 0 100 200
ARCTIC OCEAN
AXEL HEIBERG I.
ELLEF RINGNES I.
ELLESMERE ISLAND
BACHE PENINSULA
Etah
SMITH SOUND
JONES SOUND
CRAIG HARBOUR
GREENLAND (DENMARK)
Cornwallis I.
DEVON I.
Crozier
DUNDAS HARBOUR
SOMERSET ISLAND
LANCASTER SOUND
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
BAFFIN BAY
POND INLET
BAFFIN ISLAND
DAVIS STRAIT
MELVILLE PENINSULA
FOXE BASIN
ARCTIC CIRCLE
PANGNIRTUNG
SOUTHAMPTON ISLAND
LAKE HARBOUR
HUDSON STRAIT
HUDSON BAY
PORT BURWELL
QUEBEC
UNGAVA BAY
NEWFOUNDLAND
COAST OF LABRADOR
WATER RESOURCES BRANCH
9049-A

equal footing with white men. But his hands were tied by the shortsightedness of his superiors, who allowed him to enroll a small staff of field investigators to study biological conditions in the Northwest Territories, but insisted that as long as the Eskimos lived within the law, they should be encouraged to maintain their own way of life (as far as that was still possible), and should not be deliberately transformed into white men, who would inevitably demand public schools, medical care, and other services that would entail a considerable expenditure of public funds.

Doubtless much of the apathy of these senior officials arose from the uncertain status of the Eskimos. When the government in 1921 created a special branch of the Department of the Interior—the Northwest Territories Branch—to administer northern Canada, that department found itself obliged to undertake some minor relief measures in a few Eskimo settlements; for it assumed, as did the public generally, that the Eskimos were wards of the federal government.[1] In 1924, therefore, the Minister of the Interior introduced a bill into parliament that would bring them under the Indian Act and thereby transfer the responsibility for their welfare to the Department of Indian Affairs. The bill encountered considerable opposition, particularly from the Leader of the Opposition, Arthur Meighen, who objected to degrading them into wards of the nation: Canada had signed no treaties with them, he said, and should leave them alone, giving them the benefits of her Civil Law, and compelling them to comply with her Criminal Law. The bill was then amended so that it would in no way change their legal status, but merely place on the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs the added burden of Eskimo affairs: and in this form it passed the house. Consequently, in 1932, when the question of the status of the Eskimos again came into the limelight, the Department of the Interior could inform the Department of External Affairs:

> "So far as we are aware they [the Eskimos] have the status of any other resident of the Territories except Indians. They have not the status of Indians, and the provisions of the Indian Act do not apply to them."

Either by design or, as is more probable, by accident, the Northwest Territories Act of 1905 had omitted to provide any special administration of Eskimo affairs, and none of the ordinances passed by the Northwest Territories Council from 1905 until at least 1930 had discriminated between the Eskimos and other inhabitants of the Territories. The Department of Indian Affairs, however, had been less cautious, or merely perhaps more open-handed. From about 1880 onward, in the Mackenzie River delta where Eskimos and Indians were beginning to mingle fairly freely, it had arbitrarily grouped them as one people in all matters affecting education and health. From 1918 to 1923, indeed, it had spent in that area $30,800—mainly to the trading companies and the police—for the relief of Eskimo distress; approximately $4,000 yearly for the education of Eskimo children in mission schools; and $700 yearly for the services of a physician who treated at Herschel Island during the summer all Eskimos

[1] Cf. "The doubt which exists as to the precise status of the Canadian Eskimo would appear to be due to the fact that Parliament has not seen fit to enact any legislation indicating that the relationship between the Eskimo and the Government differs from that of the ordinary citizen. Generally speaking, the assumption would seem to be that because the Eskimo is an aboriginal inhabitant of the North American continent he must necessarily be a ward of the nation in the same way as the Indian." (Memo. from Dept. Interior to Dept. of External Affairs, 20 September 1932).

who needed his attention. After 1924 again, when for a short period it became legally responsible for the handling of Eskimo matters, the Department of Indian Affairs extended its medical service into the Eastern Arctic, and in 1926 provided both the salary and the expenses of a full-time physician on Baffin Island. However, on 31 March 1928, the conduct of Eskimo matters was explicitly transferred by Order-in-Council to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and two years later, in 1930, the government repealed the 1924 amendment to the Indian Act which had allocated that task to the Department of Indian Affairs.

From the official standpoint, then, the Eskimos no more concerned the Department of the Interior—or any other federal department—than white Canadians, so that Finnie's new Northwest Territories Branch, which had been expressly created, the public believed, to administer not the Mackenzie River basin alone, but the Eskimo regions of arctic Canada, was in fact not the latter's real administrator at all, but merely an investigating and clerical agency that could study conditions there, register mining claims, licence trading posts, recommend such regulations as, in its judgment, would advance the interests of the territory, and act in general as a public front for the real rulers, the Northwest Territories Council and its on-the-spot administrators, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The latter's patrols in the Arctic were not responsible to the Council, but reported to, and depended for promotion on, their Assistant Commissioner, who was only one of the Council's six members; and their duties, as viewed by Inspector (later Superintendent) Larsen, the indomitable skipper from 1928 to 1946 of the police patrol-ship *St. Roch* which conquered the Northwest Passage twice, were:

> "Firstly, to uphold and enforce Canada's Sovereignty of her Arctic Islands; to act as administrators for the North-West Territories Council; maintaining game laws; making general check-ups of Eskimos living conditions; compiling vital Statistics; authorizing the issuing of rations for the destitute, aged and infirm Eskimos; taking of census; settling of any disputes which might arise; conveying children to and from the residential schools at Aklavik; and transferring sick Eskimos for treatment and hospitalization at Aklavik. Sometimes we assist in securing suitable Eskimos, with their families, whom we transport from the Coronation Gulf area to the Mackenzie River Delta to learn to herd and look after the Reindeer Herd provided by the Canadian Government for the Eskimos in that area." (Larsen, 1944, p. 2; cf. Kitto, 1930, p. 31).

Thus the Arctic remained exactly as it had been since Low sailed north in the *Neptune* in 1903, under the control of the police: but now a civilian official headed its governing Council, a Deputy Minister who possessed at his command a civilian investigating or research agency, the Northwest Territories Branch, to help him frame its policies.

Providentially for Finnie, the Director of this branch, there remained one field, over and above research, in which he could actively deploy his administrative talents without impinging in any way on the work of the police, and without any curb from the Northwest Territories Council. He could put into effect the recommendations of the Royal Commission on reindeer and muskoxen that had just issued its report. He could provide sanctuaries for the muskoxen, which were thought to number only about 50 on the mainland of Canada, and perhaps 3,000 in its arctic archipelago—sanctuaries where they would be protected from human hunters and probably saved from extinction. He could investigate the numbers and distribution of the caribou and perhaps

check their wanton destruction. And he could introduce domesticated reindeer into the Canadian Arctic, if botanical researches there indicated that the project was feasible. All these measures would be genuinely constructive. They would benefit the entire territory, the Eskimos as much, or even more, perhaps, than the white men.

Finnie initiated this conservative program even before he had assembled an adequate staff. Within a year of the publication of the Reindeer Commission's report he had persuaded the Northwest Territories Council to set aside as native game-preserves two immense areas, one comprising parts of the Back and Thelon river basins where most of the surviving muskoxen on the mainland had taken refuge, the other comprising the two western islands of the arctic archipelago, Victoria and Banks, which had become a mecca for Eskimo, half-breed, and even white trappers from the Mackenzie delta region and were fast losing their few caribou. Three years later, in 1926, he prevailed on the Council to extend this second reserve to cover all Canada's arctic islands, so that not their caribou alone, but their herds of muskoxen would enjoy government protection. Within these reserves only Indians, Eskimos, and half-breeds might hunt and trap; but, of course, most of the arctic islands were uninhabited, and remained so. One other measure the Council enacted to protect that vital Eskimo resource, the caribou; it prohibited the export of their hides and placed a bounty on their principal non-human enemy, the wolf.

Fur-trading likewise underwent closer regulation to prevent undue competition that might deplete the supply of the fur-bearing animals. No trading post might be set up without a licence; and the government prohibited transient trading posts and controlled both the number and the locations of permanent ones. Moreover, no white man who had not been granted a special permit might either hunt or trap unless he was a British subject and had lived for at least four years in the Northwest Territories.

While the Northwest Territories Branch thus attempted to conserve the game and fur-bearing animals in the Arctic, its field men—L. T. Burwash on the east coast of Hudson Bay, G. H. Blanchet on its west coast, W. H. B. Hoare on the Barren Lands, and J. D. Soper in the south of Baffin Island—scoured the coastlines and hinterlands of the north, studying and reporting on its food and mineral resources; and Richard Finnie, the son of the Director, roved both the Eastern and the Western Arctic as the Branch's photographer and historian. These men travelled by power-boat and by dog-train, by canoe and on foot; for this was the decade when airmen were only just beginning to develop new navigation techniques and test out the feasibility of commercial air services in high latitudes. O. S. Finnie himself (Can. Dept. Int. 1929–30, p. 141), helped to make flying history by chartering an aircraft in 1929 to carry him from Aklavik to Dawson, a flight that preluded a regular air service between the Mackenzie River basin and the Yukon; and in 1930 he authorized two members of his staff, Burwash and Richard Finnie, to make with the bush-pilot, W. E. Gilbert, the first flight along the arctic coast from Coppermine to King William Island (Finnie, 1940, chap. 6; Gilbert and Shackleton, 1940, chap. 7).

The north is vast, however, and Finnie's staff was extremely small. He therefore encouraged other government departments to send scientists north each summer on the patrol vessel *Arctic* (and later on the *Beothuk*), when it carried supplies and relief personnel to the various police posts in the Eastern

Arctic. On two or three occasions, also, he raided other departments for special investigations. Thus the biologist C. H. D. Clarke was commissioned to study the muskoxen in the Thelon Game Sanctuary; the geologist L. J. Weeks was sent to Pond Inlet to appraise its coal beds, and to Cumberland Gulf to evaluate the mineral possibilities of south Baffin Island; and the experienced arctic botanist A. E. Porsild was assigned the task of assessing the reindeer-grazing resources of the area from the Mackenzie River delta eastward toward Coronation Gulf, to ensure that the government would not repeat in the west the ill-fated reindeer experiment on south Baffin Island.

Porsild studied the terrain east of the Mackenzie delta for two years, and reported in 1927 that it carried an abundance of reindeer moss. In 1928 he was sent to Alaska to examine the reindeer in that territory, and to investigate the possibility of driving a herd from its more northern districts to the Mackenzie delta. Again he submitted a favourable report: and on 1 May 1929 an Order-in-Council authorized the Minister of the Interior to purchase from the Lomen Brothers of Nome, Alaska, up to 3,000 reindeer, to be delivered to the Canadian government on the east side of the Mackenzie delta. The Lomen Brothers duly carried out their contract, and in March 1935, delivered 2,370 animals at the Reindeer Station which Porsild and his Lapp herders had constructed near Kittigazuit, on the easternmost arm of the Mackenzie delta. Within three months this herd bore 815 fawns, and the success of the experiment seemed assured. Jubilantly the Department of the Interior announced in its 1934–35 annual report:

> "The establishment of this herd is the first step in the Dominion Government's plan of providing a supplementary source of supply of food and clothing for the native residents of Canada's Arctic domain" (pp. 8–9).

Finnie himself, alas, never saw his reindeer project realized, for he and his entire branch were swept away in 1931 during the government's house-cleaning frenzy at the beginning of the Great Depression.

Police, traders, and missionaries percolated through the Arctic during the 1920's, dropping their posts wherever there were small Eskimo agglomerations. Between 1921 and 1931 the Hudson's Bay Company alone established at least fifteen new trading stations to gather in the furs of the natives; the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches doubled the number of their missions, and the police force that maintained the King's Peace[1] in the scattered communities grew to 45 men patrolling out of 13 widely separated posts.[2] Fur prices,

[1]The King's Peace, unhappily, did not coincide in every instance with the King's Justice. In 1922 the police arrested and carried to Herschel Island two Coronation Gulf Eskimos, one on a charge of murdering a white trader and an R.C.M.Police corporal and, jointly, of murdering an Eskimo interpreter. The following year (no swift airplanes criss-crossed the Arctic at that period) Ottawa sent to Herschel a stipendiary magistrate, who tried them, found them guilty, and sentenced them to be hanged, a sentence that was duly carried out seven months later. One wonders whether the Governor-in-Council in Ottawa, which must have confirmed the capital sentence, was informed that until ten years previously these Eskimos and their people had never seen a white man, but were living in the stone age without any knowledge of law or government, still using primitive bows and arrows and settling some of their quarrels through the blood-feud: also that one of the executed men was a boy of only 16 or 17 years, and the other little older. (See Roy. Can. Mounted Police Repts. for 1922, pp. 22, 23, and 1923, p. 32; also Rasmussen, 1927, pp. 279–80).

[2]These figures include the roving patrol vessel *St. Roch* with its crew of ten policemen.

mounting much more quickly than the costs of staple goods, reached their maximum level about 1929, when a white fox-skin worth only $15 in 1914 brought from $50 to $60: at no time during this decade did it rate lower than $30. Several Eskimos and half-breeds in the Mackenzie delta, shrewdly investing their fur-money and their wages from the Stefansson expedition in motor-driven schooners, sailed northward each summer to exploit the virgin territory of Banks Island, where one family had been known to trap as many as one thousand foxes in a single winter; then, when the trapping season ended and the sea ice broke up and moved away, they returned triumphantly to the delta, to dissipate their hard-earned wealth on civilization's luxuries. The region oozed prosperity:

> ". . . The igloos have given place to comfortable winter dwellings of logs or rough lumber, in many cases finished with wall-board and dressed lumber.
>
> "White flour, sugar, butter, jam, canned fruit and other luxuries are included now in their diet. Long winter evenings are passed pleasantly listening to good music provided by expensive gramaphones and radio sets. Brass and iron spring beds take the place of the old family couch of skins. Up-to-date sewing machines make the lot of the women easier.
>
> "Highly powered motor schooners, costing from $3,000 to $7,000 each, provide floating summer homes as the people move about the delta or along the sea coast in search of sea animals or to visit the trading posts. Cameras, watches, thermos bottles, safety razors, high-powered rifles, and many other products of modern civilization are in general use. Practically all these Eskimos can read and write in their own tongue and most of them have a fair grasp of English."[1]

When the bush-pilot W. E. Gilbert flew into Aklavik in the summer of 1930 some of these Eskimos cheerfully paid him $10 apiece for a five-minute ride in his novel sky-bird.

Totally absent from the scene, happily, were the alcoholic excesses that had torn this region asunder in the days of the whalers. Not because the government had prohibited the consumption and sale of alcohol in the Northwest Territories: such a measure might have been questioned in the law-courts,[2] and would have raised difficult problems regarding the legal status of the Eskimos. Instead, under the authority of the Customs acts, it had prohibited the importation of liquor into the Territories except for "medicinal" purposes,[3] and then only by holders of government permits:[4] and it had restricted the quantity

[1]Kitto, 1930, p. 68; cf. Rasmussen, 1927, pp. 293–4. Mr. K. L. Lang, a long-time resident of Aklavik, writes: "In 1930, which was the year in which the white fox market collapsed in New York, some of the Banks Island families brought in 700-800 fox each. Also their boats were higher-priced than stated. I believe the boat *North Star*, which the *S.S. Patterson* brought in that year as a deckload, was priced at over $25,000; and several other boats ran from $10,000 to $15,000." Similar conditions, from the same cause, prevailed at this period on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea (see Hughes, 1960 pp. 190–1).

[2]As it was later in 1958.

[3]The government never demanded a doctor's certificate, as far as I know, nor refused an application from any white resident of the Northwest Territories. Its policy therefore differed from that of the Greenland administration, which did not discriminate between Danish and Eskimo residents but denied the right of importing liquor to both alike.

[4]Mr. K. L. Lang comments: "The permit allowed a person to buy two gallons of liquor for medical use, usually twelve 26 oz. bottles or eight 40 oz. Some hard drinkers ordered 32 O.P. Rum or straight 90% alcohol to make it go a little further. . . Many a permit was finished in 24 or 48 hours after the boat pulled out, for the steamboat captain, due to past experience, never let the liquor off the boat until just before departure. After that it was a happy, mixed-up town, and the man was a hero who managed to save a bottle or two for Christmas."

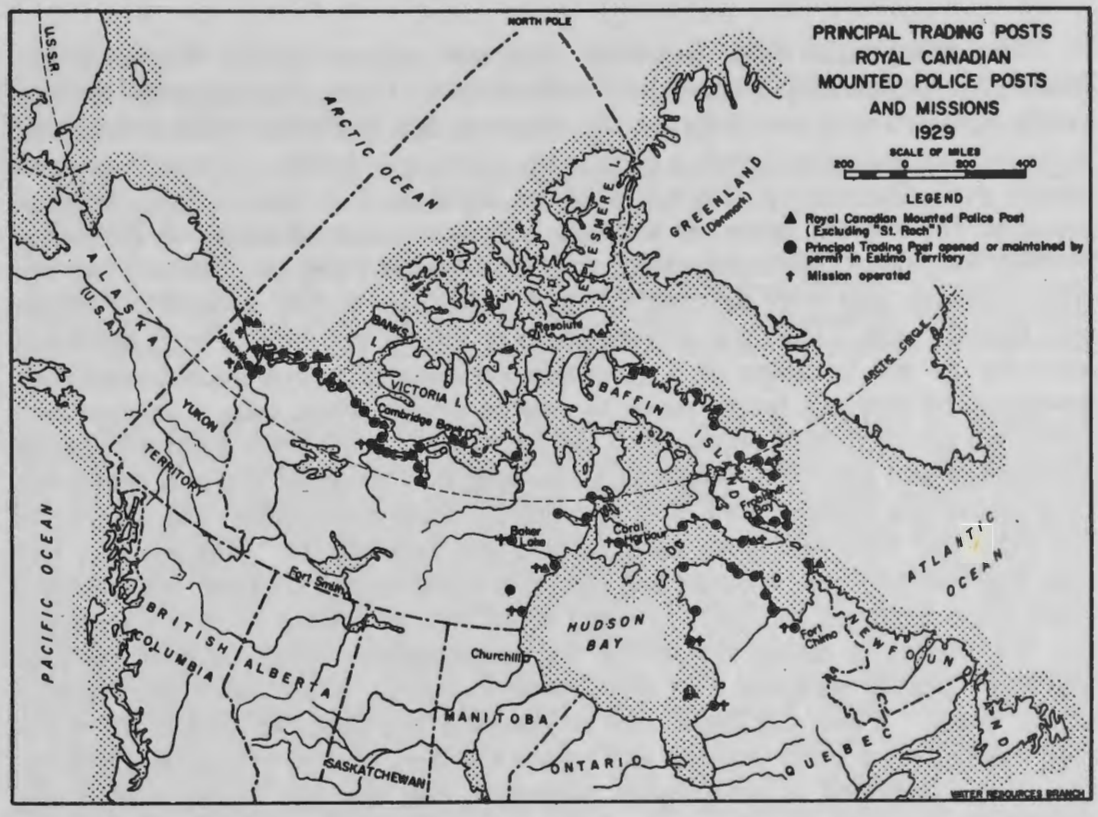


Fig. 4.

a permit-holder might import each year to what it considered a reasonable ration for himself alone—two gallons. In any case, it was so small that it left no surplus to throw on the fur-market; and there could be no under-the-counter stock, for the local police knew the names of all permit-holders, and the manufacture of moonshine, as in the roaring 1890's, was a federal offence difficult to conceal and easily kept within bounds. So the government wisely enforced temperance by placing liquor beyond the reach of the Eskimos, as the Danes had done in Greenland;[1] and if the "Banks Islanders" and other *nouveau-riche* natives squandered most of their wealth on useless luxuries and playthings, they at least derived a childish pleasure from the squandering and harmed neither themselves nor their families.

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[1]Finnie wrote to Dr. Urquhart, his medical officer at Aklavik, on 21 February 1930: "The question of the status of the Eskimo with respect to the issue of liquor permits was brought before the N.W.T. Council in session of the 11th Dec. 1929. As no doubt you are aware, Parliament has declared that the Eskimo is neither an Indian nor is he a ward of the nation. It has always been felt that he should enjoy the full status of a white man in the Territories. However, for the present it is not considered to be in the best interests of the Eskimo to issue liquor permits for medicinal purposes, but any Eskimo who has established a permanent place of residence in the Territories may apply to the Commissioner for a liquor permit and each case will be considered on its individual merit. Please communicate this information to Louis Cogolick and his companions (Eskimo and half-breed) who formed the delegation at Aklavik last summer".

Two weeks later he wrote to the Anglican missionary, Rev. Whittaker, as follows: "We have made it a practice not to issue permits to Eskimos, and since their status is precisely the same as white people it is rather difficult to refuse a permit if they insist upon it".

The Mackenzie delta, however, was not typical of the whole Arctic. Nature had endowed it with richer food resources than other regions. Innumerable muskrats swarmed in its muddy channels, fish and white whales abounded in its inshore waters and seals a little farther out; multitudes of ducks and geese nested each summer on the edges of its lagoons; and the caribou that had vanished for a time from its western hills now showed signs of returning. Farther east, from Coronation Gulf to the Magnetic Pole, the Eskimos had lost their bearings, and were drifting through unfamiliar waters without a compass or a friendly star. Fate was driving them to leap at one bound from stone-age autarchy to the bondage of a fur-trade economy; from a world seemingly governed by nature's forces alone to one in which white men, a strange race unknown to them until about 1910, dominated the stage with their mysterious knowledge and powerful weapons, preaching new ideas of life and death that they could not comprehend, and compelling them to abandon the manner of life they had inherited from their fathers and forefathers. The caribou that they had hunted every summer for food and clothing had become much scarcer since these strangers suddenly invaded their land; and they were too ignorant, too bewildered, to realize that it was the indiscriminate slaughter with the new and more deadly weapons that was destroying many of the herds and driving others away. They did know that neither the fox-skins for which the white man clamoured, nor the woollen and cotton clothing that he offered in exchange for them, provided a satisfactory substitute for the old warm caribou-fur garments; also that the flour, the bacon, and the tea he sold to the Eskimo trappers provided less nourishment than fresh caribou haunches and caribou broth. So the proud and self-reliant hunters were caught in a vicious circle. If they scorned to trap foxes and trade their furs for ammunition, steel traps, and foreign foods they would almost certainly die of starvation or freeze to death; for the old bow-and-arrow existence was no longer possible. They could, of course, humble themselves and seek charity from the white man in times of stress; and some of them did (Finnie, 1940, chap. 17). But the sturdier among them struggled bravely to maintain their dignity and keep up their morale, in spite of the baffling universe that now encircled them, the irksomeness of their bondage to the fur traders, and the insidious new diseases, influenza and tuberculosis, that swept away about one-third of their number.

Still farther east, on the west coast of Hudson Bay, the Eskimos were treading water, buoyed up by the high prices they were receiving for their furs. Rasmussen's expedition (1921–3) had found them physically inferior to the arctic coast Eskimos, and attributed the inferiority to deficiencies in their diet, which substituted bannock and tea during the winter trapping season for fresh meat and broth: in more than one instance, it reported, a lonely Eskimo trapper had died of starvation while his tent overflowed with furs. Their clothing, too, was nondescript, an inept combination of caribou fur and cotton or woollen garments bought at the trading store, the latter never washed or changed until they fell to pieces from long usage. Momentarily, however, they were self-supporting, able to find sufficient caribou within reach, char and trout in the lakes, and fair numbers of seals, walrus, and white whales off the coast, while the prices of imported necessities (such as guns, cloth, and flour) had not yet soared to heights beyond all reasonable relation to the value of their furs.

Worst off were the great majority of the natives on the east coast of Hudson Bay and in Ungava. Only on the Cape Hope Islands near the Eastmain River were they flourishing and content:

> "To-day [1927] they [the Cape Hope Islanders] appear to be the most progressive Eskimos in Hudson and James bays. In their present home they have increased in numbers. They are sturdy in appearance and well content with their lot in life. They have built themselves comfortable log cabins and are the only Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic who live in fixed abodes. The men have proved themselves capable boat-builders, carpenters and blacksmiths. Without assistance in so far as the woodwork is concerned, they have built small schooners from locally grown woods and have installed, maintained and operated gasolene engines in them." (Kitto, 1930, p. 104).

The Cape Hope Islands, however, supported only a handful of Eskimos who had drifted south to the vicinity of some small white-Indian settlements, and were slowly melting into the life of this frontier. Farther north, around Great Whale and Little Whale rivers, Port Harrison, and beyond, the condition of their kinsmen was more precarious, because virtually all the caribou in the Labrador Peninsula had disappeared, and neither seals nor foxes were as plentiful along its western and northern coasts as in other parts of the Arctic. After his journey from the Eastmain River to Richmond Gulf in 1927 Burwash reported that the health of the Eskimos along that coast compared favourably with that of the Indian population with which they were more or less associated, but still left plenty of room for improvement; that the death-rate among the younger children, for example, was abnormally high. On the other hand, he remarked concerning the hundred or so natives on the Belcher Islands that

> "These people live under what would appear to be the most trying conditions. . . . in spite of the fact that they live on what is little more than barren, storm-swept rocks, they show no signs of degeneration either physically or mentally. While they are in times of stress dependent upon the trade store, they appear to have lost none of their native arts and under normal conditions are capable of living without more outside assistance than their fur catch will buy. The diet of this group of natives conforms more closely to that of the primitive Eskimo than does that of any other group in the Hudson Bay district." (Kitto, 1930, p. 104).

CHAPTER 4

A shackled administration (continued)

The Belcher Islands, not being a part of the mainland, came under the jurisdiction of the federal government; but the western and northern coasts of the Labrador Peninsula lay within the province of Quebec, and the Dominion government, or at least its Department of the Interior, disclaimed any federal responsibility for Quebec's inhabitants unless they were Indians, adding that by parliament's ruling the Eskimos did not come under the Indian Act. For several years before 1928, however, the federal Department of Indian Affairs had quietly ignored this purely semantic distinction, and had been distributing food, clothing, and medicines, through the police, the Hudson's Bay Company and Revillon Frères, to destitute Eskimos in nearly every trading post between Fort George and Port Burwell—a relief measure for some 2,000 Eskimos that was costing from $10,000 to $12,000 yearly. From 1929 onward the Department of the Interior assumed this burden, but when its weight grew heavier year by year it asked the Quebec government to refund the costs, which amounted to $16,708.81 in 1929–30, $15,735.91 in 1930–31, and $22,215.44 in 1931–32, or the exorbitant sum each year of nearly $9 per head. The Quebec government refunded the dreadful amount, but served notice that it would make no further contribution, since it considered that the Eskimos, whatever region they lived in, fell into the same category as the Indians, and consequently were the direct responsibility of the federal government. Faced with this impasse Ottawa in 1935 referred the matter to the Supreme Court of Canada, and asked that august body to decide, once and for all, whether the framers of the British North America Act had or had not grouped the Eskimos with the Indians. In the fullness of time the Supreme Court examined many witnesses, whose evidence it studied long and patiently.

Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus.[1]

At last, in 1939, its labour ended—*Eskimos are Indians.*

Finnie would probably have rejoiced, but he had long since left the scene of inertia; and the Northwest Territories Council mistook the puny mouse for a raging lion. Panic-stricken at the consequences, its Minister of the Interior wrote to the Minister of Justice, and the Department of Justice wrote to Dr. O. D. Skelton, then Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, asking him to lodge an appeal with the Privy Council in London to have the verdict reversed. But Skelton gently pointed out that a world war was raging too, and suggested that it might be advisable to leave the 'lion' undisturbed until the other conflict

[1]"The mountains are in labour. From their womb will issue—an absurd little mouse" (Horace).

ended. The conflict did at last end, but by that time a new Minister of the Interior and a new Northwest Territories Council had discounted the fears of their predecessors and quietly accepted the verdict.[1]

Thus from the late 1920's right through to the mid 'forties the Northwest Territories Council and its allies unweariedly fought the dragon of Eskimo status. From the earliest years of the struggle, however, Finnie and the Hudson's Bay Company both sought practical ways of helping the distressed Eskimos in the Eastern Arctic. Finnie promoted a white-whale fishery in Cumberland Sound, although attempts by the Hudson's Bay Company to develop a similar industry in Labrador thirty years before had lapsed after a very few years.[2] The Hudson's Bay Company, for its part, tried to revive in Ungava Bay the Atlantic salmon industry, which had brought it more profit than the fur trade during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but had declined and almost disappeared at the beginning of the twentieth. Locating a market in England for the pickled salmon, it began to ship to that country from 150 to 200 tierces annually,[3] taken by the Eskimos from the Koksoak, Whale, and George rivers. About 1930 the market turned sour on the pickled fish, and the company then sent up from St. John's, Newfoundland, a steam trawler which refrigerated the salmon. But this experiment too failed, presumably through over-fishing, and the industry had to be abandoned (Bethune, 1935, p. 131).[4]

The larger trading companies did what they could to protect the Eskimos from unnecessary hardships. Revillon Frères consistently grub-staked the trappers who were threatened with famine:

> "The coming of the agents of Revillon Frères into the Far North has had this beneficent effect upon native life. It has banished the famines which used often to occur during exceptionally severe winters or through migrations of game or the loss of boats or dogs. When such misfortunes now happen there is enough bacon, flour and beans at the post to enable the natives to tide over the evil days." (Sexé, 1923, p. 98).

Everywhere, too, the post-managers of the Hudson's Bay Company gave the Eskimos credit to the limit that sound business warranted, and often beyond that limit. Some natives in consequence became the company's bond-slaves, indebted for more furs—but not actual money, which was still almost unknown except in the Mackenzie delta—than they could pay in several years. The Eskimos could not check the prices that the trader charged them for his goods except by comparing them with a rival's prices; and almost no district in the Eastern Arctic yielded enough furs to support two rival traders in close proximity. On the reverse side of the coin, however, was the trader's dependence on

[1] In files of Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

[2] "The Hudson's Bay Company has for several years past made successful fisheries in the mouth of the Koksoak river and in Leaf bay . . . Similar fisheries were formerly conducted in the mouths of the Great and Little Whale rivers on the east side of Hudson bay, but after some success the whales would not enter these rivers over the nets, and the fisheries were abandoned. The writer has seen great numbers of White whales in the mouths of the rivers to the northward of Little Whale river, notably so in that of the Nastapoka." (Low, 1906, pp. 274–5).

[3] According to the Oxford Dictionary, a tierce was a cask holding about 42 gallons. Dunbar says that in the present context it probably weighed about 300 lb. (Dunbar and Hildebrand, 1952, p. 94).

[4] See also p. 108 and the authorities there quoted.

the trapper; for if his post showed too small a turnover, or ceased to pay expenses, his company might close it and move him elsewhere, or leave him adrift and jobless. The writer has stayed for short periods at two Hudson's Bay Company posts in northern Canada, and has visited several others; and his limited experience inclines him to agree with the conclusion of Low at the beginning of this century, namely, that after weighing the risks and the high costs of transport, very few traders charged exorbitant prices.[1] Self-interest, if no other motive, demanded that they keep their trappers healthy, contented, and industrious. In the case of the Hudson's Bay Company, indeed, the senior officials never failed to impress on their arctic post-managers that the welfare of the Eskimos was inseparable from the welfare of the company, and also of themselves.[2]

The 'third force' in the Arctic, the missions, could not contribute to the Eskimos' economic struggle, but they gladly accepted the task of educating them, and of supplying medical care, provided the government supported their efforts with subsidies, in the same manner as the Department of Indian Affairs supported mission schools and hospitals among the Indians farther south. This arrangement suited the government well, because it hardly dinted the federal treasury. Accordingly, for the year 1922–3 the Department of the Interior contributed the sum of $3,000 to education in the Northwest Territories, of which

> "One thousand dollars was devoted to general purposes and the remainder applied toward the support of boarding and day schools, conducted by the Church of England and Roman Catholic missions.
>
> "Day schools, maintained by the Church of England missions at Aklavik, McPherson, and Simpson, received $200 each, and the boarding school at Hay River, $400. The day school maintained by the Roman Catholic mission at Fort Smith received $200, and boarding schools at Providence and Resolution $400 each." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1922–23, p. 154).

The amount of the subsidy varied, since it was estimated on a per capita basis. From 1924–7 it was $3,200 annually, in 1927 only $1,800, and in 1928 $1,975. Then on 8 January 1929, Finnie wrote to the Northwest Territories Commissioner (his Deputy Minister):

> "The Eskimos in all areas are urgently pressing for educational facilities, and a sum of $14,500 is provided in the estimates this year for assistance to Eskimo schools in the N.W.T. It is felt that similar facilities should be provided for the Eskimos in Quebec, but here again it was not thought desirable to take any steps in this direction until the question of jurisdiction was disposed of."

His letter must have been unusually effective, for the subsidy during his last year of office, 1930–1 was $12,787.50, almost the same as he had asked for, and received, in the preceding year.

Now a grant of $12,787 divided among eight mission schools could hardly be termed munificent, especially when the churches were operating their arctic missions on shoestrings and possessed no funds of their own for educational purposes. Their first task, indeed, was to teach the Eskimos Christianity, not

[1] See passage from Low quoted on p. 12.

[2] In the judgment of the Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen "The Hudson's Bay Company stands for civilization, and its outposts in these desolate lands represent the life and work of men who bear the white man's burden, the white man's great responsibility." (1927, p. 299). Cf. this volume, p. 81, footnote 1.

to instruct them in regular school subjects. Hence their

> "schools were situated where they best served Church interests, teaching personnel were selected primarily for religious rather than pedagogical attainments, and sometimes instruction tended to be shaped to religious goals to the neglect of practical ends." (Zaslow, 1959, pp. 95–6. Cf. Finnie, 1942, pp. 81–2).

Inevitably, then, the secular education that the missions imparted to Eskimo children was commensurate with the funds that the government expended on it. In other words, it was negligible.

Cabinet ministers and their advisers who control the political destinies of nations, and are expected to scan the skies of the future, often see less far, unhappily, than ordinary citizens; and the Council that administered the Northwest Territories was no exception. Had its members raised their eyes from their long mahogany table, they would have seen Canadian Eskimos already piloting vessels of the Hudson's Bay Company in arctic waters, their cousins in Greenland, just across Davis Strait, printing books and a newspaper in their own tongue, other cousins in Alaska contracting to carry the United States mail in their own diesel-powered schooners, and Siberian Eskimos helping Soviet Russia to set up a radio station and build an airfield on Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean. Naturally they could not have foreseen that within a quarter of a century some of these Siberian Eskimos would be piloting Soviet aircraft,[1] or that the inhabitants of Greenland would be governing their own country through their own elected parliament. Yet they would have observed that the Arctic was changing very rapidly; and they might have heard the distant hum of trans-polar flights. But their ears, alas, were stopped to the murmurs of the outside world, and they believed that only in some far-distant and indeterminate future would the Canadian Eskimos cease to depend on the natural resources of their homeland and abandon their traditional life of hunting and fishing. So they reasoned: why should the government squander public money on dotting the Arctic with well-equipped primary schools that will give the children of Eskimo fur-trappers the same education as white children receive, when these Eskimo children will themselves become mere fur-trappers as they grow up?

A report issued by the Department of the Interior in 1923 illuminates the government's attitude toward Eskimo education, and illuminates also the mission schools themselves:

> "There are no Government schools at present in the North West Territories but so far as the native and halfbreed population is concerned this has been overcome by the establishment of schools under the direction of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches.
>
> "The Roman Catholic Church conducts boarding schools for both boys and girls at Resolution and Providence, and day schools at Fort Smith and Simpson. The Anglican Church conducts a boarding school at Hay River and day schools at Simpson and McPherson. At other points instruction is given by the representatives of both churches whenever it is found possible to get together the necessary number of pupils. Owing to the nomadic life of the natives, it is seldom possible to give the children any continuous and systematic education other than in a boarding school.
>
> "As a result, at the schools already established children from all parts of the district [of Mackenzie River] are to be found. The general practice is, that when children enter any of these boarding schools they remain for a period of from two to five years, without

[1] "In Siberia, just before the outbreak of World War II, eight Eskimos were studying to become pilots or mechanics, and three had already qualified for their pilots' certificates with one hundred solo hours apiece." (Finnie, 1942, p. 96, footnote). The Eskimo population of eastern Siberia at that time numbered only about 1,200.

either holidays or a visit to their home settlement.[1] Grants, based on the number of pupils in attendance, are made to these schools by the Department of Indian Affairs as well as by the Department of the Interior. *This system appears to fill the present needs of the native population.*[2] It is found that a fair proportion of the younger generation have not only taken advantage of the opportunity given by these schools, but they also appear to have retained and put to good use the knowledge so acquired."[3]

Closer liaison with the missions, to whom the government had entrusted in large measure the health and welfare of the Eskimos, permitted the development of a medical service slightly less inefficient than the educational one. From 1922 onward the *Arctic*—and after that vessel was pensioned off the *Beothuk*—which replenished each summer the outposts in the Eastern Arctic, invariably carried a medical officer who

"consulted with the officers in charge of the different police detachments respecting the health of the natives . . . and gave to all natives requiring it, medical attention". (Kitto, 1930, p. 122).

In 1924 this patrol doctor reported that tuberculosis was very rare on Baffin Island, but that there were many cases of severe corneal ulcerations of the eyes due to malnutrition. The Department of Indian Affairs thereupon established at Pangnirtung a permanent medical post whose first incumbent, the patrol doctor, Dr. L. D. Livingstone, examined over 500 Eskimos in the course of two long winter journeys, one to Pond and Navy Board inlets at the north end of the island, the other to Lake Harbour on the south coast. Then in 1928 the Anglican church erected in Pangnirtung a small hospital, for which the Department of the Interior provided a medical officer, the salary of a qualified nurse, a small grant for every patient admitted, and an extra allowance for destitute cases.[4] One year later it made exactly the same arrangements with the Roman Catholic church, which was building a three-storey, 24-bed hospital at Chesterfield, to be staffed with Grey Nuns.

During the early years of the twentieth century the government had supplied all northern missions with medicines, and in the Western Arctic the

[1]Many were orphan children picked up by the missionaries on their circuits. The Department of the Interior made special grants for the maintenance of destitute children in the Anglican and Roman Catholic boarding schools. In 1924–5 the Anglican church received $370 for its boarding school at Hay River and the Roman Catholic Church $1,028 for its boarding school at Resolution. By 1928–9 the amounts had risen to $1,206.25 for the Anglican Church and $1,242.50 for the Roman Catholic.

[2]Italics are author's.

[3]Moran, 1923, pp. 16–17. Cf. "The educational requirements of the Eskimos in this region are very simple, and their mental capacity to assimilate academic teaching is limited." (Bethune, 1935, p. 55). Yet in 1927 Knud Rasmussen, the Danish explorer who was born in Greenland of part-Eskimo descent, and who journeyed by sled from Hudson Bay to northern Alaska, had sharply criticized Canada's administration of her Arctic: "With all the admiration I hold for the Mounted, for the way they carry out all usual police duties, and many others, I do not feel that they can justly be expected to substitute for all of the agencies of civilization. Some educational department must be established to deal with the Eskimo on the gentler side. There can be no step back to the Stone Age for any people that has once had contact with the white man. Canada cannot afford to be behindhand in attempting the educational paternalism that has done so much in Greenland and in Alaska to fit the Eskimo to meet the cruder contacts with the white man, in the person of the trader, the competing trapper, and the policeman." (Rasmussen, 1927, p. 303).

[4]The grants were "50 cents per diem for all patients treated and $1.50 per diem additional for indigent whites and half-breeds." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1927–28, p. 121). These at least were the rates in the Mackenzie River basin, and presumably also in the Eastern Arctic.

Department of Indian Affairs' doctor who descended the Mackenzie River each summer had given whatever medical attention he could to such Eskimos as he met in the delta. In 1922 the same department stationed a doctor at Herschel Island for a period, and about 1926, when the Anglican church opened a small hospital at Aklavik, it transferred him to that navigation terminus. In the following year the Roman Catholic church also opened a hospital at Aklavik, giving that district surplus capacity. The Department of the Interior then took over the administration of the Eskimos, and in 1930 provided its Aklavik doctor with a small motor-vessel in which he could cruise as far east as Coronation Gulf. Meanwhile, in 1928, influenza struck the Western Arctic, carrying off a considerable number of natives, especially the older ones and the very young. Finnie used this opportunity to persuade the Northwest Territories Council to engage a young Scotch doctor, R. D. Martin, for service in the Coronation Gulf area, where both influenza and tuberculosis were reported to be widespread; and he sent him to Coppermine to erect a six-bed hospital. Martin opened this hospital in 1929,[1] but closed it less than two years later on the ground that Ottawa was not supporting him, and returned to his native Scotland. So the first and for many years the only attempt of the government to operate a hospital of its own in the Northwest Territories collapsed. There still remained, however, the two subsidized mission hospitals at Aklavik, each supervised by a fully qualified, government paid nurse and serviced by the government's local doctor. They accepted not only local patients, but patients from Coronation Gulf brought to them from time to time by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police patrol vessel *St. Roch*.

Government subsidies for schools and hospitals intensified the unconcealed rivalry between the two church organizations, and sincere, self-sacrificing missionaries often became silent pawns trapped by the strategic manoeuvres of distant superiors. Whenever one denomination planted a mission in an Eskimo outpost the other sought means to plant a rival mission beside it, or in another Eskimo community in the same general region; and when one erected a hospital in the Arctic, the other matched it with a competing hospital. By 1930 their missions were wrestling with one another for control of six widely separated settlements or districts, of which only one could count more than 200 inhabitants.

Eskimo settlements containing two missions (1930)[2]

Place	*Population (approx.)*
Aklavik	411 (1931 census)
Coppermine	100
Pond Inlet	170 (including Milne and Admiralty inlets)
Baker Lake district	200
Eskimo Point	125
Southampton Island	80[3]

When the *Beothuk* arrived at Pond Inlet on 21 August 1931, most of its passengers viewed that "metropolis" with amazement. It comprised only a

[1]Cf. Finnie, 1940, p. 95 *et passim*.

[2]By 1958 five other places had been added: Cape Dorset, Fort Chimo, Fort George, Inuvik, and Tuktoyaktuk; and the following year saw the addition of three more, Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove, and Great Whale River.

[3]Sutton gave a population of 138, on the authority of a census taken in the same year, 1930, by the post-manager of the Hudson's Bay Company (1932–6, p. 42).

police post (corporal and two constables), a Hudson's Bay Company station (one post-manager and his assistant), a dozen tents sheltering perhaps fifty Eskimos, and—two missions.

Equally singular was Aklavik, at that period the largest settlement in the Arctic. To serve its floating population of 91 whites, 180 Indians, and 140 Eskimos each of the two church organizations had set up a mission, a mission school, and a hospital. Each school claimed an enrolment of 100 children, and drew a subsidy from the government for that number. Of the two hospitals the Anglican was the senior. It was the first real hospital to be erected in the Arctic—a 6-bed (later 12-bed) institution built with funds provided by an Ontario philanthropist and opened on 1 June 1926. Near it about a year later rose the Roman Catholic hospital, built with the aid of a subsidy from the federal government (Finnie, 1942, p. 76).

In the eyes of Eskimos and whites alike such unworthy rivalry between the churches tarnished the gold of their teaching; and if gold rusts, remarked Chaucer's parson, what will iron do? But even more tarnished was the good name of the Canadian government, which had abdicated most of its duties as the moral (if not the legal) guardian of the Eskimos, and was concealing its neglect beneath a cloak of deceptive or pious phrases. Year after year, from 1922 to 1932, the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, who was also Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, informed parliament and the public that all was well in the Arctic; that in 1923

> "An examination by the medical officer of the expedition showed the health of the natives in this district [Eastern Arctic] to be generally satisfactory." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1923–24, p. 13);

in 1926

> "Every assistance has been given by the branch in the effort to advance the well being of the native population." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1926–27, p. 117);

in 1927

> "There is a sincere realization that in the development of the possibilities of the hinterland, particularly the Arctic regions, the native population is destined to play a very important part. Serious study is being given the problem of providing convenient opportunities for the natives to develop themselves by practising the handicrafts for which nature has fitted them and implanting firmly in their minds the necessity for conservation in its broadest terms as affecting not only forests and wild life, but human health, energy, and economic well being. . . . The staple industry, the fur trade, has been generally good. . . . There are many indications of marked improvement in native conditions"; (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1927–28, pp. 10, 119);

in 1931

> "On the whole the natives [Eastern Arctic] were healthy, prosperous, and contented. . . Dr. R. D. Martin and Dr. D. S. Bruce, who had been engaged at Coppermine and Chesterfield, respectively, returned to Ottawa. The general health of the resident population continued good, there being very few reports of contagious diseases or other cases of a serious nature." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1931–32, p. 41);[1]

and in 1932

> "The condition of the natives [in the Eastern Arctic] who are all Eskimos, and who number about 2,400 persons was satisfactory both as regards health and the abundance of wild life necessary to sustain them." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1932–33, p. 6).

[1]Yet Dr. Martin informed the writer before he left Ottawa for Scotland that there were 19 cases of tuberculosis in Coppermine's population of about 100.

These official statements lull the enquirer into a sense of security: but the real facts were quite otherwise. Throughout these ten years the infant mortality in every district of the Arctic seems to have been abnormally high, and the population, if not stationary, decreasing rather than increasing.[1] Caribou were becoming scarcer in the Central Arctic; and all round the Labrador coast, where they had disappeared completely (or almost so), more and more Eskimos each year had to be issued food and clothing. Costs of all imported goods were rising, and only the high prices paid for fox-furs preserved many natives from destitution. Eskimo economy was clamouring for a stable base, but the fur trade in which many people had placed their trust was proving too erratic to supply it.

In several respects, it is true, the fur-trade economy offered the natives greater security than they had known in earlier days. The stocks of food at the trading posts shielded them from the famines that had ravaged their little communities every ten or fifteen years; and when they became too old or infirm to accompany the hunters to the sealing-grounds or the trappers to their solitary camps, they needed no longer to drop out on the trail, silently praying death to remove them before the hungry wolves could catch their scent; for now they could spend their last years at some peaceful settlement in relative comfort. Nevertheless, the more robust among them felt inwardly very insecure. Their parents had relied solely on their own efforts, their own courage and skill, to supply all the needs of themselves and their kindred. They had been independent and free, possessing nothing, and desiring nothing except success in hunting and fishing and a happy family life. But the present generation, the children, were dependent on strange white men who surrounded themselves with a multitude of strange possessions, white men who commanded mysterious knowledge and who imposed on the Eskimos tasks that seemed useless or beyond their understanding. The education that the missionaries offered them taught nothing, and explained nothing. The sky had fallen on their heads, and they stood among its ruins, unafraid but bewildered. They could not bring back the past, or foresee and plan for the future. So they drifted, uncertain of the world around them, and uncertain of themselves.

O. S. Finnie, Director of the Northwest Territories branch from 1921 to 1931, could certainly look back on some amazing changes in the Arctic when for the last time he locked the door of his office and surrendered his key; and some of these changes had sprung from his own initiative. He had witnessed the spread of police, trading, and mission posts into every inhabited part of the far north, even to that "pole of inaccessibility" that before the days of the aircraft centred at the Magnetic Pole. Four government radio transmission stations brought to the isolated inhabitants daily news of the outside world, including such commercial items as the price of fox-skins on the Montreal market. Three times during the winter an aircraft carried mail down the Mackenzie River as far as Aklavik and Herschel Island, and plans were afoot to provide a similar service to Coppermine and Chesterfield. Prospectors were now flying into every region of the north during the summer months; and frost-bitten trappers at the close of the trapping season were emplaning for civilization and the warm south, then taking the same plane back to their traplines at the first autumn snow. From Montreal each June a steamer carried a

[1]No real census was taken before 1921, and both that and the 1931 censuses were very inaccurate (see Robinson, 1944).

government party northward to inspect most of the settlements in the Eastern Arctic, and at the same time an R.C.M.Police vessel, the *St. Roch*, patrolled all the coast from Herschel Island to the east end of Coronation Gulf and even beyond. In a score of missions Eskimo children were learning to read and write, and both they and their parents were receiving medical care in four hospitals, two at Aklavik and one each at Chesterfield and Pangnirtung. Large game preserves, and regulations strictly enforced by the police, protected the muskoxen, and, as far as possible, the wild caribou; and the introduction of domesticated reindeer was well under way. Although police still held the administrative reins, from time to time a higher authority guided their hands and the inertia of a police state was beginning to crumble and break down.

But there were other recollections Finnie carried with him, recollections that he would gladly have forgotten. He knew full well that the schools he had been subsidizing in the Arctic were religious kindergartens that hardly deserved the name of schools. He could remember a request he had received, in the late 1920's, from a group of Eskimos and half-breeds in the Mackenzie delta: they had begged him to send a teacher for their children, a teacher as well qualified as those who taught white children in the south; and they had offered to house him (or her) and to pay his full salary from their own pockets. How glad he would have been to send them such a teacher, to set up a well-equipped government school; but his feet and hands were shackled, and he could not even limp to this first base.[1]

Then there was the vocational training scheme, a pilot scheme to train a few Eskimo girls and boys, the former as nurses, and teachers, the boys as mechanics, wireless operators, and the like. It had been an inexpensive project that, if successful, the government could have expanded later; but now it lay buried and forgotten in his files. He had succeeded in attaching a qualified medical officer to each of the mission hospitals,[2] and had actually set up a six-bed government hospital in Coppermine; but his superiors had denied adequate support to the government institution and brought about its closure after two years. Helpless because of his shackles, he had watched the rivalry of the two missionary organizations, and even strengthened that rivalry with the subsidies that his Council's policies forced him to disburse. On at least one occasion he had tried to throw off his bonds; he had refused to subsidize a second hospital at Aklavik when one was already in operation there; but in the end his superiors had forced him to back down (Finnie, 1942, p. 76). Finally, with a world depression just unfolding, the government had abolished his entire branch on the excuse of economy, cast all the senior members of his staff into the limbo of the unemployed, and tossed him out after them. He had honestly worked for the north country that he loved, but he left the public service with a sense of frustration that darkened his last years and shortened his life.

[1]The Northwest Territories Council saw no need for a government school when the missions, it believed, could furnish all the education the Eskimos needed, or indeed could assimilate (see p. 44). However, in response to the Eskimo's petition, it allowed him to subsidize two boarding-schools in the Mackenzie delta which the Roman Catholic and the Anglican missions promptly opened in 1929, the former at Aklavik, and the latter at Shingle Point on the seacoast. The Shingle Point School was moved to Aklavik in 1936.

[2]The medical officer at Aklavik served both mission hospitals.

CHAPTER 5

Bureaucracy in inaction (1931–40)

Finnie and his Northwest Territories Branch moved off the stage, followed immediately afterwards by the Commissioner himself, the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior. A new Deputy Minister and Commissioner came under the spotlights, and the Northwest Territories Council underwent some changes; beside the new Commissioner it now comprised the Deputy Minister of Mines, the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, and three new members from the Department of the Interior, one of whom, the Assistant Deputy-Minister, became the Deputy-Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. From the Department of the Interior, too, came a new secretary, who combined his secretarial work with a three-month's trip each summer on the supply vessel that visited the police and trading posts in the Eastern Arctic, thereby familiarizing himself with the region and with some of the problems of the various settlements. But the most active member of the new Council (if we except perhaps the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who concerned himself with little but his police duties) was the Deputy-Commissioner, who closely supervised the work of the secretary and the day-to-day administrative routine which, as Assistant Deputy-Minister of the Department of the Interior, he could conveniently impose on a unit of that department, the Dominion Lands Branch, later renamed Lands, Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch.

The Great Depression had barely reached its height when these changes occurred, so that it was not without reason that the new administration, following a pre-Keynesian adage, adopted as its watchword "Economy". It no longer possessed a scientific field staff, or undertook any further investigations into the natural resources of the Arctic, although other government departments and a few outside agencies continued to make a few studies. For its knowledge of conditions in the far north it relied on several channels, of which the most important were the despatches from the increasing number of police posts, and the reports of the three medical officers whom Finnie's regime had attached to the four mission hospitals. Through these and other channels, however, it obtained only fragmentary pictures of the changing Arctic, too sketchy and unrelated to supply the background it needed for any constructive policy applicable to the whole north, if indeed it harboured any intention of framing such a policy. Even the annual "Expedition" to the Eastern Arctic, which the defunct Northwest Territories Branch had organized,

> "to further the administration of these outlying possessions by personal contact, to study the condition and requirements of the natives in order that intelligent measures for their general welfare may be formulated, to investigate the natural resources of land and sea, secure meteorological and other scientific data, extend the explorations and surveys of shorelines and in various other ways add to the knowledge of the field and increase the efficiency of its administration." (Kitto, 1930, p. 120),

now lost its semi-scientific character and became merely a routine operation of supplying and relieving the medical officer at Pangnirtung and the posts of the police. In the interests of economy, indeed, the Council decided that it no longer needed to charter the Newfoundland sealing-vessel *Beothuk*, but could reserve such passenger and freight space as it required on the Hudson's Bay Company's supply vessel *Ungava*,[1] which would extend its usual itinerary in the Eastern Arctic to include all government police posts (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1932–33, p. 26). The times, in its judgment, called for a rigid hold-the-line policy devoid of any new experiments or adventures that might involve the government in extra expenditures. The police could continue as before to uphold Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and maintain peace, enforce the game regulations, collect the taxes on exported furs, distribute relief, and act in general as the Council's field administrators; the missions, supported by small subsidies, could provide all the hospitalization and rudimentary education that the Eskimos required; while the traders, gently regulated, could take care of their economic welfare.

This then was the policy which the new Council set itself to maintain, a timeless, changeless policy for a world that existed largely in its imagination. The real world moved on, raising problems in the Eastern and Western Arctic that the Council should have foreseen, and bringing nearer and nearer what threatened to become an economic crisis along the western and northern coasts of the Labrador Peninsula.

The change that more than any other disturbed the whole of the Arctic was the erratic downward movement of fur prices, which had risen steadily since the beginning of the century until by 1929 traders on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea were paying, on the average, $63.13 for a white-fox fur, and $150, $200, and even $250 for a blue-fox one (Hughes, 1960, p. 190), that in 1915 had been worth no more than $50 or $60. Canadian prices never quite attained the fantastic heights they reached on St. Lawrence Island, although in 1929 the white fox often brought more than $50. That year seems to have marked the end of the boom. One year later, in 1930, prices began to slump, and at Aklavik, Coppermine, and generally throughout arctic Canada, good white-fox furs sold for only $30, approximately the same price as in 1920, ten years earlier. In those ten years, however, the prices of such store goods as ammunition and flour rose by at least 25 per cent, so that the effective income of the Eskimo trapper tended to drop in roughly equal proportion. What complicated his problem still more was the unreliability of his yearly catch, since the populations of the fur-bearing animals run in somewhat irregular cycles, white foxes, for example, being very plentiful one year, then scarce for the next three or sometimes four years before appearing in abundance again. Unlike the farmer, therefore, the trapper could never estimate from one year to another the amount of his 'harvest', or the approximate income it should bring him. One season he might be prosperous and establish a substantial credit at the trading store; then during the next three or four years he might sink deeper and deeper into its debt.

This slump in fur prices during the 1930's gravely affected all Eskimos, but particularly those who were already living from hand to mouth and only with grave difficulty keeping their economies afloat. The plutocratic "Banks Islanders" and other Mackenzie delta natives and half-breeds could trim their sails

[1]Replaced by the larger vessel *Nascopie* in 1933.

to the adverse wind by cutting down their purchases at the trading stores, for famine was never likely to touch them as long as their region abounded in fish and game. Moreover, from 1935 onward, the reindeer that the government had just brought in from Alaska began rapidly to increase, and to provide them with extra meat and plenty of furs for winter clothing. Nevertheless, even they felt the pinch in 1934, when the price of the white-fox fur plummeted to $8.00. They did not want for food and clothing, of course, but they lacked the money to repair or replace their schooners, which now began to rot at their moorings in the delta. So in the mid-1930's the fleet that had commuted so jauntily between the Mackenzie delta and Banks Island in the 1920's disintegrated as quickly as it had come into being; and its adventurous skippers either settled quietly down again beside their kinsmen in the delta, or drifted eastward to the richer fur-trapping grounds in the area around Coronation Gulf.

Still farther east, in the harsher and more isolated region of King William Island and Boothia Peninsula, where only a few very recent immigrants from Baffin Island had ever met a fur trader before the 1920's, the fall in fur prices aggravated the dislocation wrought by the still incomplete change-over from a stone-age economy to an economy based on the trap-line. Under the stress of an unusually severe winter, it contributed to a grim tragedy, starkly described in a letter that the local post-manager of the Hudson's Bay Company wrote to his head office in Winnipeg, and that Winnipeg passed on to the Department of the Interior:

> "From the point of view of the local Eskimos the past winter [1934–5] was a fearful winter. During the latter part of December, the whole of January and the first half of February it was desperately cold, the temperature often falling to well below sixty; frequently, too, for days on end high winds prevailed with forty and even fifty below zero temperatures. Altogether it was the coldest spell of weather I have ever experienced and it was during this period that many of our good customers took what can only be described as severe punishment and when I could do little enough to help them. Surely no other people on earth can stand what the Eskimos have to put up with and yet keep on smiling. Just imagine during such wicked weather being without decent clothing or sleeping skins, and without food or light or heat for days on end. Certainly people cannot do much trapping under these conditions, no matter how tough they may be. Yet these were the conditions under which a group of some twenty of our trappers, men, women and children had to live. Their dogs all died of starvation or were used for food and they burned up all their sleds.
>
> "Altogether sixteen deaths occurred during the outfit and only four births that I know of. Of the deaths a sort of flue epidemic accounted for eight, and other natural causes and starvation and murder for the remainder.
>
> "I had to send out a team to rescue a group of nine starving people towards the end of the winter, whom I had to keep and look after for some considerable time. They were Ohowetuk, Eteroutag and Arnigah together with their wives and families. Rescue came too late, however, in the case of Ohowetuk, who died shortly after being brought in. The whole party were so far gone when they first arrived that only three of them could stand on their feet".

The Eskimos of King William Island and around the Magnetic Pole were well acquainted with hardships, for their home was one of the most inhospitable regions in the Arctic, and famines had always assailed them every few years. The winter of 1934–5, however, must have been exceptionally severe, for it brought a similar fate to several families in the north of Baffin Island. The police report from Pond Inlet informed Ottawa that some families in Admiralty Inlet had been unable to kill enough seals for themselves and their dogs, and after

their dogs had died of starvation they too starved to death, being unable to communicate with other natives. Life is uncertain everywhere, but in few places as uncertain as it was in Canada's Central Arctic until the last ten or fifteen years.

What effect the slump in fur prices produced on the Eskimos of Hudson Bay's west coast, and of the Barren Lands behind it, seems unrecorded; but the Eskimos in the Eastern Arctic, whom the 1931–32 annual report of the Department of the Interior described as "healthy, prosperous, and contented", and the 1932–33 report declared were enjoying a favourable economic condition, "they being well supplied with the necessities of life", suffered a set-back in 1933, apparently, for we read in the annual report for that year:

> "Summarizing the information secured by the Department of the Interior's administrative survey, it may be stated the health of the population of the Eastern Arctic was found to have been good. On the whole, the fur catch in the previous season was poor, and this, with the low price of pelts, had caused some hardship. Fortunately seal and walrus, on which the Eskimos largely depend for food for themselves and their dogs, and also to some extent for clothing, were fairly abundant. . . .
>
> "To assist in preventing undue hardship, the *Department of the Interior distributed 10,500 pounds of dried buffalo meat and, as an experiment, 500 green buffalo hides* were left with those in charge of relief at various posts for distribution to the natives." (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1933–34, p. 35).[1]

One year later the Northwest Territories Council authorized the transfer of surplus caribou skins to some unnamed places in the Eastern Arctic where the Eskimos themselves were unable to obtain enough hides to make their winter clothing (Can. Dept. Int. Ann. Rept. 1934–35, p. 33). The ancient costume, I may point out, needed six whole caribou hides to make one suit (man's or woman's) comprising a hooded coat, a pair of breeches, and a pair of long stockings. This was adequate for spring and summer only: winter demanded two layers of each item, an inner garment worn with the fur inward, and an outer one with the fur outward. To clothe a man (or woman) for all seasons, therefore, called for twelve caribou hides, not counting the footgear, which was generally made from sealskin. By 1930, however, most Eskimos had replaced all these garments except the inner fur coat with garments of cloth, partly from choice, but mainly owing to the scarcity of caribou. That animal must indeed have been scarce if the Eskimo hunters could no longer obtain even the four hides needed for an outer parka.

Although we are not told which districts lacked caribou, we may be certain that they included the west and north shores of the Labrador Peninsula, where the game resources were now so scanty that for several years, as we saw earlier (see p. 40), the federal government had been distributing food, clothing and medicines to needy Eskimos, all the time disclaiming any *legal* responsibility for their welfare on the ground that they were citizens of the Province of Quebec. This legal quibble came under consideration again in 1933, when a

[1]Italics are author's. The buffalo hides were too thick for clothing, but made tolerable bed-robes, rather heavy, however, to carry on the back during the summer months. The Department thus described the buffalo meat: "It is a good food, and in its concentrated form will keep for a long time. Another point in its favour is that the Eskimos are not particularly fond of it and consequently are not likely to ask for it unless they are in real need, and the chances of obtaining seal, walrus, or other fresh meat, are poor. Its weakness probably lies in the fact that it does not contain enough fat for use in the Arctic, but along with seal or walrus meat it provides a very nourishing dish." (Bethune, 1935, p. 58).

member of his staff informed the Deputy-Commissioner of the Northwest Territories that the Eskimos of Great Whale River could no longer maintain themselves in their own district, but could earn a fair living on the Belcher Islands, only eighty miles away within the Northwest Territories; he questioned, however, whether it was advisable to transfer them to the islands, because the provincial authorities of Quebec might construe that action as an assumption of responsibility for their Eskimos. Once again, therefore, a purely administrative hurdle checked the dictates of humanity, and the Great Whale River Eskimos were left to struggle along as best they could. Fortunately the hurdle disappeared within a few years, and thereafter the Eskimos could move—and be moved—quite freely between the Belcher Islands and the mainland.

By the early 1930's, then, the economy of the Eskimos in all parts of the Arctic had gravely deteriorated, partly through the slump in fur prices, and partly through a diminution in the supply of game, particularly caribou. Naturally, the natives expected that the white man who had destroyed their old way of life would help them to stand on their feet in the new; and both the government and the trading companies did provide a little relief, not in the form of money, to whose use most of the natives were still unattuned, but of food, clothing, and ammunition.[1]

> "The Northwest Territories Council recently reviewed the whole question of relief distribution, and recommended to the Minister of the Interior—with a view to the centralization, where possible, in each district of the authority for the granting of relief—that where there was a medical officer he be in charge, and where there was no medical officer the non-commissioned officer in charge of the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment be empowered to authorize the issue of relief. Where there was neither medical officer nor police in the neighbourhood, the issue of relief would, of course, have to be looked after by someone else—usually the manager of a trading post. In such instances full reports are required by the Department of the Interior. The above recommendation was approved and put into effect last year [1933].
>
> "Wherever possible relief is issued in the form of ammunition so that the natives will be encouraged to get out and shift for themselves, which they are quite willing to do—incidentally obtaining that type of food which experience has proven is the best for them. The larger trading companies undertake that where they enjoy a monopoly of trade there will be no need of the Government advancing relief to destitute natives, since those who are destitute depend upon the hunters whose exertions in securing pelts constitute the basis of the companies' trade. . . .
>
> "The Eskimos are a very fine race of people, and care is being exercised in the distribution of relief so that indolence may not be encouraged, nor their sense of self-dependence unduly weakened. At the same time it is the Administration's desire to do what it can to prevent undue suffering." (Bethune, 1935, pp. 57–8).

It was one thing to distribute surplus meat and hides from the department's buffalo herd in the Wainwright National Park, but quite another to enter in the department's estimates, which would be scrutinized by parliament, any sizable sum of money for Eskimo relief. Some member might rise and ask difficult questions, e.g., "How did the once self-supporting Eskimos come to need relief?" and "What was the government doing to make them self-supporting again, not just for a week or a year, but permanently?"—for relief never cures an ailing economy, but merely helps to keep it going during a longer or shorter emergency. But the Northwest Territories Council had no long-term plans to restore the Eskimo's shattered economy. In its ignorance of the

[1]For a specific example see Finnie, 1940, chap. 17.

Arctic—for none of its members had ever spent a winter on the arctic coast, or was really familiar with its physical environment and ecological conditions[1]—it did not even realize that the old economy had been shattered, but assumed that the mode of life based on hunting and trapping could continue indefinitely; that should nature bring some unpredictable disaster on the Eskimos, or reduce the resources of any district below the level at which the natives could subsist, nothing more was needed than to tide them over the crisis for a period (as we help out our farmers after a drought), and perhaps remove a few families to richer districts. Either measure, of course, would entail some expenditure of money; and rather than ask parliament for funds to cover the amount, the Council unloaded the whole responsibility on the companies to whom it issued trading licences, which at this period meant in effect the Hudson's Bay Company.

The following letter, written in February 1936 by the Director of the Lands, N.W.T. and Yukon Branch, to the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, states this policy quite frankly:

> "The Fur Trade Commissioner, Hudson's Bay Company, has now submitted formal application for a permit to establish a trading post at Elizabeth Harbour on Boothia Peninsula. Mention is made that such a post would serve a large area between King William Island and Pond Inlet and that the natives at the present time have to travel long distances in order to secure supplies. . . .
>
> "Accounts totalling $447.33, representing the cost of supplies issued to destitute natives who trade at Peterson Bay, King William Island, were paid by the Department during the period 30th April, 1933, to date [12th Feb. 1936]. This might not be considered excessive in view of the number of natives who trade at that post, but having regard to conditions in the Boothia Peninsula district it might be anticipated that relief expenses will be much greater unless a definite understanding upon this point is reached between the Department and traders prior to the establishment of trading posts in the Gulf of Boothia. According to the fur returns a total of 4,045 white foxes were traded to the representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canalaska Trading Company at Peterson Bay during the license year ended 30th June, 1934. It is understood the trade value of the white fox during that year was $8.00 and, such being the case, the fur yield of the district had a value of approximately $32,000, judged from the native standpoint. There are about one hundred native families in the district, therefore, the value of the trade goods received by the average family would be about $300.00.
>
> "In dealing with applications for permits to establish posts in outlying districts *the Department has stipulated that the applicants must assume full responsibility for the welfare of the natives who trade with them and the destitute natives must be maintained without expense to the Department.*[2] Such an understanding was reached in 1934 between the Department and the Hudson's Bay Company when the company was granted a permit for Dundas Harbour, Devon Island. The information available would indicate it is necessary in the interests of the natives north of King William Island to authorize the establishment of a trading post on Boothia Peninsula, and I, therefore, recommend that the company be granted a permit for Elizabeth Harbour upon the terms and conditions accepted by them in connection with the issue of the permit for Dundas Harbour."

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[1]It is true that the secretary of the Council visited each summer most of the settlements in the Eastern Arctic, but the Hudson's Bay Company's vessel on which he travelled (along with half a dozen other travellers, both men and women, who had paid $650 apiece for the pleasure of a 10-weeks' summer cruise) seldom remained more than a day at any port of call, and often only two or three hours—no longer, in fact, than was necessary to unload the settlement's supplies for the ensuing year and take on board its furs and other outgoing goods. The Council's secretary, then, could do little more than pay a brief visit to the local police station, drink a cup of tea with the missionary's wife, distribute some candy to the Eskimo children whose fathers and mothers were working at the dock, and hasten on board again before the vessel sailed for its next destination.

[2]Italics are author's.

This letter is revealing on several counts. The region in which the Hudson's Bay Company proposed to set up a new trading post was the same region as had witnessed twelve months before the fearful privation and suffering described in the letter, quoted on p. 51, which the company had attached to its application; and the company's post-manager who had written that letter still held his post at Petersen Bay. One can therefore agree with the Director of the Lands Branch that the sum of $447.33 the Department had paid to cover the relief charges in the region was not excessive, since it covered a period of nearly three years, including that winter of 1934–5. The average catch of forty white foxes per family clearly proved that the Eskimos had not been laggards in their trapping, for that is a relatively high average in almost any part of the Arctic: certainly they had not remained idle inside their snow huts during the bitter cold of mid-winter, when the hours of daylight are limited, and throughout about half the trapping season, (which lasts from November 15 to March 15) the sun never rises above the horizon. Finally, a family income of $300 a year hardly seems excessive when we remember that high costs of transport to this remote region necessarily raised the price of every article in the trading store at Petersen Bay to double its price in Montreal or San Francisco. Altogether we cannot help feeling glad that the Director of the Lands, N.W.T. and Yukon Branch recommended, and the Council approved, the company's application, and permitted it to set up a second trading post that would spare some of the Eskimos many days of arduous travel.

One feels less happy, however, with the conditions that hedged in that permit. A diplomat would politely condemn the government for "relegating its responsibilities and powers to a commercial company": the man in the street would say, "shamelessly passing the buck". What did the welfare of the Eskimos include? Did it include the care of their health, and the maintenance of the aged, the sick, and the infirm? In that case had the company the right to impose a quarantine on the Boothia Peninsula area to prevent the introduction and spread of tuberculosis and other communicable diseases? Could the company modify the Council's game regulations if, in its judgment, modification was advisable for the protection of the natives' food supply? And if its responsibilities proved too onerous, and its trading post ceased to pay expenses, was there any legal obligation to prevent it from turning back its permit at short notice, closing the Boothia Peninsula post, and moving out, as the uranium companies recently moved out from Elliot Lake? These and other questions remained unclarified.

The letter recommending to the Council the granting of a permit referred to the understanding "between the Department and the Hudson's Bay Company when the company was granted a permit for Dundas Harbour, Devon Is." It is worth our while to examine the history of that trading post, for its establishment marked the only attempt between 1931 and the end of the Second World War at any constructive program for developing, or at least populating, Canada's arctic archipelago.

In 1922, it will be recalled, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had erected a post at Craig Harbour, on the coast of Ellesmere Island overlooking Jones Sound, and two years later a second post at Dundas Harbour on Devon Island to guard the passage through Lancaster Sound (see pp. 29, 30). Both Ellesmere and Devon islands were at that time uninhabited, but the government recruited a

few Eskimo families from Etah, Greenland, to help the police with camp chores, to fish and hunt seals for them, and to guide or accompany them on their patrols. Shortly afterwards aircraft of a United States expedition under D. B. MacMillan visited the Canadian arctic archipelago for the first time. In 1929 Col. C. D. MacAlpine and a mining party flew north to Hudson Bay, and thence still farther north until they abandoned their aircraft at Dease Point on the mainland coast near Cambridge Bay. The resulting search added much to knowledge of the Barren Grounds. Two years later the United States aviator Charles Lindbergh and his wife flew across Canada's Subarctic and Arctic, and the Dominion government cooperated in their flight by depositing small stocks of gasoline at Pangnirtung, Dorset, Coral Harbour, and Chesterfield. About this time, also, in newspapers and elsewhere, a lively discussion arose about the feasibility of a commercial air route across northern Canada to Europe. This growing interest in northern aviation revived the government's apprehension about its sovereign rights in the arctic archipelago, visibly upheld along its eastern margin only by two lonely police posts, and along its western fringe by some Eskimo trappers on Banks and Victoria islands.

Meanwhile the economic condition of the Eskimos in the Eastern Arctic was steadily deteriorating, and the Department of the Interior was facing each year an increasing bill for their relief. What could have seemed more logical to that department, then, than to soften its ban on trading posts within the Arctic Islands Preserve, and to move some of the destitute natives, if not from the Labrador Peninsula, which was Quebec territory, at least from Baffin Island, into selected places within the archipelago where they would find abundant game, could turn in their furs at one or more trading posts the government would authorize the Hudson's Bay Company to set up, and in one or two years, perhaps, regain economic solvency. Two or three families might even find employment at those trading stations, and several others might replace the Greenland natives who were serving at the police posts. Such an expansion would show the world that the northern archipelago was indeed Canadian territory, providing in an increasing number of places permanent homes for Canadian nationals.[1] Of course, the operation would cost money, but it could be anticipated that the Hudson's Bay Company, which would benefit from the expansion of its trade, would take care of the expense.

It was a happy coincidence, therefore, that in 1933 the company broached to the Department of the Interior the question of reopening the trading posts at Arctic Bay in Admiralty Inlet, and at Port Leopold on the northern tip of Somerset Island, which it had opened in 1926 and 1927 respectively, and closed in 1928 when the department pointed out that they infringed the regulations governing the Arctic Islands Preserve: their closure, it now claimed, had caused the Eskimos of the area much unnecessary hardship by forcing them to travel exceedingly long distances to dispose of their furs.[2] The department undertook to consider the matter, and suggested at the same time that it would welcome an application from the company to set up a post in Dundas Harbour

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[1]See the article (an official press release, apparently) headed "Occupy Arctic Isles to Insure Canadian Claims," reproduced as an Appendix to this chapter.

[2]The letter from Superintendent T. H. Irvine, quoting a report from Pond Inlet (see p. 51), substantiated this claim. The report reads, "If there had been a post at Arctic Bay last year there would not have been any cases of starvation in that area."

and "stock" the district with impoverished natives from Baffin Island. In due course the company filed its application, and received a permit for the Dundas post, together with this covering letter from the Deputy Minister, written 15 March 1934:

"Dear Mr. Watson:

I have your letter of the 7th instant applying for a permit on behalf of your company to establish a trading post on Devon Island under the conditions outlined in our letter to you dated 29th December last. It is observed you propose to transfer six families of natives from Baffin Island to Devon Island, and in doing so you assume full responsibility for their welfare.

"At present there are no natives on Devon Island and as your company will have full control over the trapping operations of those whom you transfer it has been decided to grant you a trading permit for this location upon the distinct understanding that the company will comply with the under-mentioned terms and conditions:—

1. Establish the trading post in the immediate vicinity of Dundas Harbour.
2. Furnish the Department with the names and present place of residence of each native transferred to Devon Island.
3. Assume full responsibility for the welfare and maintenance of the said natives.
4. Issue definite instructions to the natives to refrain from killing musk-oxen and supervise their trapping operations to prevent their encroaching upon the habitat of the musk-oxen.[1]
5. Take such measures as are necessary to ensure that the provisions of the Northwest Game Regulations shall be fully observed by these natives.
6. In the event of the company withdrawing from Devon Island the company agrees to return the natives to their homes at its own expense or to transfer them to such other trapping grounds as may be designated by the Department.

"Trading post permit No. 405 authorizing your company to establish this trading post is enclosed and we would be glad to receive assurance that the conditions enumerated above will be complied with. A fee of one dollar is charged for this permit."

Thus originated what the Northwest Territories Council's secretary described as an entirely new departure and in the nature of an experiment to re-establish the Eskimos in depopulated areas where the native food and clothing supplies were in abundance; and he elaborated on the plan in a memorandum to his chief, part of which reads:

"When discussing the plans for the Eastern Arctic Patrol, 1935, I brought up the general policy relating to trapping in the Arctic Islands Preserve. I had in mind the reopening of Arctic Bay and Port Leopold which had already been approved by the N.W.T. Council. There was also the probability of establishing posts at Craig Harbour and on other islands in the Archipelago to facilitate the general plan of northern migration and settlement where game is abundant. The opening of those posts will provide employment and relieve destitution of those natives who are compelled, through lack of transportation and other means, to seek better hunting grounds and maintain their independence.

Dundas Harbour is the spearhead of the movement, and upon its success depends the whole future of northern migration and Eskimo independence."[2]

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[1]There is a herd of muskoxen at Cape Sparbo, in the northeast corner of Devon Island.

[2]In files of Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Italics are author's.

Appendix to Chapter 5

"Occupy Arctic Isles to Insure Canadian Claims." By James Montagnes[1]

" More Eskimos will this year live closer to the North Pole, as the result of decreasing game and farther north occupation of Canada's Arctic by government officials. The administration of the Northwest Territories has the past few years been experimenting with the northward movement of Eskimos in the eastern Arctic and this summer more Eskimos will follow the trend, according to a high official in the government service.

"The past few years families of Eskimos from southern Baffin Island, where game is becoming scarcer, have been taken aboard the annual supply ship with all their belongings and transported to police and trading posts on Devon and Ellesmere Islands. There these families have acclimatized themselves and found better hunting both for food and the fur trade. This year the experiment will take on a permanent nature with more families being moved northward.

"Only the younger and healthier natives are picked for the northward trek, and the proposition is carefully explained to them, so that they are free to take advantage of it or reject it. Work is given them at the police and fur posts farther north, which is an inducement, as the more southern posts have too large a community to give everyone work. At the northern posts there are many chores to be done, for the men guiding water patrols and food hunting, for the women sewing and cooking. There are no posts in the northland without Eskimo helpers.

"Formerly Eskimos used to be brought over from Greenland to work at the more northern posts in the eastern Arctic. But now that Eskimos are becoming more numerous in the Hudson Straits area, it is no longer necessary to hire Greenland Eskimos, and there are few of them left now in Canada's eastern Arctic.

"In addition to the placing of the Eskimos in new regions where game is more abundant and work more regular, there is the angle of occupation of the country, now that aerial routes, mineral developments, and other reasons make possible the claims of other countries to part of Canada's Arctic, which now reaches to the North Pole. To forestall any such future claims, the Dominion is occupying the Arctic islands to within nearly 700 miles of the North Pole."

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[1]Reproduced from the photostat copy in government files, wrongly ascribed to the *Winnipeg Free Press* of 8 June 1935.

CHAPTER 6

A colonization scheme that failed

Colonization schemes commonly begin with a survey. A party goes out to explore the region, to examine its climate, its soil, its vegetation, its water supply, and other features; and only after it has completed this examination and selected the most favourable spot do the colonists move in with their families. Should they choose a coastal location a sheltered harbour will be vital, and a safe and easy approach to it from the open sea. The navigability of the open sea itself is never questioned; every colony planted on a coastline takes it for granted that sea-going vessels will keep it in contact with the outside world.

In Canada's arctic archipelago different conditions reign. Agriculture there is impossible because the ground is always frozen, and no trees grow because the climate is too severe. Ice obstructs navigation by sea for about ten months in the year, in many regions permanently; in the latter it precludes all contact with the outside world by sea-going vessels, and elsewhere renders it dangerous and intermittent, limited generally to once or twice a year. To the Eskimos, however, the land was relatively unimportant except as a home for the caribou and muskoxen, and as a safe place to set up their tents or stone-and-sod huts; and until the coming of the white man, they were not dependent on contact with the outside world, although, being human, they never willingly moved beyond reach of other Eskimos. What they sought was a locality where seals and walrus were numerous off shore, and caribou not too far distant. Later, after the white man imposed on them the fur trade, they required also good trapping localities and access to a trading post. It was the trading post that could not operate without sea transport; and this was the factor that greatly limited the number of localities the Northwest Territories Council could attempt to colonize. Dundas Harbour was one of the most accessible; a vessel could always reach it without much difficulty towards the end of summer. If then the dream of arctic colonization was ever to become reality, surely Dundas was the logical place to give it form.

Did the experiment there prosper?—Let us briefly trace its history (see Fig. 5).

In August 1934 the Hudson's Bay Company's supply vessel *Nascopie* called at Cape Dorset and took on board, in addition to the local post-manager, 22 Eskimos, men, women, and children, with all their dogs and household possessions, including their kayaks, whale-boats, and sleds. Proceeding then to Pangnirtung it took on 12 more Eskimos, and a few days later 18 at Pond Inlet. All these natives had "volunteered" to trap for two years around Dundas Harbour, after which, if they were dissatisfied with the district, the *Nascopie*

Fig. 5.

or some other vessel would return them to their homes. At Dundas Harbour, then, the steamer landed them: 52 Eskimos and 109 dogs, with a Hudson's Bay Company employee to set up a post and receive the furs they would trade in. The harbour abounded in seals, walrus, and white whales, but it was so congested with rough ice that the Eskimos could not easily pursue these mammals in their small boats; and clearly, after the winter set in, they would find it

equally difficult to travel by dog-sled around its shores and maintain their lines of fox-traps. The Hudson's Bay Company's post-manager, therefore, dispersed his party by boat, transporting half the natives to Croker Bay, some 30 miles to the westward.[1] But this location too proved unsatisfactory, for precisely the same reason. In 1936, accordingly, the company closed the trading post in Dundas Harbour and, embarking the natives once more on the *Nascopie*, landed the Dorset and Pond Inlet Eskimos—"48 natives and 163 dogs"—at Arctic Bay, and returned the two families from Pangnirtung to their homes. One year later the vessel called back at Arctic Bay and conveyed the homeless Ishmaelites to Fort Ross, a new post which the company was establishing on the south end of Somerset Island at the entrance to Bellot Strait. They were still there in 1939, for

> "While at Cape Dorset, southern Baffin Island, arrangements were made for the transportation of several Eskimo families who desired to join relatives at Arctic Bay and Fort Ross." (Can. Dept. Mines and Res. Ann. Rept. 1939, p. 80).

In 1947, however, Fort Ross was closed because ice rendered it too difficult of access; and its natives then moved to Spence Bay, on the west side of Boothia Peninsula. In that place comparatively rich in game, their survivors and descendants still work and trap, although their future remains far from assured. Whatever the destiny fate spins for them, in 1939 the government tacitly conceded the failure of its scheme for "northern migration and Eskimo independence" by hiring once more two Greenland Eskimo families to serve for two years at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police post in Craig Harbour.

Dundas Harbour, as we saw, is readily accessible to shipping each summer, and in winter can probably be reached by sled from the north coast of Baffin Island. The attempt to colonize it, therefore, might have succeeded if conditions in and near the bay had been less unfavourable. On the other hand, the more ambitious project of colonizing numerous islands in the arctic archipelago was wholly impracticable as long as the Northwest Territories Council insisted on laying down conditions which those responsible for the actual colonization could not possibly carry out. Many of these islands—for example, Melville and Axel Heiberg—can rarely be reached by sea, some of them never; and the cost of maintaining trading posts on them would have been fantastic in the days before cheap air-freight, and fantastic perhaps even today. It can be done, as proved by the weather stations now scattered throughout the archipelago, but only when costs become a secondary factor and the government or some wealthy corporation like the Standard Oil Company stands prepared to foot the bill. Even regions accessible by sea—for example, the two shores of Amundsen Gulf—might well have proved too deficient in game resources to supply the food requirements of the colonists, and too poor in fox and other furs to support the expense of a trading post unless the government stood at the trader's back and came to his rescue whenever occasion demanded. Certainly in those areas no commercial organization such as the Hudson's Bay Company could possibly

[1] In its 'Annual Report' for 1935–36, p. 36, the Department of the Interior refers to the operation in these oblique words: "In general the health and well-being of the white and native population [in the Eastern Arctic] was found to be above the average due to a large extent to the abundance of game and fur-bearing animals. However, it was found desirable, in the interests of good administration, to transfer several Eskimo families to more congenial localities."

pay its way, and at the same time fulfil such obligations concerning the welfare of its Eskimo trappers and their families, as the government had imposed when it sanctioned the colonization of Dundas Harbour (see p. 57).

Furthermore, there were the desires and aspirations of the Eskimos themselves to be considered, a factor that both the government and the Hudson's Bay Company largely neglected when they shuttled the south Baffin Islanders from one arctic trapping-ground to another.[1] How long would a tiny colony on Melville Island, let us say, remain contented and energetic in such isolation? It is true that the 300 or so Eskimos around Etah and Cape York, in northwest Greenland, seemed contented when John Ross discovered them in 1818, although they had lived in absolute isolation for perhaps 300 years. But, except from vague tradition, they did not know that other people existed, or that there was a world and a mode of life in any way different from their own. Consequently, they were unable to make comparisons between their community and others, and were not unhappy. Similarly, in our own society, the man who has never seen a refrigerator, a radio, or a motor-car, can be very happy without them; but once he becomes familiar with them, knowledge creates desire and desire breeds discontent.

It may have been possible, therefore, a hundred years ago, when the Baffin Island Eskimos still used their ancient weapons and preserved their ancestral skills, to plant small colonies of them at selected places in the arctic archipelago and leave them to shift for themselves, knowing that though they might never trap a single fox or meet a single trader, they could be self-supporting and independent as long as seals remained plentiful in their localities, caribou grazed within reach of their hunting, and from some source or other, perhaps through trade at long intervals with Eskimos far to the south, they could obtain a little wood for weapons, tentpoles, and boats. At that time they had few needs, and few wants. They still knew how to track down the seals' breathing-places in the sea ice, to set an indicator in the hole to warn them when the animal was rising, to strike with the harpoon at the exact moment it broke water, and to draw the victim on to the surface of the ice, if it was a common ring seal, or to hold tight to the harpoon-line and shout for help if it was the bearded variety that weighs up to 600 pounds. All through the long cold months of winter, provided the blizzards did not rage so fiercely that it was impossible to find the breathing-holes, they could keep their bodies well-nourished with fresh meat, and their snow huts bright and cosy with the blubber that burned in their stone lamps.

By the 1930's, however, only the Eskimos along the arctic coast between Coronation Gulf and northern Baffin Island still preserved this lore. All the rest had forgotten it. No more readily than the white man could they detect the faint signs of a seal's breathing-hole in the snow that masked the surface of the sea ice; no longer did they possess the skill to make and use efficient bows and arrows. In the months of winter they sustained themselves on such surplus meat and fish as they had succeeded in storing away during the autumn (rarely

[1] An anonymous writer in the Oblate quarterly *Eskimo* sagely remarked in connection with the resettlement of another group of Eskimos 24 years later: "These movements of population are the most delicate kind of operation. Eskimo are not pawns on a chessboard. They belong to well-defined groups, with strong family ties, dialects, particular customs." (1958, p. 3, footnote 1). A quarter of a century had to elapse before the Cape Dorset colonists at Spence Bay permitted one of their members to marry a local native.

enough for more than three or four weeks), on any seals they could shoot with rifles in some narrow water-lane, or any polar bears that chanced to cross their path, but more than all else, on the flour, bacon, beans, and other imported foods that they bought with their fox furs at the trading store. They had tasted the fruits of the "tree of knowledge"; they had eaten the foods of civilization, acquired some of the trappings of the white man—his rifles and outboard motors, his woollen clothing and rubber boots, his sewing machines and his gramaphones; and they had accepted his Christianity, so far as they understood it, and were beginning to look at the world through his eyes. They could not return to the isolation of their forefathers, either physically or psychologically, and survive.

Nevertheless, they might have become—and may still become—the "spearhead of the movement" into the arctic archipelago; but not without being trained for it, and retaining close contact with the world to the south. That demands the unswerving cooperation of the white man and his logistic support, neither of which can the white man give save at a heavy price. Not nearly as heavy, to be sure, as the price we now pay to maintain our northern airfields and weather stations with white personnel, but still heavy. And in the 1930's the Department of the Interior was not prepared to pay that price.

It gave more heed, instead, to those who advocated that the Eskimos should be encouraged to make more use of the wildlife resources available in their homelands and continue to follow the manner of life of their ancestors.[1] Much of the money it was spending on relief paid for ammunition to make the natives hunt still harder, however scarce the game might be; not for retraining them for other occupations, as we retrain our discharged soldiers and airmen. Such a policy suited the Department of the Interior's budget, of course, since it spared the high cost of any genuine training program. But it was a short-sighted policy which in the long run could only prove more expensive. Each year it was becoming more and more impossible for the Eskimos to gain even a bare subsistence, because, quite apart from the fluctuations in the supply of fish and game, their incomes, which hinged directly on the prices of furs, were diminishing rather than increasing, while their needs—or what they had come to consider their needs—were growing both in price and in number. Unless then they could find some source or sources of income additional to the trap-line, or in place of it, they would continue to lean on the government more and more heavily until they became permanent dependants on a dole, victims of all the evils such dependence brings.[2] If that happened, their dead weight, like the badly adjusted brake of a wagon, would slow up the wheel of northern development that seemed already on the point of moving forward. They possessed

[1]Cf. "Because the natives in the Eastern Arctic are encouraged to follow their natural bent for hunting and trapping rather than remain as workers at the settlements the periods available to the Missions for teaching the children are comparatively short." (Can. Dept. Mines and Res. 1941, p. 4).

[2]Dr. Sheldon Jackson, founder of Eskimo education in Alaska and founder also of its reindeer industry, wrote as follows when advocating the introduction of reindeer: "Relief can, of course, be afforded by Congress voting an appropriation to feed them [the Alaskan Eskimo], as it has so many of the North American Indians. But I think that every one familiar with the feeding process among the Indians will devoutly wish that it may not be necessary to extend that system to the Eskimo of Alaska. It would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, and, worse than that, degrade, pauperize, and finally exterminate the people." (U.S. Bur. Ed. 1891, p. 6).

the necessary intelligence to contribute to that development; they possessed also certain qualities, for example, mechanical ability, familiarity with the arctic environment, and a capacity greater than the white man's to withstand its cold; but they lacked the necessary education and training. We may observe the same situation today in many other parts of the world, in southeast Asia, in Africa, and in South America, regions which would gladly develop their natural resources and raise the living standards of their populations, but which lack the trained men to initiate and direct that development because they have been unable to give their people the requisite education.

Despite these examples all around us of the necessity to educate and train every citizen, whatever his race or colour, many people in Canada still cling to the outworn doctrine of the Department of the Interior in the 1930's concerning the Eskimos, although the alarming decrease in the herds of wild caribou should give them pause. As late as 1952 a Round Table Conference on Eskimo Affairs, held under official auspices in Ottawa, upheld that discredited policy by affirming "that Eskimo should be encouraged and helped to live off the land and to follow their traditional way of life." (*Arctic Circular*, 1952, p. 41).

Such a resolution merely blinds men's eyes to the lessons of history and to the events that are happening in the world today. The Eskimo cannot stand still. He cannot follow the way of life of his ancestors, even if he wants to (which he does not), any more than we can abandon our aeroplanes, our motor-cars, and our televisions, and go back to the horse-and-buggy, the two-ox plough, and the wind-up music-box. One man in 100,000 may do so; he may turn himself into a hermit and find peace—or stagnation. But the rest of us, driven by some inward urge, irresistible though generally unconscious, keep pressing forward, seeking new knowledge, new pleasures, and new gadgets. Whether the effort brings us greater happiness, greater misery, or, what seems not unlikely in this atomic age, complete destruction, we must press on, if only that our children may enter life's struggle without handicap. The Eskimos possess the same urge. In certain periods of their history—which we are only now beginning to unravel—some of them enriched their lives, both materially and socially, and others impoverished them; but at no time did they stagnate. Until recently they lived outside our civilized world; but now they are a part of it, they form a section of its fringe, and neither physically nor mentally can they exist separate from it. Those Eskimos who live in Canada are citizens of the Dominion, subject to the same obligations as the farmer on the prairie and the worker in the textile mill; and they are entitled to the same educational and other rights.[1]

[1]The Legal Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources opines that "Eskimo are Canadian citizens if they were born in Canada or otherwise satisfy the requirements of the *Canadian Citizenship Act*. As Canadian citizens they have all the rights and privileges of a Canadian citizen, and, in addition, they have the right to hunt for food, on unoccupied Crown lands in the Northwest or Yukon Territories, game other than game declared by the Governor in Council to be game in danger of becoming extinct. The *Indian Act* does not apply to Eskimos, so their rights and privileges are not affected in any way by this Act."

CHAPTER 7

Bureaucracy in inaction (continued)

After its abortive attempt to colonize the far northern archipelago and relieve by that expedient some of the destitution in the Eastern Arctic, the Northwest Territories administration relapsed into inactivity.

> "Today's Administration, clinging to its policy of laissez-faire, has abandoned the natives to moral and physical disintegration." (Finnie, 1942, p. 85).

The appointment of a new Commissioner in 1936, and the demotion of the Department of the Interior to the status of a mere branch in the new and unwieldy Department of Mines and Resources, stirred hardly a ripple in the languid regime; and the addition to the Northwest Territories Council in 1938 of an Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs left it equally undisturbed. To quote again from Finnie's second book, published in 1942:

> "In a nutshell, the Government's direct efforts in behalf of the natives comprise:
> (1) Game regulations, enforced by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
> (2) Maintenance of game preserves, sanctuaries, and the establishment of a reindeer herd.
> (3) The work of seven medical officers in the Northwest Territories.[1] . . . This work includes allotting rations to aged and destitute natives—which, where there are no doctors, may be done by the Mounted Police, missionaries, or traders; and in Indian country the doctors act as Indian agents, paying Treaty money each year and listening to tribal grievances.
>
> "Otherwise the general welfare and training of the natives are left in the hands of the Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries, whose schools and hospitals are subsidized. . . . Officials see them [the natives] only on fleeting trips into the North, and for information about them depend on the medical officers, Mounted Police, missionaries, and traders . . . independent explorers are not encouraged to give unbiased testimony, and often feel that it is unwelcome if offered." (pp. 73–4).

Meanwhile the economic condition of the Eskimos failed to improve. Prices of white-fox furs zigzagged up and down, reaching as high as $35 during the Second World War, after averaging only $11.76 during the four years preceding that war (Cantley, 1950, p. 39); but living costs too went up, and the needs of the natives did not diminish. The white-whale fishery organized by the Hudson's Bay Company in Cumberland Sound, after supplying the *Nascopie* for three or four years with satisfactory cargoes of oil and hides, declined through depletion of the whale-schools, apparently, and was abandoned about 1935. Then the company in 1939 tried to establish an eider-down industry on the islands fringing the south and southeast coasts of Baffin Island; but

[1] Three of them among the Eskimos, namely at Aklavik, Chesterfield, and Pangnirtung.

that too failed. During the decade it had opened a few more trading posts: Read Island, 1931; Tuktoyaktuk, 1934; Perry River, opened 1927, closed 1928, re-opened 1937; Holman Island, 1939; Igloolik, 1939: but its profits from the arctic fur trade reportedly diminished. Meanwhile the relief payments to the Eskimos were creeping upward, and their morale steadily sinking.

The one bright spot was the domestic reindeer industry. The original herd of 2,370 deer that had reached the Reindeer Station on the eastern side of the Mackenzie delta in March 1935 (see p. 35), rapidly multiplied, although its small staff of Lapp herders drained off the surplus males each year to supply meat and skins for their own families, and for the two hospitals and the police post in Aklavik. When its number reached about 5,000, and the reserve seemed in danger of being over-grazed, the most efficient Eskimo the Lapps had trained received a herd of 1,000 deer on condition that he repaid the same number when it doubled; and he moved with his animals to a grazing area near the Anderson River, about 100 miles to the eastward. By 1941 the total reindeer population had grown to about 8,000, some 5,000 on the original reserve and the remainder in two herds under native management, the first near the Anderson River, and the second, near the Horton River. The government was hoping to hive off further herds and gradually extend the nascent industry to Coronation Gulf, where the wild caribou had all but vanished; but its prospects were already darkening. Year by year it was growing more difficult both to recruit further Eskimos as apprentice herders, and to retain the herders who had been trained already.

> "The main problem affecting the reindeer industry is a shortage of suitable help for effective supervision and herding, and for the establishment of additional herds under native management. This is attributed to wartime conditions and the continued good fur yield with high prices in the Mackenzie Delta area. Three apprentices and one qualified herder, all natives, left the reindeer service during the year and engaged in trapping. No replacements were available. As the year closed, various staff adjustments and improvements in the facilities for handling the deer and marketing surplus products appeared necessary in order to protect the herds and continue development." (Can. Dept. Mines and Res. Ann. Rept. 1944, p. 70).

Throughout the 1930's the missions continued to expand and increase their already numerous areas of conflict. Looking back from the Olympian height of 1962, when Christianity, after being virtually expelled from a third of the globe, is fighting what appears to be a losing battle in Africa and struggling with incredulity and apathy in its European homeland, one cannot help wondering why the Anglican and the Roman Catholic faiths did not conclude a truce in the Canadian Arctic and present a united front, rather than wage a fratricidal strife that worked to discredit the teachings of both sects.[1] But fate, or fanaticism, kept the feud constantly burning. The Roman Catholic church, which in 1930 had chosen the port of Churchill to be the seat of its See, opened missions at Igloolik, 1932; Repulse Bay, 1933; Pelly Bay, 1935; Wakeham Bay and Cape Dorset in 1936; and Tavani, 1941. Meanwhile, the Anglicans set up a mission

[1] In the late nineteenth century the Church of England had avoided any overlapping with the Moravian mission in Labrador by agreeing to confine its activities to the western and northern coasts of that peninsula, leaving the entire Atlantic seaboard to the Moravians (Hawkes, 1916, p. 21 footnote).

at Moffat Inlet near Arctic Bay in 1937, and an outpost at Fort Ross three years later.[1]

From his newly opened post in Repulse Bay the Roman Catholic missionary wrote in 1934 to his Bishop:

> "Protestant prayerbooks, calendars and bibles are plentiful here. They come from Pond Inlet, from Chesterfield, from King William's Island. They are a pest, and often it is their influence that sets the Eskimo stubbornly against us. When somebody is sick, his people try to cure him with prayerbooks, laying the book upon him or reciting certain formulas drawn from the book. If our book or our pictures don't work, they try again with the Anglican book and they are ready to swear by the one that does the trick. Recently a fellow had the nerve to come and tell me that he had put away carefully in a box the prayerbooks, pictures and crucifix he had received from us, because his little boy, who was sick, had been 'prayed' with the Anglican book." (Morice, 1943, p. 202).[2]

The missionary's cry for help brought a swift answer. His Bishop "improved" the syllabic script (see pp. 15–16) in which the Anglican books and calendars were printed, compiled a 156-page Roman Catholic prayerbook in the reformed script, published 15,000 copies of the work in France, and distributed them to all his arctic stations.

Confronted with warring missions and conflicting teachings, some of the Eskimos joined one faith, some the other; and some shifted from one to the other as often as seemed expedient. A few, however, tried to interpret the Bible extracts distributed by the missions in the light of their old pagan beliefs; and this, on more than one occasion, brought disaster. In 1941 some extracts referring to the Second Coming of Christ created a pathological condition of agitated expectancy among the Eskimos of the isolated Belcher Islands; and when one of their number returned from the mainland with the message that he himself was God, and his companion the Christ whom they were awaiting, some of the natives accepted his pronouncement. Others scoffed; dissension erupted into violence, and several people were killed. Yet even this tragedy failed to allay the hysteria. A woman declared that Christ was coming over the ice to the islands; and she persuaded a number of Eskimos to strip off their clothes and follow her seaward to meet Him. She herself survived and was subsequently pronounced insane; but several members of her delegation perished from exposure.[3]

The rivalry between the two churches did not improve the education of the Eskimos, or advance their health and welfare. Indeed, it contributed in several ways to destroy such cohesion as still remained in the social structure of their lives. During the first three decades of the twentieth century missionaries of both denominations had gathered up young orphans, sent them to mission boarding-schools at Fort Providence (R.C.), Hay River (Angl.), and Fort Resolution (R.C.), far up the Mackenzie River in Indian country, and

[1]Bishop Marsh states that the Fort Ross outpost was established in 1938 (1957, p. 16).

[2]It is difficult not to agree with the anonymous contributor to *The Economist* (22 June 1963, p. 1,250) who wrote, "Rival missionaries eager to convert the same cannibal are apt to behave like rival cannibals stalking the same missionary."

[3]In 1922 misunderstanding of Christian teaching and religious frenzy had caused three "murders" at Home Bay, on the east coast of Baffin Island (See Roy. Can. Mounted Police Rept. for 1923, p. 36f.) Students of comparative religion will recognize in these events the "Messiah" phenomenon well-known from other regions in the New World, and also in the Old.

there raised them with Indian children until some of them forgot their native tongue and spoke only English or French—and even that imperfectly. Then, when these Eskimo children reached their teens and it was time for them to stand on their own feet, the missions had sent them back to their relatives, entirely untrained, to earn a living by fishing, hunting, and trapping, since there was no place for them among either Indians or whites. It was a grievous hardship to inflict on young orphans. And it was unfair to their kindred, who might have ill-treated them (for Eskimo folk-lore contains numerous tales of abused orphans who avenged themselves later when they grew up), but who would never have allowed them to die of starvation, for that would have violated the social code. Ninety per cent of the natives would have treated them as kindly as they treated their own children, as I myself witnessed in Coronation Gulf when the Eskimos of that region still preserved their aboriginal way of life. During epidemics, no doubt, the missionaries had no choice but to send them away; but there were many cases when we may question whether they acted wisely or even charitably, in placing the young orphans in distant boarding-schools, where their upbringing, and the sketchy education they received, unfitted them for the life of their own people without making them acceptable to the world of the white man.

Happily, in the third decade of the century, the missions modified this policy. After 1929, when both denominations erected boarding-schools in the Mackenzie delta (see p. 48, footnote), they ceased to send any Eskimo children to schools in far-distant Indian country. Instead, they erected several day-schools at Eskimo settlements in other parts of the Arctic. The Roman Catholic church opened one alongside its hospital at Chesterfield in Hudson Bay; and the Anglicans built two in the Coronation Gulf area, at Coppermine and at Cambridge Bay, and two in Hudson Bay, one at Baker Lake and the other at Eskimo Point. Thus by 1937 there were seven schools in the Arctic, and Eskimo children needed no longer to be taken out of their Eskimo environments to receive the rudiments of an education. The education they received, too, seems to have greatly improved, at least in the Western Arctic, for Dr. Andrew Moore, a secondary-school inspector from the Province of Manitoba who, during the summer of 1944, investigated both the Indian boarding-schools in the Mackenzie River basin and the two Eskimo boarding-schools at Aklavik in the delta, found their physical plants, their equipment, and state of repair, well above the average of schools on the Canadian prairies. It is true that their time-tables and curricula, the exercise books he examined, and the conversations he held with the teachers and the clergy (for classes were suspended during the summer) indicated that the general standard of instruction and the academic advancement of the children still fell considerably below the level in prairie schools; but that was not because the teachers lacked devotion to their work: on the contrary, Moore was convinced that the majority of them possessed considerable teaching ability and gave of their best unstintingly. Only two of them, however, were certificated or abreast of modern methods and practice. He, therefore, concluded:

> "Living conditions and the general environment in the North West Territories do not tend to attract the best type of teachers unless they are fired by missionary or religious zeal and of these there is an insufficient supply even at present under church auspices." (1945, p. 82).

Moore discovered another fact. Out of 1,007 Indian children between the ages of 5 and 14 in the Mackenzie River basin, and 443 Eskimo children in the Western Arctic, only 55 were attending day-schools in 1943–4 and only 115 resided in the boarding-schools. Ninety-three per cent of the children in this area were receiving no education at all. Corresponding figures from the Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic are not available, but the percentage of children who were attending school in that region cannot have been much higher.

One can praise without reserve the "Industrial Homes" that sprang up in connection with the mission hospitals toward the end of the 1930's. It was the Roman Catholic hospital at Chesterfield that established the first home—in 1938; but the Anglican hospital in Pangnirtung, and the rival hospitals in Aklavik, followed its example within two years.

> "Industrial homes, where the aged and infirm are cared for and taught native handicrafts, are operated in conjunction with the hospitals at Chesterfield and Pangnirtung. The Department pays for the care and maintenance of each inmate on the basis of $200 per annum. The sum of $2,419.25 was expended under this heading." (Can. Dept. Mines and Res. Ann. Rept. 1939, p. 71).

The number of patients who found shelter in these homes probably never exceeded two score at any one time,[1] and their financial cost was negligible, even if the missions had to duplicate the government grant. At the close of the twentieth century's third decade, when most of the Eskimos still lacked fixed homes, but spent nearly all their days roaming the land and the sea to win a bare subsistence, these havens of refuge relieved them of a heavy burden, and saved their old and infirm much misery. We know that in earlier times, when a man (or woman) could no longer keep up with his relatives or was endangering their lives, he often begged them to abandon him, or fell behind of his own accord, to meet death face to face alone. I myself have seen a man cheerfully drag his infirm father on a sled, day after day, in sub-zero weather, until one night death overtook the invalid in their snow hut and released them both. A well-run Industrial Home may not have been the ideal solution in all cases, but at this period it undoubtedly filled a very definite need.

I cannot subscribe to the opinion, expressed by some writers, that the missions were largely swayed by monetary considerations when they undertook to educate the Eskimos and provide them with medical care. Had such been the case, they must have been very disappointed, for surely their costs far exceeded the meagre subsidies the government doled out to them. I believe that they saw two extremely important fields of public service in the Arctic which the government itself was openly evading; and that they did their best to fill the gap. That they failed to perform either task well cannot be questioned, for they lacked the necessary organization and the funds. The fault was not theirs, however, but the government's, and back of the government the people of Canada, who forgot the responsibilities that go with territorial ownership and refused, or at least neglected to provide the same services to the Eskimos that it provided without question to other citizens of the Dominion.

Public opinion exerted through the churches, nevertheless, forced the government to make more or less token contributions to those services. We obtain a close view of its contributions in a statement of the cost of 'Medical

[1] In 1948, Industrial Homes accommodated an average of 23 patients at a cost of $5,562.45 (Can. Dept. Mines and Res. Ann. Rept. 1949, p. 139).

Services, Schools and Relief for Eskimo Territory for the year 1939–40', which the Deputy-Commissioner of the Northwest Territories forwarded on 22 August 1939, to the Indian Affairs Branch.[1] The amounts are listed under six headings, each of which is itemized. I shall retain the headings, but summarize the itemized details for the sake of brevity. Costs at the head office in Ottawa were not included.

Medical Services, Schools and Relief for Eskimo Territory for the year 1939–40

Item	*Cost*
1. Medical Services This item includes the salaries of 4 doctors and 5 nurses attached to the four hospitals at Pangnirtung, Chesterfield, and Aklavik; also their provisions, fuel, medical supplies, travelling expenses, etc.	$ 29,480.00
2. Hospitalization of destitutes at the 4 hospitals	16,000.00
3. Maintenance of destitutes at the 2 mission residential schools in Aklavik, $20,000	
Maintenance of destitutes in the Industrial Homes attached to the 4 hospitals, $6,000	
Direct relief (provisions, etc.) $4,000	
Total	30,000.00
4. Grants to day schools at Baker Lake, Eskimo Point, and Pangnirtung	500.00
5. Grants to the two residential schools at Aklavik, school books, freight, and express	1,750.00
6. Eastern Arctic Expedition The main expense here was $25,000 paid to the Hudson's Bay Company for passenger and freight space on the *Nascopie*, as per contract	27,000.00
Total	$104,730.00
Addendum: The Department paid for relief to approx. 1,800 Eskimos in Quebec Province	9,873.92
Grand total	*$114,603.92*

I know of no reason why Item 6, "Eastern Arctic Expedition", should have been included in this statement, except that one of the four doctors listed under Item 1 joined the government party[2] on board the *Nascopie* to examine the health of such natives at the twenty-four ports of call as time and opportunity permitted. If we remove that item, the Department of the Interior spent, in 1939, $87,603 for the education, health, and welfare of some 7,000 Eskimos, which works out to slightly under $13 per head; and of that $13, health accounted for $7 (of which $5 went to pay the salaries of the field medical staff), education received $3, and straight relief used up the remaining $3.[3] Even the most casual inspection of these figures can leave no doubt that the administration was faithfully living up to its chosen watchword, "Economy".

It will be convenient to add here a comparative table, showing the approximate costs of the same services, at the same period, among the Eskimos of Alaska and the natives of Greenland; also the approximate Eskimo populations of those regions in 1939, and the costs of police services among them.

[1] In files of Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

[2] The other members of the party were the secretary of the Northwest Territories Council and replacements for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

[3] The Eskimos themselves contributed, directly or indirectly, as much perhaps as 40 per cent of this expenditure through the taxes that the government levied on their furs.

Approximate Expenditures in 1939 on Eskimo Education, Health, and Welfare, and on Police Posts in Eskimo Territory

	Alaska (*Pop. 19,000*)	*Canada* (*Pop. 7,000*)	*Greenland* (*Pop. 18,000*)
Education, Health, and Welfare	$844,000[1]	$ 88,000	$338,822[2]
Police	8,000[3]	119,000[4]	Nil

What should we deduce from this table? Did the political philosophies of Denmark and the United States differ so greatly from Canada's philosophy that the first two countries could select doctors and school-teachers to be the apostles of western civilization, whereas Canada had to assign that role to the police? Or was Canada, as I believe, negligent? Did she choose the easiest path, the path of least expense, and give no thought to the reckoning that would come on the morrow? And that morrow arrived quickly.

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[1]The digest of Appropriations for the Support of the Government of the United States for the Service of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1939, gives these figures:

Education of Alaskan natives	$ 825,164.12
Health of Alaskan natives (including construction of a hospital at Barrow)	508,000.00
Total	$1,333,164.12

Referring to the Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1939, Table II, we find that the native population of Alaska in that year consisted of 19,028 Eskimos and 10,955 Indians, or a total of 29,983. We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that the expenditures on Eskimos alone amounted to approximately 19/30 of the total expenditure, i.e. $844,000.

[2]1,355,287 Kroner. This is the figure for 1938, before Denmark became involved in the Second World War. Its break-down into separate items will be found in 'Statistike Oplysninger om Grønland'. Greenland possessed no police force either before or during the Second World War.

[3]Estimated cost of a marshal stationed in Nome.

[4]This figure, which excludes cost of maintenance, is based on the following two items:

28 constables paid an average of $3500 each	$98,000
12 special (Eskimo) constables paid $1750 each	21,000

CHAPTER 8

War ferment

In the conflict that erupted on the mainland of Europe in August 1939, mankind reverted once again to the total war of earlier ages, to the dagger and club struggles of palaeolithic cave-people and the sickening barbarities of mediaeval Huns and Mongols. The populations of several nations arrayed themselves *en masse* against the populations of other nations, and during six years of insensate strife permitted the laws of the tiger and the serpent to triumph over the gentler codes that humanity had evolved so painfully through unnumbered centuries. The conflict quickly spread to the New World, where the United States conscripted its male citizens without consideration of race or colour, detailed some of its Alaskan Eskimos to work side by side with their white countrymen on strategic roads and airfields, and enrolled others in two battalions of scouts to meet and repel any invasion of their homeland. Her Eskimos, however, had learned to speak and read English, even if imperfectly. The illiterate Eskimos of Canada, on the other hand, spoke neither English nor French—the Dominion's two languages—knew nothing of the world outside their immediate Arctic and Subarctic, and understood neither the nature of war nor its meaning. Consequently they could play no part in the struggle, could contribute no help whatever to their embattled fellow-Canadians. In many regions of the Arctic, indeed, they remained what they had become during the preceding quarter-century—small, isolated groups of Canadian citizens who could no longer maintain their economic independence, despite their desperate struggle to support themselves, but relied for their very survival on the charity of the Canadian government and the goodwill of the Canadian taxpayer.

The world conflagration, nevertheless, did not leave them totally unsinged. Its flames licked the edges of some Eastern Arctic settlements when a crisis in the conflict demanded the transfer of fighter aircraft from America to England more swiftly and safely than was possible by ship. United States planes then scoured certain coastal areas of Hudson Bay and Greenland, reconnoitring what later became known as the "Crimson Air Staging Route"; and a year afterwards, in 1942, her labour battalions levelled the ground and constructed airfields, not only in Goose Bay and Churchill, but close to Eskimo encampments at Coral Harbour on Southampton Island, at Fort Chimo in Ungava Bay, and in Frobisher Bay near the southeast corner of Baffin Island. Thereafter dozens of ships steamed northward each summer to supply the new air-bases with food, fuel, and other necessities; and radio and meteorological stations sprang up to

speed the military planes from one staging post to another. In 1947 other radio and meteorological outposts arose in the High Arctic, centering upon an all-weather air-strip in Resolute Bay; and two long-range navigation stations, one at Cambridge Bay and the other at Kittigazuit in the Mackenzie River delta, carried belated ripples of the war into Canada's Western Arctic. During the next decade, however, these western ripples disappeared beneath the wash of a more turbulent phenomenon, the erection across Canada's Arctic and Subarctic of early-warning stations that could signal the approach of long-range missiles and aircraft.

Let us review, first, the effect of the Crimson Air Staging Route on the Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic, and on the government's administration of that region. The Crimson Route, of course, did not provide the only line of air-fields into Canada's far north. A second line, built about the same time, followed the course of the Mackenzie River; and a third ran from Edmonton and the Peace River area to the Yukon Territory and Alaska, complementing the Alaska Highway. This third line, however, did not touch the Canadian Eskimos; and wheeled planes larger than Cessnas or Piper Cubs[1] could not descend the Mackenzie River beyond Norman Wells until the 1950's, when the government built air-strips at Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. Throughout the course of the Second World War, therefore, only the Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic heard the clatter of tractors and the clang of military bugles. An army of a thousand United States workmen debarked with bulldozers and lumber near the mouth of the Koksoak River, erected a temporary town on its west bank opposite the lonely trading post of Fort Chimo, and built there an elaborate air-base, which was guarded by United States soldiers until 1949, when it reverted to the Royal Canadian Air Force, and from that body to the federal Department of Transport. A parallel invasion simultaneously disturbed the tranquility of the Southampton Island Eskimos; and still another agitated the ten-score natives who frequented the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post at Ward Inlet in Frobisher Bay.

Haste was imperative in those days. The Western Front was urgently calling for planes, as many as possible, and as quickly: and the U.S. Army Air Forces could not spare time to teach illiterate natives the English language, or the meaning of the instructions on road machinery and of the labels on packaged foods. It employed, therefore, only a few Eskimos in Canada's Eastern Arctic, and those only on unskilled or semi-skilled jobs such as kitchen help and the unloading of cargo vessels. The Chimo base engaged more natives than the bases in Frobisher Bay and Coral Harbour, because two groups, the one of Eskimos and the other of Indians from the interior of the Labrador Peninsula, erected separate camps on its outskirts and found work as carpenters, truck drivers, and general chore-boys; and their employment attracted other natives from as far away as Great Whale River. Irrespective, however, of the actual numbers of workers the air-bases engaged, their very proximity to Eskimo settlements, their overflowing supplies of every conceivable commodity, and the free-handedness of their personnel, profoundly affected the outlook of the local inhabitants and modified the pattern of their economy.

To begin with, the bases interposed a thorny hedge between those natives who continued to seek their livelihood by hunting and trapping, and those who

[1]These small two- and four-seater planes used a short landing-strip at Aklavik.

worked for wages and obtained all or most of their supplies from the military establishments. Not that wage-employment was entirely new to the Eskimos. Almost none of them, to be sure, had seen or handled money before 1940, or understood its function in an organized society. Yet explorers, whalers, and traders had hired individual natives since the earliest days of white contact, and nearly every arctic post of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police invariably employed at least one Eskimo family. Many whaling captains of the nineteenth century had hired entire communities, but only for the Eskimos' traditional occupation, sea-mammal hunting, in which they were entitled to a large share of the catch. The natives had interpreted this arrangement as cooperation rather than wage-employment; and they had been the more content, because it did not drain away their man-power into new and unfamiliar fields. Day-labour at the air-bases, on the other hand, confronted them with an occupation that was totally alien to their culture; an occupation, too, that gravely interfered with their traditional way of life. Most communities can sustain without shock the aberrant activities of a few of their members, but stresses and strains quickly develop when large segments of their labour forces abandon the established roads and branch off along new paths.

It was well-nigh inevitable, therefore, that such stresses and strains should develop around the air-bases, and that they should increase when day-labour there proved not only less arduous than the traditional life of hunting and trapping, but financially more rewarding. With the passing of the Great Depression the demand for furs had risen, and white-fox skins for which the world market had offered an average price of $16.86 during the four-year period from 1932 to 1936, and then lowered that offer to only $11.76 during the succeeding period from 1936 to 1940, sold during the first years of the 1940's at an average of $25.99.[1] Nevertheless, even this doubling of fur values rarely if ever raised the fur income of the Chimo trapper above $500; it still remained much lower than the wage income of his cousin who filled the airfield garbage-truck and drove it to the official dump. Naturally no Eskimo could foresee that the airfield's activities would decline almost as quickly as they had expanded, and that its garbage-collector and his fellow-labourers would lose their jobs within four or five years. For a period whose duration no one could predict fortune smiled on them, and these day-labourers were enjoying greater prosperity than they had ever known. Cheerfully, they liquidated their perennial debts at the Hudson's Bay Company's trading store, and proceeded to fill their cabins and tents with baubles, many of them articles that had been thrown away at the airfield or lightly traded by its personnel. Infirm kinsmen camped

[1] A report prepared by James Cantley in 1950 (p. 39) gives the following table of prices of white-fox furs between 1920 and 1948. The prices are averaged for four-year periods to correspond with the cycles in white-fox populations.

Years	*Average Market Prices*
1920/21 — 1923/24	$38.32
1924/25 — 1927/28	$38.67
1928/29 — 1931/32	$26.99
1932/33 — 1935/36	$16.86
1936/37 — 1939/40	$11.76
1940/41 — 1943/44	$25.99
1944/45 — 1947/48	$16.58
1948/49 — One year only	$ 8.88

near them to gather some of the crumbs from their tables; once proud, independent trappers regarded them with envy, or returned their scornful looks with equal scorn; and a few parasitical natives preyed on both the trappers and the labourers whenever they wearied of scrounging food for their dogs, and collecting some of the flotsam and jetsam that had ended up on the airfield dump.

Meanwhile the comfortable quarters of the white officers and men at the air-bases, their multitudes of boats and machines, their workshops, laundries, and cinemas, and their inexhaustible supplies of construction material, food, weapons, clothing, and tents, had opened the eyes of the Eskimos to the riches and the complexity of civilization, and awakened profound dissatisfaction with their own harsh and impoverished way of life. A few acquired the houses of officers who had moved into better quarters or returned to the south: others salvaged discarded boards, or appropriated unused and seemingly unneeded timber, to construct new houses of their own.[1] Almost anything appeared to be available for the asking—or the taking. Even after the war ended and the soldiers withdrew to their own land, most of their equipment remained behind, protected by guards indeed, but guards so few and so careless that they seemed hardly more than shadows. Every day the Eskimos could see such waste and extravagance that it dazzled their eyes and distorted their judgment concerning the values of the goods so lavishly piled up around them. Naturally, then, when the end of the war brought an end also to their employment, their discontent deepened until it undermined their native independence and vigour. Some adopted a fatalistic spirit that discouraged enterprise: "Why worry?" they said. "If conditions become difficult the white man will provide for us." And the more critical murmured "Why should we freeze and starve again on our pitiless hunting- and trapping-grounds when the white man possesses an abundance of everything? Our hunters always divided up their catch when they were successful. Why should not the white man share his wealth too?"

Only the natives around the air-bases, broadly speaking, heard the alarms of the Second World War and underwent serious disturbance from the conflict. Elsewhere the Eskimos fished and hunted and trapped as unconcernedly as before, apart from the few families that worked for the police, or at the meteorological stations on Resolution and Nottingham islands, at Cape Hopes Advance, and at Chesterfield. Under a long-standing agreement with the Northwest Territories Council, both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Meteorological Service paid their native employees approximately the same wages as the Council subsequently recommended to the United States Army authorities who set up the air-bases, namely $2.00 (in rare cases $3.00) a day, together with housing and rations; and $1.00 an hour for such brief but pressing tasks as the unloading of vessels. The Canadian services, however, did not pay the natives cash, but only trade goods, on a basis of cost plus 10 per cent; and the Northwest Territories Council, unconscious still of the passage of time and the changing conditions in the Arctic, frowned on the employment of natives for

[1] From purely charitable motives the officer in charge of the U.S. Air Force at Frobisher made the Eskimo village a dump for old boxes, beds, springs and other discarded objects that might be used by them. A Danish official who visited Frobisher in 1952 wrote: "The dwellings they construct [at the bases] from any materials on hand are on or in the vicinity of the camp 'dump' and make, together with the tents one sees there in the summer, a depressing impression." (Christensen, 1953, p. 28).

longer than three years in jobs that by their very nature could not be permanent, lest they should lose some of their hunting skills and become incapable of "living off the country" when their employment terminated—as if at that late date "living off the country" was in any real sense possible.

The war brought about another change. It rolled half-way back the long-closed doors of the Canadian Arctic and allowed the world to glimpse some of the things that had been happening (and not happening) behind them. Airmen and construction workers returned with first-hand descriptions of the Eskimo settlements they had visited, and foreign newspapers and magazines published accounts of Canada's north that reflected little credit on its administrators. High officials in Ottawa began to take notice. In 1944 an Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs wrote to the Vice-Chairman of the Northwest Territories Council requesting information concerning Eskimo education and health; and the Deputy Minister of Transport called the Council's attention to the deplorable health of the natives at Chimo. Was this Deputy Minister reassured by the reply he received from the Council's Vice-Chairman?

> "Undoubtedly conditions among the Eskimos at some points in Northern Quebec are not satisfactory. . . . We are considering at the present time the question of whether the system of having hospitals constructed and operated by the Missions is the plan best suited for the future needs of the Northwest Territories."

A Cold War succeeded the Second World War, but only after a breathing-space during which the Communist powers on the one hand, and the western nations on the other, rebuilt their damaged economies and endeavoured to outstrip each other in the military applications of nuclear energy. During the early stages of the war strategists had written off the Arctic as useless, and the police had closed a few of their outposts to release more men for military service: but by the war's end the strategists were revising their opinions, for German submarines had successfully operated in the waters of the Soviet Arctic, and large aircraft of longer range had brightened the prospect of trans-polar flights carrying either passengers or missiles. Every island in Canada's far north, every level tract of ground that could serve as a landing-field, then became potentially valuable, or at least a locality of interest. To forestall any challenge therefore from some foreign and perhaps hostile power, the Dominion government reaffirmed its sovereignty over its entire arctic archipelago by initiating a vigorous program of exploration and mapping, and by cooperating with the United States in setting up five manned weather stations that would proclaim Canada's "effective sovereignty" at the same time as they assisted transatlantic flights. In support of this program the Royal Canadian Mounted Police reopened the posts it had closed a few years earlier, and established two or three new ones to widen its coverage.

Time had modified the earlier transportation services that had nourished Canada's Arctic. Although the military retained control of the newly built airfields and systematically photographed the whole of the far north for the preparation of accurate and detailed maps, civilian airlines were already casting their eyes on the region and estimating its peacetime requirements in passengers and freight. Chartered aircraft would fly anyone anywhere, and small private airlines were springing up to service the most frequented localities. Sea communications too had altered. After 1924, when the heavy pack-ice off Point

Barrow carried off the *Lady Kindersley* and sank her without trace somewhere in the Arctic Ocean, the Hudson's Bay Company had abandoned the dangerous sea route from Vancouver through Bering Strait, and shipped all its western freight down the Mackenzie River to Tuktoyaktuk, whence shallow-draft vessels carried it as far east as Spence Bay. In the Eastern Arctic, too, after the aging *Nascopie* (which from 1918 onward had carried supplies from Montreal to nearly every trading settlement in Hudson Strait, Hudson Bay, and the region centred on Pond Inlet) crashed in 1947 on a reef off Cape Dorset, Ottawa was confronted with a grave dilemma. Should the government continue to charter private vessels to carry its officials and supplies into the Eastern Arctic, or should it build and operate vessels of its own? The quickening tempo of events precluded any hesitation. Without delay the federal Department of Transport laid down the keel of an ice-strengthened vessel at Lauzon on the St. Lawrence River, christened it the *C. D. Howe*, and sent it north in 1950 to service both Hudson Bay and the region beyond.

By this time Ottawa was taking stock of the changed conditions in the Arctic, and endeavouring to meet some of the Dominion's most urgent needs by shuffling certain departmental duties and responsibilities. In 1945 it transferred the care of both Eskimo and Indian health to the Department of National Health and Welfare; and officialdom for the first time publicly recognized the Eskimos as citizens of the Dominion by distributing among them the family allowances to which a bill enacted a few months before had entitled all Canadian citizens. A year later the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, who was also the Deputy Minister of the Department of Mines and Resources, retired, whereupon the government, anxious to reorganize that unwieldy department and reinvigorate its northern administration, appointed in his place Dr. H. L. Keenleyside, a ranking official of the Department of External Affairs well acquainted with Canada's international status and obligations in the western hemisphere. A freshness then began to permeate the Canadian Arctic. At long long last the winds of change were stirring.

CHAPTER 9

Laying the new foundations (1945–50)

From 1936 onward the Department of Mines and Resources discharged such disparate functions as the regulation of immigration, the care of Canada's Indians and Eskimos, the investigation of the Dominion's mineral and other resources, and the administration of the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Keenleyside fell heir to all these duties when he assumed charge of the department in 1946. Realizing, however, that no deputy minister, not even the most capable, could carry this heavy load efficiently and give each branch of the department the thought and attention that it required, he immediately began to formulate plans for divesting himself of some of his responsibilities, and by January, 1950, was ready to submit his reorganization scheme to his minister and cabinet for approval. Geological and mining research then separated off to become the nucleus of the new Department of Mines and Technical Surveys; immigration combined with the Indian service, and with the Citizenship branch of the Secretary of State's office, to become the Department of Citizenship and Immigration; and the remaining functions of the dissolving Mines and Resources Department, among them the administration of the Northwest Territories and the care of the Eskimos, merged to form a third department that was named Resources and Development.

Before fully rounding out this reorganization scheme, however, Keenleyside had looked deeply into the Northwest Territories administration and introduced two significant changes. The first was in large measure constitutional. Foreseeing that the increasing white population of the Mackenzie River basin, particularly its mining element, would not endure much longer the control of Ottawa officials who allowed them no voice in their own destiny, he pressed his minister and cabinet to appoint a local representative to the Northwest Territories Council.[1] So well received was this measure that in 1951 the government amended the Northwest Territories Act to permit the creation of three constituencies in the Mackenzie River basin, and the election to the Council of tnree representatives, a number (raised in 1954 to four) large enough to presage a day, not too far distant perhaps, when that region would demand and receive the status of a separate territory similar to the Yukon.

This first innovation affected the Eskimos of the Mackenzie delta, but not the vast majority who lived outside that region; the second innovation affected

[1]John G. McNiven, this first representative, was manager of the Negus Mines at Yellowknife.

them all and everywhere, for it completely reversed the policy that had governed their education from the beginning of the century. With the support of his cabinet minister, Keenleyside initiated the present-day policy of building government schools throughout the Northwest Territories and the Eskimo region of northern Quebec, and of staffing them with government teachers supervised by a federal school inspector.[1] The first Eskimo school he erected in 1947, two years after taking office, at Tuktoyaktuk,[2] the terminus of river navigation in the Mackenzie delta; then, pressing his education program hard, he opened in 1949 four others—at Coral Harbour, Lake Harbour, Fort Chimo, and Port Harrison; and in 1950, his last year of office, three more—at Cape Dorset, Coppermine, and Aklavik. Succeeding Commissioners have continued his program without interruption right down to the present time, until by the spring of 1961 no fewer than 33 federal schools dotted the Eskimos' coastline from the Mackenzie delta to Ungava; and 7 more were to join them in the immediate future. Schools operated by missions still existed,[3] and the government had not ceased to subsidize them; but gradually and painlessly it had withdrawn nearly all secular education from mission hands, thereby disembarrassing them of an extraneous activity and enabling them to devote all their efforts to the religious instruction that constitutes their primary task. Of money for Eskimo schooling there is today no lack. For a time at least Canada has tossed overboard its pinch-penny arctic policy of the pre-war years, and parliament is willing to loosen its purse-strings for the education of all its citizens, whites and Eskimos alike.

In this manner then a genuine program for the education of the Eskimos began to take shape at the end of the 1940's. Unhappily it could not restore their economy, which in most areas, indeed, gravely deteriorated. The war had brought an increase in the prices of furs, and in the dollar income derived from them; but a simultaneous rise in the cost of trade goods neutralized this improvement, and when fur prices slumped again at the war's end natives who lived by trapping were worse off than ever. Hardest hit, perhaps, were the Eskimos of the Hudson Bay region, some of whom had prospered from the good wages they had earned during the construction of the Crimson Air Staging Route, but had lost their employment in 1945 when the airfields were completed. They escaped any grave hardship during the three years that followed because trapping still provided a small but significant income, the air-bases, meteorological stations, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Hudson's Bay Company continued to employ two or three score families, and welfare payments, particularly family allowances, sufficed to tip the scale on the side of solvency. But when furs plummeted in 1948–9 to only half their earlier value[4]

[1]Keenleyside's predecessor, implementing a recommendation of the educational expert Dr. Andrew Moore (see pp. 68–9), had already appointed a school inspector, with headquarters at Yellowknife, whose duties entailed the coordination of all educational services in the Territories.

[2]The Anglican mission seems to have operated it for the first two years, pending the appointment of a government teacher.

[3]At Maguse River (Pentecostal), Gjoa Haven (R.C.), Pelly Bay (R.C.), and Repulse Bay (R.C.).

[4]In 1948–9 the price of the white-fox fur averaged $8.88, and at one period in 1949–50 it fell as low as $3.50. (See footnote p. 74).

the situation of the natives became desperate. Trapping now brought in virtually no return, and even the most energetic hunter could rarely avoid dependence on relief. In 1950 an official investigator estimated that from their own earnings the Hudson Bay Eskimos were defraying only about 40 per cent of their purchases at the trading stores, and that the federal government was contributing up to 60 per cent through various hand-outs.[1]

In the Central and most of the Western Arctic the majority of the Eskimos lapsed into similar destitution, because they possessed no revenue-producing resources except the fur of the white fox; and the value of that fur had fluctuated so erratically during the previous half century that no one could predict its price from one year to the next—which explains, perhaps, why only a few specialists dare to handle it on the world's markets.

In more stable demand, although much cheaper, was the fur of the muskrat; but muskrats were rare in Eskimo territory outside the delta of the Mackenzie River. There, however, they were so numerous that even in 1949 and 1950, when the value of the white-fox fur dropped so low that it hardly paid to trap the animal, the fur of the muskrat provided a fairly satisfactory income for about 210 Eskimo trappers, and an almost equal number of Indians and whites. To protect this self-sustaining community against poachers, and to encourage the conservation, not of muskrats only, but of other game, the government registered and licenced each muskrat trapping-ground. This measure, however, proved of little avail. It made those Eskimos who were left without any trapping grounds at all disgruntled; and it failed to take into account the steady increase of a population whose sole revenue-producing activities were a muskrat industry that could probably not support further expansion, and a trifling amount of wage-employment provided by traders and transient whites, mainly in the brief navigation-season that rarely lasted more than three months.[2]

For the second time within the memory of living Eskimos, then, the foundations of Eskimo economy were crumbling. Hardly more than a generation earlier the Eskimos of the Central Arctic had procured their food, their clothing, and all the other necessities of life from their own environment, undisturbed by contact with the white man and totally ignorant of the infinite variety and complexity of his possessions. Then the storm had burst over them, as it had burst over other Eskimos a generation or two before. The pressure of the white man's demands, and his superior tools and weapons, had shattered their self-contained existence; and his insistence on furs, ever more furs, had forced them to build up their lives on an entirely new foundation. Too weak to resist the aggressive and domineering invaders, they had surrendered their immemorial freedom and resigned themselves to the lot of helots labouring for foreigners who seldom troubled to learn their language. Now,

[1]Cantley, 1950, pp. 38–39. Cf. also Fig. 12, p. 152.

[2]Cf. At Aklavik "we have a mixed population of probably 300 whites, 600 Indians and 1,000 Eskimos, all almost entirely dependent either directly or indirectly on the muskrats which can be trapped during a few months each spring. Those of the whites who are not directly engaged in trapping are there nevertheless because of the trapping. Without muskrats there would be little or no trade and without trade the community would be reduced to little more than a relief centre". (Cantley, 1950, p. 36). The term Aklavik in this passage presumably embraces the river district centred on the settlement of Aklavik, not the settlement alone.

in the 1940's, their new economy too was tottering on its base, and it was by no means clear that the white man who had built the unstable edifice would not quickly abandon it again and leave the Eskimos to their fate. As James Cantley reported in 1950 to the Northwest Territories Council:

> "Although the Hudson's Bay Company has been trading in Canada for 281 years and in the Arctic for over 40 years, there is no guarantee that they will continue to do so indefinitely. The experience of the past few years has shown that it would not be impossible for the fox market to deteriorate to a stage where no commercial concern could afford to carry on. The Hudson's Bay Company has already greatly reduced the number of its Quebec trading posts and some years ago closed out entirely in Northern Labrador. While the immediate danger of any further drastic action being taken has passed, since the fox market improved, it is a danger that may recur at any time". (Cantley, 1950, p. 49).[1]

After a rapid tour of arctic Canada, during which he saw with his own eyes the wretched conditions under which the Eskimos were living, Keenleyside had commissioned James Cantley, who was an experienced fur-trader, to analyse their economic troubles and suggest remedies. He was to study particularly the following problems, which had been outlined at a special meeting of the Northwest Territories Council on 27 October 1949:

> "(a) The feasibility of opening government-owned or co-operative stores at points rich in native food supplies which are not at present served by traders, owing to the local scarcity of white fox.
> (b) methods by which the Eskimo economy might be improved, such as by the introduction of new industries, handicrafts, etc.
> (c) The feasibility of subsidizing fur prices at a level to permit the Eskimos to earn a decent living without reliance on relief which has a demoralizing effect.
> (d) The advisability of the Government taking over all trading in Eskimo territory as in Greenland.
> (e) The possibility of some arrangement whereby the Hudson's Bay Company might continue in the picture with a degree of Government supervision and assistance to accomplish desired results." (Cantley, 1950, p. 1).

Cantley's report, submitted a year later, was frankly pessimistic. He could discern in the Arctic no important natural product that could be exploited for the benefit of the Eskimos within any foreseeable future except the white fox, and, in the Mackenzie delta, the muskrat. While admitting that we knew very little about the region's mineral resources, he did not believe that any mineral deposits rich enough to develop commercially would affect the lives of more than a very few local Eskimos: the great majority of the natives would

[1] Apart from a few independent operators in the Aklavik area, and one or two others in the southern portion of Hudson Bay, the only fur-traders in the Arctic in 1950 were employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. Concerning the attitude of that company at this time a Danish official wrote: "The Eskimos are in no way exploited to provide large profits for the company. Lately it has come to light that the arctic stations altogether are running at a small loss. When the company continues its activities in spite of a loss the reason is probably considerations of prestige and a wish not to fail the Eskimos and perhaps risk public criticism. To this must be added that the arctic trade is such a small part of the activities of the company that a small loss does not mean much. It may also be of importance to the company not to give up its foothold in areas where mineral wealth may some day be found and exploited, as has happened in the Western waste lands." (Christensen, 1953, p. 27).

still remain dependent on the Arctic's wildlife. He discouraged subsidizing or setting a floor under fur prices by pointing out, that the average income of an Eskimo family in 1949–50 was only $429, of which the family itself earned only $247 and relied for the balance on government allowances and unpaid debts; and he added:

> "If we assume that the market for white fox will recover to a point where $10 per pelt can be paid in the country or, as has been suggested, that a floor price of $10 should be placed on these skins, the approximate overall annual income per Eskimo family from this source would be no more than $360 at the peak, $100 at the low and $200 on average. Excluding revenue from muskrats, which only the Mackenzie Delta natives share in, revenue from Family Allowances, wages and other sources would probably average a further $150 per annum per family. Income at these levels, taking into consideration the high costs of goods in the Arctic, provides little more than subsistence for the majority of Eskimos." (1950, p. 56).

Cantley foresaw no stability in the white-fox market; and, apart from some unpredictable increase in the numbers of the fur-bearing animals and (or) the prices obtained for their pelts, he could suggest two ways only of raising the low living standard of the Eskimos, namely, by developing among them small industries or handicrafts which he did not further elaborate, and by larger government grants. He believed that government monopoly of trade in the Arctic would be a retrograde step; but he recommended closer cooperation between the government and the Hudson's Bay Company, and the cessation of all welfare activities on the part of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to reduce the prevalent overlapping of agencies. One further expedient that he suggested was tried out three years later—an experiment to determine whether a number of small engineering works might not greatly increase the harvest of muskrats in the Mackenzie delta; and, if so, whether this development should be left to private initiative or become a community enterprise under government auspices as in Manitoba (Cantley, 1950, pp. 34–6). The Wildlife Service of the federal government thereupon constructed a few pilot dams, but after three years they concluded that the cost of building and maintaining them far exceeded any increase in the revenue that would be derived from a fur of so little value.

One misses in Cantley's report any mention of the "area surveys" that were already being undertaken to ascertain whether the Eskimos could make fuller use of their local resources: also any reference to the removal of destitute Eskimos to areas where game was more abundant, the "relocation" schemes which the Northwest Territories Council discussed on more than one occasion during 1949 and 1950 (Can. Dept. Res. and Dev. Ann. Repts. 1950, p. 12; 1951, p. 80). Before the Council had actually received the report, it had arranged that the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, aided by a grant from the Northwest Territories administration, should organize and encourage the production of handicraft articles among the Eskimos, and also handle their marketing. Dormant in Keenleysides' files, too, lay a second scheme, to set up two small shipyards, one in the Mackenzie delta and the other somewhere in the Eastern Arctic, for the building and repair of whaleboats, Peterheads, and similar small vessels. However, in 1950, before he could either implement Cantley's recommendations or put into operation any further plans of his own, Keenleyside resigned the Commissionership to accept a post with the United Nations. Yet his influence

did not end with his departure, since his successors, Major-General H. A. Young (1950–3) and R. G. Robertson (1953–63), have continued along the paths that he lightly sketched between 1945 and 1950 and have carried some of his projects nearer to fulfilment.

The radical change in the outlook and policy of the Northwest Territories Council at the end of the Second World War coincided with a revolution also in the territories' health administration. In 1944, as the reader may remember (p. 76), the Vice-Chairman of the Northwest Territories Council had confided to the Deputy Minister of Transport that his organization was beginning to question whether the system of having the missions build and operate all hospitals in the far north was providing the population with an adequate health service. It may be that his Council had heard the grinding of God's mills, for in that same year the Social Science Research Council, when it engaged Dr. Andrew Moore to survey the educational facilities in the Northwest Territories, engaged also Dr. G. J. Wherrett, the secretary of the Canadian Tuberculosis Association, to investigate the region's health conditions and its medical and hospital services. The two men travelled together down the Mackenzie River to its delta; and the report submitted by Wherrett was more forthright even than Moore's. He informed the people of Canada that out of 729 deaths recently recorded among the Eskimos of their Arctic, 613 or 84 per cent were unattended by either doctor or nurse; that in every part of the north the rates for pulmonary tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases were extremely high, and that

> "A vigorous programme is needed, not only to save the Indian and Eskimo from this scourge brought by the explorers, traders, and settlers, but to save the white children of today from the disease introduced by their forefathers." (1945, p. 53).

It is pleasant to record that at the Indian and Eskimo mission schools he visited, Wherrett (1945, pp. 56–7) found the buildings and classrooms in good condition, and the children who remained in them during the summer months in excellent health. Their diet seemed adequate, and from September to April, the winter months, they were receiving daily doses of codliver oil provided by the Department of Mines and Resources. Medical officers treated pupils who became ill, and some schools, though not all, insisted on immunization and vaccination. Only in a minority of cases, however, were the children regularly examined on admission and none of them were X-rayed. Wherrett (1945) recommended that health education and health examinations, including X-ray and immunization, be made standard practice in all schools; and to drive home his recommendation he pointed to the epidemic of diphtheria at Eskimo Point on Hudson Bay, which had just carried off 48 of its 170 victims, and declared:

> "This shows what an epidemic can do in a native population in which no immunization measures had been carried out." (p. 52).

Although he believed that the mission schools in the north were conscientiously trying to carry out their health responsibilities, Wherrett reached a

very different conclusion concerning the hospitals, and the policy of the government in relation to them.

> "One is amazed at the number of hospital beds which are to be found in the Mackenzie River area and appalled at what little use is made of them. . . . in the [Northwest] Territories there are, on the average, at least 150 beds, or two-thirds of the total, unoccupied every day of the year. . . . As an example, at Aklavik, where the two mission hospitals provide seventy-five beds, there were only five patients under treatment." (p. 55).

And he added:

> "One fears that it has been the policy of the Department [of Mines and Resources] . . . to reduce expenditures by discouraging the admission of patients and encouraging the care of these people in their homes. It is obvious that such a policy will never solve the problem of such an infectious disease as tuberculosis. As long as a native is born, lives, and dies in an atmosphere of contagion, and with the standard of living what it is, tuberculosis will continue to wreak havoc in these areas. . . . (p. 56).
> "It is high time that the Department formulated a health policy founded on the needs of the people, rather than the meagre sum that "Treasury Board" will allow it to put in the estimates. . . . Medical services should be divorced from administration, so that medical officers will have full time for medical duties. . . . health cannot be divorced from socio-economic conditions, and a health programme will fail if, at the same time, efforts are not made to improve the economic status of these people." (pp. 59, 60).

The report was timely. A few months after its appearance parliament transferred responsibility for the health of the Eskimos and northern Indians from the Northwest Territories Council to the Department of Pensions and National Health, or more correctly, to its offspring the new Department of National Health and Welfare; and it attached to the same organization the entire Indian medical service of the Department of Mines and Resources.

It became immediately apparent that the old Department of Pensions and National Health had received too small an appropriation from the federal government adequately to treat the countless victims of pulmonary tuberculosis in Canada's native population, even if it had been given that responsibility; also that the Arctic's four small mission hospitals, served by three doctors only, had possessed neither the funds, the equipment, nor the staff to fight this scourge among the Eskimos. Now, however, the Tuberculosis Association of which Wherrett was secretary combined with other organizations to "pressurize" the government, which had but recently set up a committee from the two Houses of Parliament to revise the Indian Act. Parliament lent a favourable ear, and sanctioned a large increase in the budget of the new Department of National Health and Welfare, an increase that enabled it to expand its services and organize a vigorous campaign against every cause of sickness among the Dominion's aborigines, but particularly against the plague of tuberculosis that was ravaging their settlements in both southern and northern Canada.

The war had now ended, large numbers of doctors and nurses were returning to civil life, and the Department of National Defence no longer required all the hospitals it had built or operated during the emergency. Accordingly, it handed over to the Department of National Health and Welfare six hospitals, among them a base hospital in Edmonton, today called the Charles Camsell Hospital, which immediately became a tuberculosis centre for the treatment of patients from the Mackenzie River basin and the Western Arctic.

At the same time the Department of National Health and Welfare itself proceeded to build three or four new hospitals in different parts of the country, one of them in Moose Factory at the foot of James Bay, where it could serve the Indian and white populations of the surrounding area and also some of the Eskimos of Hudson Bay.[1] The department knew that the four mission hospitals in Eskimo territory were merely stop-gaps, being too ill-financed, too ill-equipped, and too ill-staffed to provide an adequate health service. Nevertheless it decided, for the time at least, not to erect a large new hospital of its own on the arctic coast, partly because the Eskimo settlements were so small, so widely scattered, and in many cases so difficult of access, that its operating costs would far exceed the cost of treating the same patients at some better-equipped institution in the south, but mainly because the isolation of such a hospital, and the limited experience it could provide its medical staff, would repel the specialists whom the staff should include and render very difficult the enlistment of competent general practitioners.[2]

During 1946 then, its first full year of arctic responsibility, the Department of National Health and Welfare felt its way carefully. It opened its fight against tuberculosis by X-raying, and immunizing with BCG vaccine, as many Eskimos in the Eastern and Western Arctic as its field officers could reach during the summer season, and by subsequently developing and analysing the films at Ottawa to determine the presence or absence of the tubercle bacillus. One medical group, travelling through the Eastern Arctic on the R.M.S. *Nascopie*, X-rayed over 1,500 natives, while another group in the Western Arctic X-rayed a rather smaller number in the region extending from the Mackenzie delta to Coronation Gulf. Both parties, of course, supplied medication to all individuals who needed it, and performed some minor surgical operations; but the tuberculosis survey was their major task, and they shipped to the south, by aircraft or by boat, only those Eskimos whose condition plainly demanded immediate hospitalization.

In 1947 the field doctors renewed their survey, but the wreck of the R.M.S. *Nascopie* at Cape Dorset interrupted the work of the eastern party and prevented it from completing its program. Nevertheless, by chartering aircraft from private airlines, and by enlisting the generously given aid of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the United States Army Air Force, it succeeded in flying out 42 Eskimos, most of them natives who had been X-rayed the previous summer and recognized as tubercular from their films. These Eskimos were hospitalized in Quebec City, while others taken from the Western Arctic were sent for treatment to the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton.

This was the program with which the Department of National Health and Welfare finally launched its campaign against tuberculosis in the Arctic, a vigorous campaign which it has pursued uninterruptedly, year after year, right

[1] This 165-bed hospital, begun in 1948, was not completed until September 1950.

[2] "It has always been difficult to obtain the services of well-trained and experienced physicians and in recent years it has been impossible to obtain the services of dentists. Present salary scales do not offer sufficient incentive for a physician or dentist who could do just as well or better in private practice in Southern Canada to work in relative isolation from his professional colleagues, far from the large hospitals, medical and dental schools with which he must keep in touch to keep up to date." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Welfare, 1961, p. 3).

down to the present day. The Toronto Hospital at Weston is now the main treatment centre in eastern Canada, hospitals in Winnipeg, The Pas, and Moose Factory accept a small number of Eskimos, and the government vessel *C. D. Howe*, which since 1950 has visited each summer most of the settlements in the Eastern Arctic, has become more and more a hospital ship that processes the X-ray films on board as soon as they are taken and evacuates to hospital without delay every recognized case of active tuberculosis. Otherwise the program has hardly changed. Tuberculosis will not cease to spread, of course, as long as northern Canada harbours even a small reservoir of active cases: and given the region's harsh climate, and the close confinement this necessitates during many months of the year in dwellings that are overcrowded and sub-standard, there can be little hope of eradicating the disease entirely until science finds some vaccine or other agent that will render the human body immune. Nevertheless, by unceasing effort, the Department of National Health and Welfare has already lowered the high morbidity rate, and cherishes firm hopes of reducing it still further. Whether or not it succeeds will depend in large measure on economic and other factors over which it has little or no control.

Meanwhile the four small mission hospitals at Aklavik, Chesterfield, and Pangnirtung continued for a few years to operate as before, supported by federal payments, now provided not by the Northwest Territories administration, but by the Department of National Health and Welfare. That department, however, more conscious than its predecessor of the hospitals' deficiencies, drew up a plan to supplement them by establishing in isolated regions small medical centres of a type that had proved very successful among both Indians and whites in remote parts of the prairie provinces. It calls them "Health Centres" and "Nursing Stations", and defines them as follows:

> "The Health Centre consists usually of a dwelling and office, staffed by a registered nurse whose primary function is to implement a public health program and who offers, also, whatever nursing care and, under direction, such medical aid as she is called upon to render. Where circumstances call for a stronger emphasis upon treatment services, the unit is expanded to include a few beds and staffed with one or two graduate nurses, an assistant, and a fireman-labourer. This is called a Nursing Station." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Welfare, Ann. Rept. 1957, p. 78).[1]

In 1947, accordingly, the department opened the first half of a nursing station at Port Harrison in the Eastern Arctic, and a year later completed one in the Western Arctic at Coppermine. In 1949 it finished its Port Harrison station and added two others, one at Lake Harbour and the second at Fort Chimo. It then pushed this program throughout the 1950's until today it has

[1]The typical Nursing Station measures from 60 to 90 feet long and from 25 to 35 feet wide. At one end are the quarters of the nursing personnel, at the other accommodation for four patients, and in between a kitchen and a combination waiting-room and office. Such a building costs today from $70,000 to $150,000 according to its location. A later development is the Health Station which is defined as: "an insulated building about 24′ by 36′ containing a bedroom and livingroom kitchenette for visiting professional staff (e.g. Field Nurse) and a separate health services room usually containing one or more folding beds for patients, and cupboards and a work bench. Usually no electricity or water services provided. "Built-on" toilet rooms with "chemical" bucket type toilets, separate for staff and patients. Usually not kept open and hence not heated except when in use. May be used at discretion of local Dispenser (e.g. RCMP officer or missionary) for emergency care of sick awaiting transportation to Nursing Station or Hospital." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Welfare, 1961, p. 71).

one nurse, and sometimes two, in each of twelve widely separated Eskimo settlements, from which they can visit outposts in fourteen others (see Fig. 9).

It was on these nursing stations, rather than on the annual ship-patrols or the four small mission hospitals, that the Department of National Health and Welfare founded its Eskimo health program. The patrol ship that called at the settlements in the Eastern Arctic each summer, and the smaller vessel that carried the Aklavik medical officer to Coronation Gulf at the same season, brought hundreds of natives into contact with the department's doctors and X-ray technicians, but for a few minutes only, whereas the nurse was on hand at her arctic station, or visiting one of its outposts, every day in the year. Hers was generally the only medical building within a radius of 500 or 1,000 miles. It served

> "a population of up to 1,000, scattered in small groups, some of them moving from place to place according to the fortunes of the hunt; a single family here, a dozen families there. For these people the Nursing Station must be more than a mere refuge, to which their sick come stumbling in pain, coughing or feverish, seeking a cure. Positive preventive action must be taken to visit the homes and discover conditions likely to result in disease, to meet the shy, pregnant native woman and introduce her to the benefits of antenatal care and delivery of her child at the nursing station or, if complications seem likely, at the nearest hospital. This usually requires the services of a second Registered Nurse, preferably with training in public health (known as a Field Nurse)." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Welfare, 1961, p. 10).

Back of the field nurse stood the field doctors whom she could summon by radio in an emergency, and back of the doctors the hospitals, especially the big hospitals in the south to which the most serious cases could be evacuated by aircraft. But, just as in Alaska, where the territorial (now state) government had adopted a similar program, it was the nurse at her lonely field station who held the front line in the battle.

Such a front-line fighter was sorely needed in the crises that overtook one or more Eskimo groups every three or four years. In 1945, only one year after the diphtheria epidemic had swept away 48 Eskimos living around Eskimo Point, an epidemic of typhoid struck the Cape Dorset natives and claimed 45 victims. Then in 1948 came a third epidemic:

> "Commencing in November, 1948, beyond Churchill and spreading north along the West Coast of Hudson Bay towards the Barren Lands, a devastating epidemic of poliomyelitis occurred among a people previously most fortunately free of this disease. The new cases occurred in a fanshaped zone from the point of detected origin and presented such spectacular features that there was no difficulty in enlisting the assistance of foremost clinicians and research men.
>
> ". . . By the end of March, 1949, 90 cases had been identified with 14 deaths and a number with extensive residual paralysis. A large area was quarantined and all but essential travel west from Hudson Bay to the Barren Lands is to be discouraged for many months." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Welfare, Ann. Rept. 1949, p. 108).

Thus in one decade three different epidemics ravaged the Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic. Nor were the 2,500 natives in the Western Arctic by any means exempt, for between December 1949 and February 1950 measles attacked 300 of them and carried off 14.

Tuberculosis, diphtheria, influenza and other diseases of the body we can fight with drugs and surgery, but we have yet to learn how to combat the sickness of the soul which sometimes grips whole tribes or groups of people when crushed by misfortunes from which they see no issue. This was the

malady that affected many Eskimos in the late 1940's, after those who had been working at the air-bases lost their employment, fur values collapsed, the multitudes of caribou that had once provided both food and clothing shrank in number from an estimated 2½ millions at the beginning of the century to perhaps half a million,[1] and white "medicine-men" invading the Eskimos' homes began to carry off young and old, parents and children, to an unknown country from which some of them never returned. Very few tubercular Eskimos at that period left their homes willingly; the great majority went in silence, offering no resistance, and their relatives stood silently by and watched them depart without tears. But there were occasions when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer had to use his authority, and a number of families deliberately kept away from any settlement when the hospital ship was due to make its annual call. In the south the evacuee, strictly confined to hospital, unable to speak more than a few words of English, could hardly fail to be lonely and depressed, although both the doctors and the nursing staff lavished on him more than usual sympathy and care. His low morale imperilled his recovery and restitution to his home, while his kinsmen in the north, lacking news of him, despaired of ever seeing him again.

Such a situation was fraught with tragedy; yet the Department of National Health and Welfare, certain of the beneficial outcome of its program, never wavered. In cooperation with other government departments, it strove to raise the morale of the patients through radio talks, and circulars written in Eskimo syllabics; and it fostered the exchange of letters between patients and relatives back in the homeland. Also it carefully supervised its patients before shipping them south, issued special supplementary diets to their families during their absence, and continued the issues long after their return. These measures did improve considerably the Eskimos' morale, but what more than all else revived their confidence was the steady stream of ex-patients who returned to their settlements after one or two years, restored to health or at least greatly improved. Anyone who has witnessed the separation of an Eskimo mother from her child, or of a husband from his wife, at the departure of the hospital ship, may wonder at their calmness and seeming unconcern; but he need only witness their later reunion to realize how deeply an Eskimo can feel without showing any emotion on the surface.

Voices were raised at that period (and are sometimes heard even today), protesting against the government's "heartlessness" in tearing Eskimos from their home-land and isolating them in hospitals in what must have seemed to them a foreign country. Public health, the critics said, possesses a social aspect distinct from, but no less important than, its medical and economic ones; and in its treatment of the Eskimos the Department of National Health and Welfare was neglecting this social side.

> ". . . the system of taking the patients South for hospital care is bad; the patients do not feel comfortable in the strange environment which influences their psyche and thus their chances of recovery, and the protracted stay under what is for the Eskimos luxurious conditions makes their return to primitive conditions difficult. . . . It has been suggested that a larger hospital be built somewhere in the Eastern arctic district where the problem is most serious. It might decrease the difficulties and would make it easier for the patients to return to their normal existence". (Christensen, 1953, p. 44).[2]

[1]Ten years later, in 1961, a biologist estimated their number at only a quarter of a million, and a senior R.C.M. Police officer lowered that estimate to 180,000.

[2]Cf. also G.M.R. in *Eskimo*, 1961, pp. 6–7.

So protested these lay critics; but the department pursued its policy regardless. A decade later, however, one of its most experienced medical officers denied that hospitalization in the south affected the Eskimo's chances of recovery. Exactly the contrary was the case, he said:

> "Tuberculosis is a constitutional, communicable disease requiring complete bed rest, both physical and mental, for the early stages of care. It has been found that frequent visits of relatives make the patient unhappy and dissatisfied, thus retarding his or her recovery. It has been shown, time and again, that patients with a long term stay in northern hospitals (i.e. at Aklavik, Fort Simpson, etc.) have made slower progress towards recovery than they did after transfer to the Camsell Hospital (in Edmonton). This can be definitely demonstrated by X-rays."[1]

On the other hand, no one will deny that a protracted stay in southern Canada has made it more difficult for many Eskimos to return to the primitive conditions of their earlier life. There will always be natives who will want to return: like the poet Horace, long ago, they will hate our noisy, tumultuous crowds and gladly escape them by fleeing to the peace and timelessness of their Arctic, despite the stern struggle for a bare subsistence that they know awaits them there. Some ought never to return, at least until the Arctic changes, because disease has permanently impaired their health and they can no longer endure the rigours of its climate and the hardships of a hunting and trapping existence. And others again, though they may have regained the strength to endure that existence, will resent its hardships and privations, and, if we allow them the choice, will prefer to remain in the south and enjoy the flesh-pots of our civilization.

And why, indeed, should they not remain? Why should we force them to return,[2] for the rest of their days, to an environment which very few white men are willing to endure for a single winter—an environment in which not many Eskimos can maintain themselves and their families today without continuous help from our government. We do not subsidize our farmers to help them cling to the dust-bowls that have ceased to yield rewarding crops. Why then should we subsidize our Eskimos to keep them in barren arctic regions where without our subsidies many of them would die of starvation? Should those to whom we have carried our deadliest diseases, and then brought south to cure them of those diseases—should they not be allowed, even encouraged, to stay among us if they wish, and helped to earn in the south the livelihood that the underdevelopment of the north, and nature herself, deny them today in their homeland?[3]

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[1]Dr. W. L. Falconer, Regional Superintendent of the Indian and Northern Health Services of the Department of National Health and Welfare, in an address to the Anglican Synod at Inuvik in April 1961.

[2]Not by physical constraint, of course, but by failing to provide them with the means to support themselves and their families in southern Canada.

[3]"In 1956, 1,600 Eskimos were in hospitals in southern Canada. Now [1962] there are only about 350. Many of the 3,000 Eskimos who have been hospitalized over the past six years and who have returned to the north cannot return to their life on the land; many have been unable to adapt to a wage economy and culture (where such an economy and culture existed). Because all could not be absorbed by existing rehabilitation programs, the inevitable alternative has been relief. Better health services have saved more lives than before, but many of these persons have been left handicapped and depend to a greater or lesser extent on relief for their subsistence." (Memo. Welfare Div. Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ottawa, 31 October 1962).

CHAPTER 10

Steering without a compass

Although Canada has governed her Arctic by remote control from Ottawa since the beginning of the century, at no time has she attempted to gather all her activities in the region under a single authority, as Denmark did in neighbouring Greenland. Cantley drew attention to this feature of her rule in the report he submitted to Keenleyside in 1950:

"Under the present arrangement the administration of all Eskimo affairs, excepting the Aklavik area and matters pertaining to education, is the direct responsibility of the Arctic Services section of Northern Administration. The Ottawa staff consists of two Administrative Officers, two clerks and two stenographers. In the field, there are welfare teachers at Fort Chimo, Cape Dorset, Southampton Island, Port Harrison, Tuktoyaktuk and Coppermine. The administration of Eskimo affairs in the Aklavik area is included in the duties of the resident District Administrator, and education everywhere in the Territories is directed by the Education and Welfare section of Northern Administration.

"Law and order are maintained throughout the Northwest Territories by the R.C.M. Police but in the Arctic where, apart from the District Administrator at Aklavik and the welfare teachers referred to above, there are no Departmental representatives, they perform most of the administrative duties. These include the control of issues of Family Allowances, relief and Old Age Allowances, the recording of Vital Statistics including taking a decennial census, the enforcement of fur and game regulations, acting as Postmasters for the Post Office Department and the local supervision of all matters affecting the health and general well-being of the Eskimos.

"The Department of National Health and Welfare assumes responsibility for the medical care of the native population throughout the Territories, and in the Arctic has nurses at Fort Chimo, Port Harrison, Cape Dorset, Lake Harbour, Southampton Island and Coppermine, and resident doctors at Pangnirtung, Chesterfield Inlet and Aklavik. The Anglican and Roman Catholic Missions, aided by subsidies from the Department of National Health and Welfare, maintain hospitals at Pangnirtung and Chesterfield respectively, and each has a hospital at Aklavik. Eskimos from all areas are also brought out to hospitals in civilization for treatment.

"Anglican and Roman Catholic missions operate at a number of places where besides religious instruction a limited amount of elementary schooling is given while the natives are in the settlements. . . .

"Except in the Aklavik area and for one or two small traders in the southern areas of Hudson Bay, the Hudson's Bay Company are the only traders now operating in Eskimo territory.

"While all these agencies are doing something for the Eskimos, directly or indirectly, they all function independently. No means have yet been provided for co-ordinating their activities or for the general over-all direction and control of Eskimo affairs. No matter what policies Arctic Services may recommend and have accepted by this Administration, they cannot do anything to implement them without the concurrence and assistance of one or more of the other interests. In particular, the Hudson's Bay Company is free to follow any policy laid down by its own management; the R.C.M.Police will only discharge their responsibilities as native welfare supervisors as they see fit and the Department of National Health and Welfare must, of necessity, be left free to make its own decisions regarding medical care." (1950, pp. 44–5).

Two years later the Danish official Christensen noted the same dispersal of authority and functions among the handful of white residents in arctic settlements. He wrote:

> "On the spot where the actual work among the Eskimos takes place the little settlements bear witness that the work is done by several institutions, independent of each other.
>
> "Such a settlement consists perhaps of 15-20 houses belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, Department of Health and Welfare, Educational Service (Northern Administration), Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church and perhaps a radio-meteorological station (Department of Transport). Almost without exception they are neat and well kept, especially are the houses belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company well planned and practical. Each institution is on the whole independent of the others, gets its supplies shipped directly and has its own little electrical power station. Of course this does not mean that there is not usually excellent co-operation and good relations among the inhabitants, but it is interesting to notice that the small quarrels which occasionally occur, are exactly identical with those among the heads of the various institutions, known to everybody who has been in Greenland. On both sides of the Davis Strait trade bears the brunt of the quarrels, and as a rule without deserving it.
>
> "The daily life of the resident personnel is the same as in the smaller colonies in Greenland, with one important exception: there is only a very small residential native population. The majority lives its own life out in the district and comes to the settlement only to trade, when a ship is expected and at Christmas time." (1953, pp. 12–13).[1]

The years since 1950 have brought no decrease in the number of government agencies operating in the Arctic, or in the character of most of the settlements. We may leave aside such military and paramilitary activities as the construction of the D.E.W. and Mid-Canada lines, because they are essentially transitory, even though for a brief period they may demand heavy outlays in money and men and disrupt a few communities. The Northern Administration Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has mushroomed, its staff has trebled and its expenditures multiplied fifteen times;[2] but the Eskimos are only one of its responsibilities. The Department of National Health and Welfare, whose responsibilities embrace all Canada, has expanded similarly: on the Eskimos alone, whose numbers it estimated at 11,166, it spent in 1961 $3,087,492. Other civil departments, particularly those of Transport and of Mines and Technical Surveys, have increased their operations in the far north during the last decade, and their arctic expenditures too must reach a sizable figure, though it is difficult to separate them from expenditures in other regions.[3] Even the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which at the outbreak of the Second World War reduced the number of its posts in Eskimo territory from 13 to 7 without perceptible ill-effect, staged a re-advance at the close of the war and was manning 19 posts in 1950, 24 in 1960[4] (Fig. 6).

[1]Christensen also noticed another difference between arctic Canada and Greenland. The Greenland administration deliberately shared control over purely local affairs with the inhabitants of each settlement, whereas Canada, up to that time at least, had allowed the Eskimos no voice in village management (1953, p. 46).

[2]The approximate figures, as calculated by a Northern Administration officer, are:

Staff:

In Ottawa: 150 in 1954; 300 in 1961

In the field: 370 in 1954; 1,260 in 1961

Expenditures: less than $2 millions in 1955; slightly over $28 millions in 1960.

[3]Total government expenditures in the Northwest Territories rose from $12 millions in 1955 to $47 millions in 1959; and during the same period the number of government employees administering or directly concerned with the region increased from 950 to over 2,000. The population of the area in 1959 was estimated at 22,100.

[4]The number dropped back to 21 in the latter year when Ottawa removed its police posts from northern Quebec.

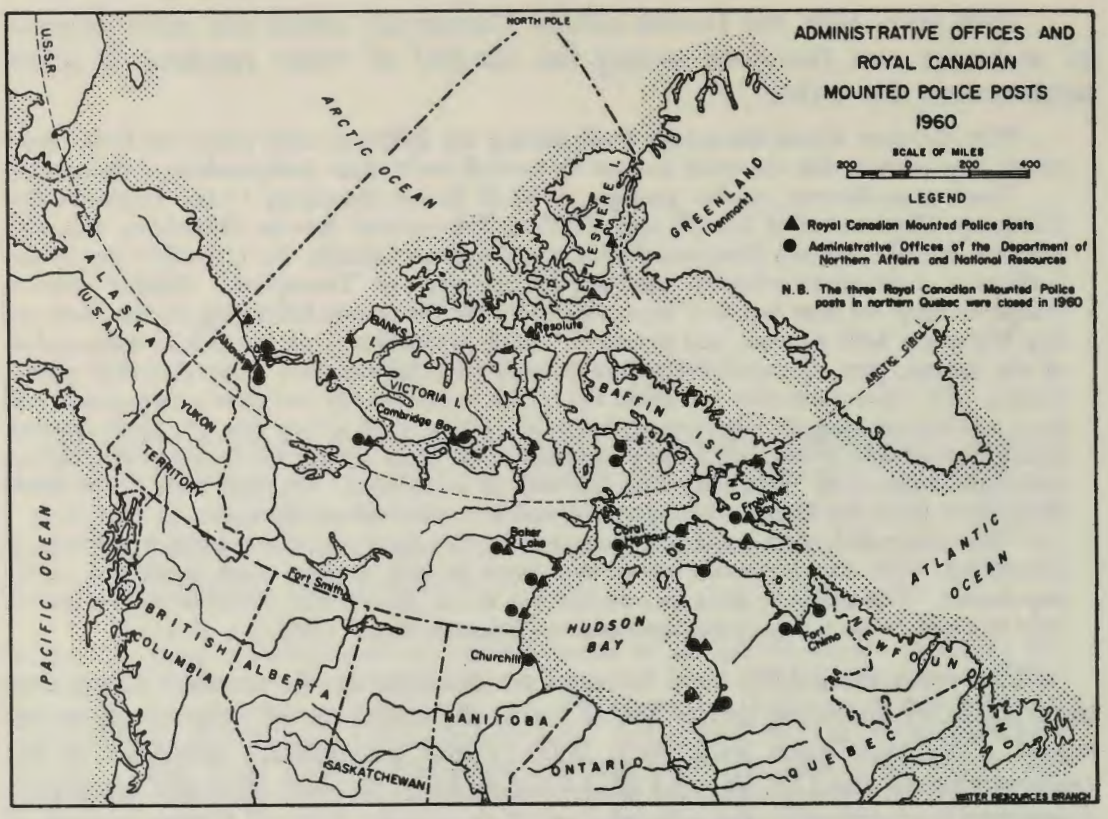

Fig. 6.

In January 1953 the federal cabinet reactivated an old interdepartmental committee, the "Advisory Committee on Northern Development" which today, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, coordinates the activities of the several government branches and tries to check any duplication and wastage of public funds. Although it lacks executive authority, it keeps the various branches informed of current operations and future plans, and can facilitate permanent or temporary transfers of functions from one branch to another. Thus the Department of National Health and Welfare is responsible by law for the distribution of Family Allowances to the Eskimos; but in some settlements officials of the Department of Northern Affairs distribute them, in others, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

A large percentage of the government's outlay in the Eskimo area represents capital investment in communication facilities, schools, health stations, new housing and other items designed to promote the economic development of the north and the welfare of its inhabitants. Projects of this nature seldom produce immediate results. Planning has to balance the capital investments against the anticipated production at some date not too far remote; and the production must be reckoned in social values, and calculated in social figures, just as carefully as in economic ones. For the Arctic this means that one arm of the balance must carry, not only the gross production of the region reckoned in dollars and cents, and the average family income of its inhabitants, in cash and kind, but also the number of schools relative to the size of the population,

the level of education that the inhabitants attain, their health, and, if we can find a suitable measuring-rod, their contentment. Not until we have gathered all these factors together, and weighed them in our balance against the capital investment in money and effort, can we truly evaluate the results of our planning.

Since 1945, when it drew the Department of National Health and Welfare into the administration of its Arctic, the government has consistently followed a clear and enlightened program in its struggle for Eskimo health. In its educational policy, however, it has vacillated, partly because of the unusual difficulties in teaching an illiterate and still primitive people through the medium of an alien tongue, and partly because a romantic preoccupation with a culture that has already passed away has too often diverted the attention of the authorities from one of education's main goals in the north—the building up of

> "a region where race lines are unknown, and where the north will be run by its own people, standing on their own feet, and doing the job better than we from the south could do it." (Robertson, 1961, p. 13).

To build up such a region within a reasonable period of time requires an educational policy that is both venturesome and single-minded. It requires, too, the support of an economic policy equally bold and single-minded: but the economic field bristles with obstacles, many of which we may be unable to remove until mining expands in Canada's northlands and opens up a larger labour market.

Every thinking Canadian will endorse the ultimate goal for our Arctic and Subarctic which the then Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs set forth so concisely, in the sentence just quoted. The busy administrators of earlier years, distracted by the perplexing problems they were encountering from day to day, had entertained conflicting opinions concerning the goal at which they should aim, and the steps they should take to reach it. Even after Cantley and Christensen had explored the grave weaknesses of our present arctic economy, and the precarious condition of its Eskimos, a high official in what was then called the Department of Resources and Development, when asked what plans his department had framed for their welfare, answered without hesitation that

> "it had three programs. In the more southern regions, where the Eskimos live close to white settlements, it was educating them so that they could adapt themselves to our civilization and be gradually assimilated. Farther north, wherever the natural resources were abundant, it was encouraging them to continue their old hunting and trapping existence. Finally, wherever their districts lacked sufficient resources of fish and game (and here he pointed to a place on the east coast of Hudson Bay) it was moving them to other districts where game was more abundant." (Personal communication).

The advocate of these programs did not realize, apparently, that he was deliberately reviving a policy which Canada had adopted with her Indians more than two centuries before; that he was perpetuating her racial problems by rejecting the Eskimos as equal partners with the whites in developing Canada's northlands, and by segregating them, not in carefully surveyed reservations adjacent to white settlements (as the Indians had been segregated) but in remote regions, for the moment not exploitable by white men, where he expected them to support themselves without becoming a drag-chain on the rest of Canada. Unconsciously he was advocating a form of apartheid, the creation of a Canadian

Bantustan. He was following in the footsteps of that spokesman for the Northwest Territories Council in the 1930's who believed that the Eskimos could be useful servants at police and trading posts, could furnish a pool of unskilled labour for any construction jobs that might arise in the north, and could supply a few of the furs that adorn our ladies in Paris and New York: but that in race and culture they differ from the white man, and fall far behind him in knowledge and skills. Canada, he agreed, must carry the "white man's burden"; she must protect and succour her Eskimos (and Indians) whenever they need her help; and her missionaries must instil into them the comforts of the Christian faith. But she is not obligated, like Abraham, to take them to her bosom. She should shelter them in their own homeland where, benevolently ruled by government officials, they can pursue the same life as their forefathers without obstructing in any way the progress of their white fellow-countrymen.[1]

He did not realize, too, that the north today is not the north of yesteryear; that the fur trade has declined, that the caribou and some of the sea mammals have greatly decreased in numbers, and that the Eskimos can no longer exist by hunting and trapping alone. Even when he (or his successor) moved some of them, in 1953, to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, two districts in the arctic archipelago that abound in seals and foxes, he still had to provide them with a considerable proportion of their food; for a man cannot trap foxes all winter and at the same time diligently hunt seals. He had to furnish them with lumber for wooden houses, and fuel oil to heat them; for if he had forced them to live once more in draughty skin tents or chilly snow huts 50 per cent of them probably would have contracted tuberculosis again and half their babies would have died of pneumonia. He had to send them rifles and ammunition, warm woollen clothing to replace the old clothing of caribou fur, water-tight rubber boots for wading the streams and tramping over soggy muskeg,[2] wooden boats, outboard motors, steel axes, steel knives, and a multitude of other goods that the Eskimos could do without in pre-European times, but now find as necessary as we do. All these things the administrator had to send north to them by ship or by aircraft, at exceedingly high cost.[3] And after they reached the High Arctic how could his Eskimo settlers have paid for them if the air-base and the police posts in their vicinity had not provided some of them with employment that gave the worker eight or ten times the meagre income, $200–$400 a year, he might have earned from trapping foxes?[4] A canoe for fishing and sealing, or a 12-foot dingy, would cost him about $300, and for an outboard motor to

[1]Dr. Trevor Lloyd, Chairman, Department of Geography in McGill University, who returned recently from Russia, informs me that the Soviet Union appears to have adopted exactly the opposite policy. In one of that country's large research institutions he was introduced to an Eskimo woman-scientist who had been born somewhere in the Bering Strait region of northeast Siberia. He said to her, smiling, "I am told that you are an Eskimo". The lady proudly drew herself up and answered, "I am a Soviet citizen of Eskimo lineage".

[2]Before the days of rubber boots the Eskimos wore during the summer months carefully sewn boots of sealskin; and the seamstress' crowning test was the making of boots that never leaked at the seams. I have seen a man test a pair of boots his wife had just finished by deliberately wading in water for half an hour, at the end of which he scolded her severely because one boot leaked at a stitch that had inadvertently passed right through the skin to the underside. Very few Eskimo women today possess the skill to make such boots.

[3]In 1961 freight charges by boat from Montreal to Cape Dorset stood at $72 a ton. To Pond Inlet and other settlements in the far north they were much higher. Cf. Dubnie, 1959, p. 21.

[4]The average may have been a little higher in the Western Arctic. See Fig. 12, and p. 154.

drive it he would have to pay the same or even more. Even in his high arctic home he could no longer survive without money, or the things that only money (or its equivalent in credit) could procure for him. However bravely he might strive to reinvoke the freedom and independence of his forefathers, and support himself and his family from the wildlife he found around him, he was still as closely chained to our white civilization as any trapper or farmer in southern Canada.

Only a very few Eskimos today can support themselves and their families on the income that trapping yields, even when they secure most of their food from fishing and hunting. The majority sell a few handicrafts, work as general factotums for any white men who will employ them, and eke out a miserable existence with the help of family allowances and various government subsidies. It is not without significance, then, that at the time our senior administrator revealed his department's program for Eskimo welfare, military authorities were planning to set up a number of defence establishments in the Arctic and Subarctic, and the contractors who undertook to build those D.E.W. and Mid-Canada lines welcomed the opportunity to employ local Indians and Eskimos at a low wage-scale, just as the U.S. Army Air Forces had welcomed a similar opportunity when it built the northern airfields almost a decade earlier. Employment on these lines has brought temporary prosperity—economic, but not social—to perhaps a hundred Eskimo families, and eased the condition of two or three times that number; but in a dozen or more communities it has produced as much disorganization, and created as much tension and unrest, as the building of the airfields. A newspaper correspondent who visited Great Whale River in 1959 reported:

> "Before a Mid-Canada Line radar station was built there in 1955 Great Whale was an old established settlement where the Eskimos camped for a few weeks each summer near the trading-post. Then they dispersed again to their hunting-grounds, under their headman, who was the hunter of most renown. In 1955, however, all regional Eskimos moved to Great Whale River. Many were hired as labourers, but some soon abandoned their well-paying jobs to return to hunting. The Eskimo community was split between hunters and labourers, and the wide difference in income caused tensions. Soon hunting decreased and fresh meat became scarce. The labouring jobs were fewer with the completion of the radar base. A Northern Service Officer arrived to distribute relief and family allowances. In the winter of 1958 hunting was so poor that many Eskimos did not leave Great Whale." (Chisholm, 1959).[1]

Inevitably the defence establishments employed many of the Eskimos for a few years only: by May 1960 they offered steady work to only 95, a number that has hardly varied since that date.[2] Like the police posts that have employed one or two Eskimo families ever since the 1920's, and the mining companies that, with the help of local Indians, opened up the Yellowknife goldfields and the iron ores of Knob Lake in the Labrador Peninsula, the D.E.W. and Mid-Canada lines and the northern meteorological stations have given our natives no training except on unskilled jobs. They have left the racial problem exactly as they found it, and hastened the entrance of the Eskimos into the world of civilization only to the extent that they familiarized a small number of families with some peripheral features of our daily life.

[1]See also Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ann. Rept. 1954–55, p. 14.
[2]In 1962 they were employing 94 Eskimos.

Nevertheless, ideas in government circles have been changing, even in the few short years since our high official outlined his department's three-point program. In 1955 the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources published this forward-looking assessment of the Eskimo problem:

> "It is only in the relatively recent past, however, that there has been a growing awareness on the part of the government and of the people of Canada of their responsibilities to the Eskimos and of the need for a program which will enable them to participate fully in the national life. . . .
>
> "The Canadian Eskimos are today in an in-between state; their mode of life is in transition. They have received a few of the benefits of our civilization. For their white fox furs they obtain some of our food, tools and clothing. With the nation as a whole they share family allowances, old age security pensions, old age assistance allowances, blind persons allowances, and disabled persons allowances and when they are indigent they are provided with relief. But these measures do not meet the much broader needs—and they are immediate needs—of health, education and a sound economy. These are not separate problems. Each is related to the other. It is not enough to cure disease, the cause of disease must be removed: this is largely a matter of education, and the improvement of economic conditions. Education must be provided, but this depends on good health, and the needs and opportunities of the economy. A sound economy means a diversified economy not based on white fox trapping alone; new occupations are needed, but if the Eskimos are to undertake these occupations satisfactorily they require better health and more education. In providing health, education and a sound economy the complications are infinite. The area is enormous, the population small, communication extremely difficult". (Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ann. Rept. 1954–55, pp. 11–12).

Since these lines were written, several federal departments have enlarged their activities in the Arctic and increased their field staffs, though without entirely eliminating the overlapping of agencies that Cantley and Christensen remarked. Their increasing activity, and the increasing knowledge it has brought of the Arctic's limited resources, quickly uncovered some of the inadequacies of the three-point program we have just discussed, and sent officials in search of other means to improve the economy of the Eskimos and raise their living standard. This time it was the Department of National Health and Welfare that proposed a new policy. In 1956, a year in which it was holding 1,600 Eskimos in southern hospitals,[1] many of them patients ready for discharge but too impaired physically to take up again the hard life of hunting and trapping in an arctic environment, it suggested that convalescents who seemed adaptable to the life of civilization should be settled with their families, in small colonies, in or near southern cities where they could be given light employment. It even offered to provide two sites for such colonies, one on the grounds of the Mountain Sanatorium, Hamilton, the other at the Dynevor Hospital near Selkirk, Manitoba; and it enlisted the interest of the Westinghouse Electric Company of Hamilton in placing the Eskimos in suitable jobs.

The government, following its usual procedure, set up a small interdepartmental committee to study the proposal. This committee prefaced its report by declaring that the Eskimos could no longer support themselves on the wildlife of the Arctic, as the three-point program had postulated; that, culturally and economically, they were inseparably linked with the rest of Canada; that their numbers were rapidly increasing since the Department of National Health and Welfare's vigorous campaign had reduced the high infant death-rate and was lowering the mortality from tuberculosis; and that in addition to the disabled convalescents then in southern hospitals, there was developing in the

[1] One-sixth, roughly, of the total population.

north a surplus population which that region would be unable to support for an indefinite time to come. From these premises it drew the logical conclusion, that the government must either resign itself to large and continually growing medical and relief expenditures on Eskimo account, or it must devise some means of draining off the surplus population and resettling it in areas where it could once again become self-supporting. It noted that some destitute Eskimos from Fort Chimo had been successfully resettled in Churchill, and some Port Harrison natives at Resolute Bay in the arctic archipelago, but that hitherto the government had never attempted to introduce Eskimos into areas of labour shortage in southern Canada. The committee was convinced that such an undertaking was both practicable and desirable. Accordingly it set forth in considerable detail how it might be carried out, and estimated the cost of establishing a pilot settlement of six families.

In due course an item for $100,000 to cover the cost of the pilot settlement was incorporated in the estimates of a branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Somewhere along the line to parliament, however, it died, and never came under the scrutiny of the nation's legislators. The committee's whole resettlement plan then passed into oblivion.

These groping projects during the 1950–60 decade clearly reflect the increasing concern of the government for the welfare of its Eskimo citizens, and its rapidly shifting judgments and attitude as the complexity of arctic problems sank deeper and deeper into its consciousness. The outlook of the Eskimos too has been changing ever since the construction of the northern airfields, the weather and radio stations, and the D.E.W. Line, opened their eyes to the advantages of wage-employment. The fur trade which the white man had introduced during the latter half of the nineteenth century had weakened the intense community life they had inherited from their ancestors by preventing the traditional reunion of families each autumn on the sea ice, or on the adjoining coast, where the hunters could cooperate in tracking down the seals at the animals' breathing-holes to supply both the daily food of the community, and the blubber it needed to cook that food and to light up its homes. Thereafter, the hunters deserted the sealing-grounds to seek fox furs during the four or five months of winter when the pelts were in their prime: they scattered with their families to individual trapping-places, each a day's journey from its neighbour, because the white fox, the commonest fur-bearer in the Arctic, is a solitary animal that wanders far and wide. During the 1950's, however, the new semi-urban settlements which the white man was creating with his schools and health outposts, his trading posts and his weather and radio stations, began to draw the families together again by holding out prospects of wage-employment, even though the employment might last a few days only; because when fur prices are low, as they have been in recent years, wage-employment is not only more comfortable than the monotonous existence on a lonely trapping-ground, but often more profitable. Furthermore, settlement life is easier for the aged and the sick, because it rescues them from their uncomfortable trapping camps (and from the bitter struggle to keep up with the dog-sleds whenever the families must take to the trail) and shelters them in warm, wooden houses where, thanks to the government's new welfare program, they receive the best of available foods at federal expense, and in many places also the ministrations of a well-trained nurse. Even the children benefit when their parents refrain from moving away to their trap-lines for the winter, because they can attend

the government schools uninterruptedly throughout the whole academic year, not just for a few days or weeks in the summer and fall when their parents bring them into "town". We cannot wonder, then, that increasing numbers of Eskimos, disheartened by the scarcity of caribou and the meagre returns from trapping, are spending most of their time in the settlements, which they leave for brief excursions only.[1] In more than one district, indeed, there is developing a pattern of life similar to that of many Indians and half-breeds in northern Saskatchewan, and of most "liveyers" in southern Labrador—a pattern in which men leave their wives and children in the settlements throughout the winter, and hunt and trap alone, returning for short visits at irregular intervals, or, as often in Labrador, at Christmas only.[2] If this trend continues and becomes widely spread, family bonds may weaken just as community bonds weakened earlier in the century, and even the smaller Eskimo settlements may breed the same social stresses as have already appeared at Aklavik, Inuvik, Churchill, and Frobisher Bay (cf. p. 160).

Thus our post-war administrations have confronted a series of problems that are more than usually complex. They inherited a territory whose inhabitants were handicapped by illiteracy and crippled by tuberculosis, and whose economy, unstable even before the war, began to totter immediately after it, as Cantley emphasized so strongly in his report. We know what difficulties the more experienced nations of Europe have encountered in administering some of the undeveloped countries of Africa and Asia; and we need only follow our Yukon River to its mouth, or travel round the arctic coast from the mouth of the Mackenzie River to the Bering Sea, to realize that the United States is wrestling in northern Alaska with difficulties similar to those of Canada.

Our arctic problems today are greater perhaps than our neighbour's; so great, in fact, that Cantley, who eleven years ago despairingly watched the gradual collapse of the Eskimos' economy, could think of only two ways in which the government might shore it up: it could promote a number of handicrafts and petty industries, and it could increase its subsidies and "doles".

Later administrations have been less pessimistic than he was. They have experimented with both of the remedies that he suggested, and have tried other expedients of their own. I will briefly appraise the economic condition of the Eskimos today, then outline what have been the results of Cantley's first remedy, the promotion of small industries and handicrafts.

[1]"Two important factors influencing the trend towards settlement are the availability of educational and medical services in the larger centres and the possibility of wage employment.

"In 1957, 1,300 Eskimo children attended school; now more than 2,100 do. This represents an increase of about 400 families who send their children to school. In order to increase the certainty of obtaining various needed services, about 250 families have moved into settlements though not all have managed yet to obtain steady employment." (Memo. Welfare Div. Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ottawa, 31 October 1962).

[2]The Southampton Islanders now lay out lines of up to 300 fox-traps which radiate for scores of miles from the two settlements, Coral Harbour and Snafu, on South Bay. In winter each trapper patrols his line with his dog-team, collects his foxes, and returns to his family in one or other of these settlements after completing a circuit that may keep him in the wilderness for ten or fourteen days. Following a short rest he repeats the operation, making five or six circuits in the course of the five-month trapping season. During the intervals between his visits he inevitably loses an appreciable percentage of his foxes, whose frozen corpses are devoured by other foxes, and by polar bears. Throughout the winter the government pays the board in Coral Harbour of about 30 of the trappers' children, so that they may attend the government school.

CHAPTER 11

The economic problem

To the pre-European Eskimos trade meant only the simplest barter, and in Canada even that occurred but rarely. A man expected to support his wife and children by his own efforts from the sea and the land around him. Food he obtained by hunting and fishing; with his own hands he made all his tools and weapons. Snow, hard-packed by the wind, furnished the building blocks with which he erected his winter dwelling, and the skins of caribou and seals supplied the covering for his summer tent. The same skins or furs, carefully cut by his wife and stitched together with sinew-thread from the back of the caribou, provided clothing for himself and all his family. For food, clothing, and shelter, therefore, he depended on no man; he was completely self-supporting, as no European has been since some of our ancestors 15,000 years ago crouched for warmth and safety in the caves of central France during the closing centuries of the Great Ice Age. Once or twice in his life-time, perhaps, our Eskimo exchanged his home-made knife for a soapstone cooking-pot, or a strip of white fur from the belly of a caribou for a long wooden pole that could serve as a fish-spear handle; but to a degree that we today can hardly comprehend he was free and independent, master of his own fate, as far as any living creature can be master of its fate in this our imperfect and ever-changing world.

Today they are free no longer. The first white men who gave them guns and ammunition, steel knives, and metal cooking-pots in reward for their services or in payment for their furs destroyed their independence by creating needs that could only be satisfied by association and trade with the outside world. The Eskimos saw and craved numberless things from that world which seemed to make life easier or more pleasant, and little by little they lost the skills and the knowledge which their forefathers had acquired under the stress of isolation, and handed down to generation after generation of their descendants. When Europeans brought them guns, steel axes, and steel knives they gave up the art of chipping stone, of making three-piece bows of driftwood backed with twisted sinew, of setting snares for caribou and hares, and of stalking to within harpoon-range wary seals that basked uneasily in the spring sun on the surface of the ice (cf. p. 25). It is an old, old story the world over. How many white women in Canada today have learned from their grandmothers to make soap and candles, or to spin wool, weave on a loom, and clothe their families with garments made entirely in the home?

We cannot revert to the life of our forefathers before man discovered electricity, erected steel rolling-mills, and invented diesel and gasoline engines. Neither can the Eskimos. Once they forgot the lore and lost the skills of their

ancestors they could not survive in the Arctic without a continuous inflow of goods from the outside. That meant trade or rather barter, since no money circulated until quite recently, save in the Mackenzie delta, where the Eskimos acquired more knowledge of English and of writing than other Canadian Eskimos through their close contact with Alaska, and with a dozen or more white trappers and traders who settled in or near the delta and married native women during the first decade of the twentieth century. In this barter all advantages lay on the side of the white man. The Eskimo could offer him nothing but his labour, which the white man hardly needed, and the furs of the fox, the polar bear, and (in the Mackenzie delta) the muskrat, luxury articles of fluctuating value which civilization can always dispense with. The Eskimo himself, on the other hand, could no longer wrest a livelihood from his barren home without the weapons and tools, the boats and other goods which the traders brought in from the world to the south; by some means or other he had to obtain those goods or perish. He knew no world except the Arctic, and dared not try to move his family outside it, even if he had been given the opportunity. So it was the white man who called the tune, and the Eskimo who danced to the music. It was the white man who decided where to set up the trading posts, what goods he should bring into the north, what prices he should demand for them, and how much (in money or credit) he should pay the Eskimos for their labour and their furs. And the Eskimos had no choice but to submit.

Today the tune has changed. Its cheerful melody when the civilized world was prepared to pay high prices for white-fox furs has moved into a sombre key darkened with notes of gloom. The profits of the fur trade no longer cover the expenses of the trading stations: only a few years back the Hudson's Bay Company had to close its posts in northern Labrador. Styles in the world of fashion change rapidly, and the white-fox fur has to compete with the furs of other animals, many raised on special farms, and with the new synthetic furs that are cutting into the sales of the natural product. Were this merely a temporary phenomenon, like a glut in the supply of wheat, it might benefit the Eskimos (and our northlands) if the government set a floor price on white-fox furs; but Cantley, who studied this expedient in 1950, rejected it as ineffective, and a more recent investigator supports his opinion (see p. 82).[1] As a foundation on which to build an enduring economy in the north the fur trade has proved no more stable than shifting sand. This holds particularly true for the trade in white-fox furs, because that animal resists domestication and in the wild state fluctuates greatly in numbers, obeying an irregular cycle that averages roughly four years. In a year when the foxes reach their peak an Eskimo may often trap as many as one hundred, whereas in a lean year he may catch only ten. The cycle's irregularities, and the wide differences between the fat years and the lean, make prediction of a trapper's catch more uncertain than the prediction of a prairie wheat harvest; and they immensely complicate the problems of the trader who may be obliged to outfit him on credit.

Let us balance the fat years with the lean ones, and estimate how large an income the average Eskimo family has been earning from his furs since the war

[1]Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. 1959.

years. The amount will differ from place to place, of course, since the fox population is not spread uniformly over the Arctic. Very rarely, too, does every household in a district now spend the winter on its trapping-ground, but one or more families remain in the settlement, either through ill-health, or because the head of the household has steady wage-employment. Cantley, who also took an over-all view, has provided us with an estimate for the ten years 1940–50. Assuming for those years a mean price for the white-fox fur of $10, he calculated that trapping had yielded the average Eskimo family $360 in a peak year and $100 in a poor one, giving a mean income of about $200 (see p. 82).

Two years later the Danish official Christensen, using information supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company, calculated an even lower mean. He wrote:

> "During the last ten years, to the end of 1951, the average price of white fox has fluctuated between $24 apiece and $4 apiece. During the same period the number of foxes traded in at arctic trading posts swung from over 53,000 to less than 16,000. The value of the traded-in pelts has in individual years fluctuated between $800,000 and $130,000. It is easy to understand that with such rapid and large fluctuations in the production and price of the chief article, it is impossible to establish a sound economy for the individual family. The catch is of course considerably larger than in Greenland (Thule excepted), where the fox trapping is less important, but there is certainly no abundance. At Baffin Island for instance the last complete four-year cycle of foxes provided an average annual income of $81 for each family. It was somewhat better in the other Eastern arctic areas and much better in the Western districts, where the white foxes furthermore are only a part of the total catch of furred animals." (Christensen, 1953, p. 22).[1]

Local studies in several small settlements give similar figures for more recent years. On Southampton Island the average annual return per family from white foxes and polar bears during the ten years from 1949 to 1959 amounted to only $330; and at Eskimo Point only about $400.[2] Marjorie Findlay, who studied the Fort Chimo Eskimos in 1945, says that their trapping yielded at best $200–$300 a year (1955, p. 128); and Willmott in 1958 calculated the separate incomes from trapping for three groups among the Port Harrison natives at $72, $240.40, and $276.22, respectively (1961, p. 31). From the Western Arctic we have similar figures. At Tuktoyaktuk, near the mouth of the Mackenzie River, where the family income in 1957 approximated $1,850, substantially more than in any other arctic settlement, Ferguson reckoned that 60 per cent was derived from wage-employment, permanent and casual, 22 per cent from government allowances of one kind and another, only 11 per cent (i.e. about $200) from trapping, and 1 per cent from handicrafts (1961, p. 27).[3]

From time to time one hears a rumour—which may be true—that a certain trapper and his family have captured in a single season, on Banks Island perhaps, over 1,000 white foxes, whose furs, at $10 apiece, would have brought him an

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[1] See Fig. 12.

[2] VanStone, 1960, p. 85; McGrory, 1960, p. 9f.

[3] In another passage in the same publication he says:

"Income derived from family allowance payments and relief rations constitute a significant resource in this area. Family allowance payments per family average $350 annually. Less than 1% of the population of Tuktoyaktuk received destitute rations during 1957 but it was expected that this percentage might reach 5% during the following winter. Four persons receive old-age pensions but only three of them are totally dependent for livelihood on this allowance." (pp. 22–3).

income exceeding $10,000. Instances of such large catches have occurred in the past, and may occur today; but they are counter-balanced by the very much larger number of cases in which the trapper and his family have captured no more than five or ten. This can be demonstrated quite clearly from some statistics recently released by the Game Management Service of the Northwest Territories (Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. 1962). During the ten years from 1952 to 1961 inclusive, trappers in the Northwest Territories, nearly all of whom must have been Eskimos, captured a total of 328,000 white foxes, which they sold for $4,395,000. The Eskimo population during those ten years averaged 9,800, of whom approximately 8,000 lived in the Northwest Territories, the remainder in northern Quebec. Reckoning the average Eskimo family to contain 4.8 individuals (see p. 148) and assuming that every family trapped (which of course was not the case), then each would have caught an average of 20 foxes yearly, and derived from their furs an annual income averaging about $264. If only three-fourths of the population engaged in trapping, the contribution of fox furs to the income of each trapping family would have averaged about $352.

A city-dweller not familiar with the Arctic might suppose that during the continual round of his winter trap-line the Eskimo would not infrequently cross the path of some polar bear that was roaming the waste in search of food, or observe a seal raise its head above the surface of a water-lane that the tide or a current kept open in an otherwise solid ice-field; that he would encounter flocks of ptarmigan, which change their brown summer plumage to a wintry white and peck at the grass tops protruding above the snow; and, if he was especially lucky, come upon a herd of caribou that had lingered behind in a sheltered valley not far from the coast; that his path would carry him over some of the numberless lakes of the Arctic, lakes that abound in char and trout, or, in the Western Arctic, whitefish, beneath the 3- to 5-foot ice-cover that stills their waters 6 or 8 months of the year. Could he not procure enough food from these sources to support himself and his family throughout the winter and yet not interrupt his trapping? He would then be self-sufficient during the hardest season of the year, and his fox furs and bear skins might defray the cost of his equipment and certain articles of clothing.

Nearly fifty years ago I spent the greater part of a winter with two families of Eskimo trappers on the arctic coast of Alaska one hundred miles east of Point Barrow, its northernmost cape. Throughout October and early November my hosts set their nets in a lake about eight miles behind their seashore cabin, and hauled in several hundred whitefish weighing, on the average, from 4 to 6 pounds each. After allowing the fish to freeze they stored them in bags outside their cabin on a high wooden platform beyond the reach of the sled dogs. On this same platform, shortly before I joined them, they had cached two? seals and five or six brant, all shot in the late autumn when open water still lingered near the mouth of the Colville River, and some of the birds that had nested on the tundra during the brief summer had not yet returned to the south. In the first days of November, before they had laid out their lines of fox-traps—at that period the north Alaskan trapping season began on November 15 and ended on March 31—their nets ceased to yield the usual quota of fish and hung empty, why I do not know, for an Eskimo near another lake seventy miles away, I discovered later, was netting a few fish right into February.

Whatever the reason, our nets had become profitless, and there was nothing we could do save pull them out and store them on the platform until spring. From then on, my hosts devoted all their days to trapping. Every morning when the weather permitted they left the cabin before dawn, and returned at dark, or an hour later, after completing the round of their traps. Both families, my Eskimo interpreter, and myself, lived on the fish and meat they had cached away, and on the flour, rice, and other European foods we had bought in the trading store at Barrow; and once a day we fed our dogs with a fish or half a fish apiece. Before the New Year, however, our supplies became so low that it was necessary to conserve the fish, and chop frozen chunks of meat for the dogs from a whale carcass that had stranded on the seashore twenty miles away: at the same time we sent a sled to Barrow to bring fresh supplies of food for our own use. Only twice down to the end of February, when I retreated with my interpreter to the Barrow trading post, did we come upon the tracks of a polar bear near our cabin; never once did we see the hoof-prints of a caribou; and only twice, as far as I can remember, small flocks of ptarmigan. The coast all around us seemed lifeless, save for the numerous fox-tracks, and for the solitary raven that haunted our neighbourhood and once cawed mockingly at me as it rose in the air and flew away. It is true that our excursions did not carry us more than about ten miles from our cabin, except when we visited our nearest neighbours almost three times that distance down the coast, because from mid-November until mid-February the sun never rose above the horizon, and only the bright moonlight and the flashing aurora ever relieved the intense darkness that enveloped us from three o'clock each afternoon until nine o'clock the next morning. Nevertheless, even within our ten-mile radius I had expected many more signs of life during the six hours of twilight, since the basin and mouth of the Colville River had been one of the richer game areas in arctic America less than fifty years before.

I relate this episode because it illustrates the utter incompatibility of an efficient trapping regime with a life based on hunting and fishing. Before the white man introduced the fur trade into arctic Alaska the grandparents of my Eskimos had hunted with inefficient bows and arrows in the area where I spent that winter, and had successfully raised families there; but the herds of caribou had not then been massacred with high-powered rifles, and the hunters had been free to move about as they wished in search of game, not tied down to one small locality as we were by trap-lines. My hosts would have starved to death had there been no trading post within reach, because being inlanders, they had never learned to track down and harpoon the seals in winter at that mammal's breathing-holes. They had lost the independence of their grandparents and were bound hand and foot to the fur-trade economy imposed on them by our civilization. Our Canadian Eskimos are in the same condition. It is criminal folly therefore to suggest, as is often done, even today, that we should encourage them to take up again the life of their forefathers, and endeavour to recover their independence by hunting and fishing in regions where game has not ceased to be plentiful. Hunting and fishing may still provide them with food and even clothing, but it cannot bring in the income they need to buy rifles and ammunition, boats and outboard motors, and all the other articles of civilization without which they would perish almost as rapidly as we would. Through no fault of their own, trapping has ceased to provide that income;

and it is incumbent on the Canadian government and the Canadian people to introduce them to other activities that will make them self-supporting again.[1]

Cantley saw this very clearly more than ten years ago; and he suggested the introduction of small industries or handicrafts, a suggestion that the government has taken up with vigour. Before we review the results of its efforts, however, let us enquire how large an income an Eskimo family requires today to become economically self-supporting, and at the same time relatively content.

Actually, it is not possible to calculate such an income with any pretence to accuracy, because conditions vary so widely from place to place in the Arctic. Some families are able to procure more fish and game than others, at little or no expense beyond their own labour. They live where seals are plentiful, where schools of white whales enter the estuary of a river, or shoals of char migrate upstream to spawn in inland lakes; or perhaps, as on Southampton Island, close to some locality where a herd of walrus gives birth to its young. These families will spend far less on store food than the Tuktoyaktuk native who worked on the D.E.W. Line, and whose food bill at the local Hudson's Bay Company's store ran as high as $1,000 yearly (Ferguson, 1961, p. 27). We must consider, too, the cost of clothing for a family, no great sum for the few Eskimos who still find numerous caribou in their neighbourhood and can dress in fur garments patterned after those of their forefathers, but an appreciable item in the budget of a Port Harrison or Southampton Island native who has never seen a live caribou. Housing presents another variable item, particularly since the government began to subsidize it and encourage the Eskimos to set up small prefabricated dwellings of special design. One type, measuring 12 feet x 20 feet, costs about $1,500 erected, of which amount the government donates $1,000, writes off $250 as the value of the buyer's labour in putting it together, and gives him a ten-year loan to cover the remaining $250.[2] The payments on such a house may be negligible, but its heating during the long winter, with fuel oil that sells (at Cape Dorset) for $28 a drum, and in remoter settlements for double that figure, costs from $200 to $700 yearly. In contrast, an Eskimo of the Mackenzie delta can still avoid all housing costs, if he wishes, by erecting a cabin of driftwood, and by heating it with driftwood in a homemade sheet-iron stove.[3] Finally there are the transportation costs of the Eskimo who wishes to hunt and fish and visit his neighbours—as all of them still do. At Coral Harbour in 1961 a 22-foot canoe cost $625, a whaleboat $4,000, a "Peterhead" schooner

[1]Cf. pp. 94–5. If I seem to repeat this theme *ad nauseam*, the reader will forgive the reiteration when he recalls that voices are still frequently raised, both on the public platform and in the press, demanding that the Eskimos be allowed to live their own lives, in their own homelands, free from all governmental interference.

[2]It is interesting to note how closely Canada's housing program and other activities in the Arctic parallel those of the Soviet Union in the Chukotsk Peninsula of eastern Siberia, where the Eskimo population of barely 1,000 is less than one-tenth the population in Canada's Arctic. I quote this passage from the *Soviet News Bulletin*, Ottawa, 20 May 1959:

"Communities of new houses with electricity and radios are springing up all along the coast of the Chukotsk Peninsula. The state pays for the delivery of houses from the central part of the country and for their construction. Pre-fabricated homes are sold to the local dwellers for ⅓ of their cost and they can be paid for in instalments over a period of ten years. Electric power stations are going up in all communities. School buildings are being erected for the local population, as well as hospitals, clubhouses, and other cultural, educational and communal institutions."

[3]I have seen an Eskimo make a stove, with a small oven, from two castaway, 5-gallon coal-oil tins, and from two more make his stove-pipe.

$10,000, and a 7½ H.P. motor to drive the canoe or the whaleboat $275. Many Eskimos today cannot afford even a small flat-bottomed dingy at $300, but must share a boat and outboard motor with their neighbours. However, a boat and motor, like a rifle, lasts for several years, whereas food is consumed almost immediately and must be constantly renewed: and now that many Eskimos are spending most of their days in the settlements, it is the food bill that often heads the list of a family's expenses. The D.E.W. Line worker at Tuktoyaktuk in 1956–7 was spending 55 per cent of his wages on store food, whereas at Cape Dorset four years later the average family expenditure on food hardly exceeded $300. But in the latter district 60 of the 75 families were living during the greater part of the year on the land, at a considerable distance from the settlement, and there they were obtaining most of their food by hunting and fishing, which still left them spare moments for carving small figurines from soapstone to sell in the world's art markets.

It is clear, then, that the factors on which we must rely to calculate the minimum income an Eskimo family requires vary so greatly in different regions of the Arctic that our estimate can be no more than an informed guess. I myself would suggest about $1,500, in cash and kind, as long as the prices of the essential goods—rifles, boats, cloth, flour, and tea—remain at or near their present level. Should these prices rise even slightly, however, my guess would jump to $2,000.[1] In many places the Eskimos could still survive, perhaps, on as little as $1,000, as they did at Fort Chimo in 1954 (Findlay, 1955, p. 112); but Canada dare not again consent to such wretched conditions as prevailed during that period there and at other places in Ungava Bay.

A statistician, Dr. P. S. K. Murty, recently calculated that on 31 December 1960, the Eskimo population of Canada (including northern Quebec) numbered 10,751. Of that total 3,521 (1,774 males and 1,747 females) fell into the age-group 15 to 34, and 1,808 (976 males and 832 females) into the age group 35 to 54, giving a possible labour force of 5,329 (1961). He estimated further that only 307 individuals in that force, or approximately 6 per cent, had enjoyed steady wage-employment during 1960.[2] A much larger number had been intermittently employed on such jobs as stevedoring, freighting supplies, and carpentering, for periods lasting from a few days to a few weeks; but the majority of the 5,329 Eskimos between the ages of 15 and 54 earned no wages at all, and the males could have been listed in a labour register as unemployed.

How, then, did they manage to pay their way? How did they retain their credit at the trading store, if they required an income, in cash and kind, of at least $1,500? They could no longer obtain all their food by fishing and hunting, as their forefathers had done before the coming of the white man; nor all their clothing; nor the weapons, tools, and cooking utensils they used every day of their lives. These they had to buy at the trading stores from the money they earned by their labour, and from selling such furs as they had gathered during the winter; and the latter, as we saw, never brought an income averaging more than $300. Seeing that about 90 per cent of the labour force was unemployed, that is to say, earned little if any wages, how did they succeed in buying what they needed and remain solvent?

[1] An Officer of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources who has been stationed for two years at Cape Dorset, estimates that the living expenses of the average Eskimo family there, in cash and kind, amount to about $1,800.

[2] His employment figures seem too low. See this volume pp. 115, 116.

Cantley supplied an answer in 1950 when he reported that the Eastern Arctic Eskimos of his day were earning from their labour and their furs only 40 per cent of the money they were spending at the trading stores, and that the government was supplying 60 per cent through pensions, family allowances, and various hand-outs (see p. 80). Since his day government activities in the Arctic, and the operation of a small nickel mine (now closed down) at Rankin Inlet, have given steady work to a somewhat greater number of Eskimos, but otherwise there has been little change in the employment field. Perhaps a dozen communities have increased their incomes from handicrafts and from fishing; and trapping has yielded higher returns in some years and lower returns in others. But the number of Eskimos receiving relief payments virtually doubled between 1957 and 1959, and in the latter year comprised nearly half the total population.[1] The economy of a people must be extremely sick when half of them, year in and year out, are driven to line up for relief chits.

A little help has reached them lately from the embryonic industries and the handicrafts which Cantley had counted on to invigorate their economy, and which the present administration has promoted with the utmost energy. These have proved successful to a degree, but utterly inadequate to compensate for the undeveloped condition of the Arctic today and the poverty of its known or at least utilized resources. Both the Hudson's Bay Company and the government itself had previously experimented with some of these "industries" and abandoned them; but each new generation hopes, not unnaturally, that its greater knowledge and technical skill will bring success where an earlier generation failed.

Let us consider, first, the vicissitudes of what seemed the most promising enterprise, the raising of large herds of domesticated reindeer on the moss-covered arctic tundra.

The reader will remember that several years before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Danish-born botanist, Dr. A. E. Porsild, successfully established for the government a small domesticated reindeer industry in the Western Arctic (see p. 35). The single herd of 2,370 animals that had arrived on the east side of the Mackenzie River delta in March 1935, increased steadily until in the 1951 round-up the mother and daughter herds together mustered 8,412 deer, despite heavy losses through straying, sickness, wolves, and other causes, and the slaughter of a considerable number for their meat and hides.[2] They were grouped at that time into three herds, the largest, containing 5,559 deer, under direct government control, the two others, numbering 796 and 2,057 deer respectively, owned and managed by Eskimos, but still under government supervision. On the planning board a third herd was to be cut out and placed under Eskimo ownership; and the authorities were dreaming of a day when reindeer in large numbers would be grazing near every Eskimo encampment,

[1] Murty, 1961. The increase in the number of Eskimos requiring relief must be attributed mainly to improved case-finding. Cf. "The Departmental staff in the Mackenzie District has increased from 351 in 1957, to 617 in 1962, almost double. Staff in the Arctic District has increased from 117 in 1957, to 375 in 1962, more than triple. Staff increases have not only extended services to additional and more remote geographic areas, but have permitted a more accurate assessment of need to be made in larger settlements as well." (Memo. Welfare Div. Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ottawa, 31 October 1962).

[2] In 1943 the government began to ship some of the hides to Baffin Island and northern Quebec, regions from which the wild caribou had virtually disappeared. From that year to 1957 it distributed 4,647 reindeer hides to destitute Eskimos in the Eastern Arctic who needed warm clothing.

patiently serving all the needs of their masters. In 1952, accordingly, they cut out the third native herd, and in 1954 a fourth, although for at least ten years they had been encountering great difficulty in finding young Eskimos willing to apprentice themselves as herders.[1] Then in 1956 the bright prospects of wage-employment on the D.E.W. Line stations which were being erected in that part of the Arctic brought on a crisis. One after another the owners of three of the herds surrendered their animals to the government and moved away, leaving only one native herd numbering less than 2,000 deer, and one government herd swollen now to about 6,000. Ottawa then decided to split its own herd into two and place their management in private hands. The curtain has not yet fallen on the final act of the drama, but it would seem quite clear that as an economic enterprise reindeer herding has already vanished from the Canadian stage.

Why did the enterprise collapse? An outsider can only guess at the reasons. It could have survived, I believe, Ottawa's attempt to conduct it from 3,000 miles away, instead of entrusting it to an expert on the spot and allowing him to make all but the most vital decisions; it could have survived the excessive financial overhead and the meagre return;[2] but it could not survive the unwillingness of the Eskimos themselves to adopt the unfamiliar and arduous life of the reindeer herder as long as their traditional occupations, hunting and fishing, could supply most of their food, and wage-employment promised an easier and far more profitable livelihood.

Dr. Sheldon Jackson, the founder of Eskimo education in Alaska, established the reindeer industry in that region forty years before Canada began her experiment; and he carried it to a much greater height of success than it ever attained in the Dominion. By 1914, when the First World War broke out, the 1,280 reindeer he had imported from eastern Siberia between 1891 and 1902 had increased to perhaps 50,000, and the enterprise seemed so flourishing that private capital wormed its way in, and tried to develop it into a great meat industry rivalling the cattle industry of the western United States. The effort failed, and the United States government bought back the alienated deer and restored them to Eskimo ownership. But the enterprise has never recovered its former prosperity, defeated by the same economic and psychological factors, apparently, as have caused the collapse of the Canadian experiment.

The arctic's oldest industry, of course, was whaling, the pursuit of the huge bowhead whales for their baleen, their oily blubber, and their meat; but this ceased at the beginning of the twentieth century, after baleen had lost its

[1] Cf. p. 66 and Can. Dept. Mines and Res. Ann. Rept. 1945, p. 69.

[2] This overhead, and the returns in production, are set forth in the following table, taken from an interim report of the Reindeer Committee (Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. 1957).

Expenditures from 1926 to 1957	
Purchase of 2,370 reindeer	$ 154,830.00
Preliminary investigations and establishment of the Reindeer Station, 1926 to 1935	139,040.00
Cost of maintaining Reindeer Station, 1935 to 1957	871,640.00
Total Expenditures	*$1,165,510.00*
Production 1935 to 1957	
Meat produced: 12,054 carcasses weighing an average of 120 lb. apiece	1,446,480 lb. meat
Hides distributed in Eastern Arctic	4,647

I suspect that these figures do not include the quantities of meat and hides used by the reindeer herders and the supervisory staff, or donated to the police post and the two mission hospitals at Aklavik.

commercial value. Before it declined the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been disappointed by the fur trade at its newly founded post at Fort Chimo, began to exploit the belugas or white whales that frequent the estuaries of several rivers in northern Labrador and south Baffin Island, and the salmon and char that migrate up the Koksoak, the George, and the Whale rivers of Ungava Bay. The beluga fishery too declined quickly, probably because the rate of slaughter exceeded the animals' reproduction rate, although Low in 1903 attributed it to their increasing wariness of the nets which the hunters stretched across the estuaries at high tide. The Eskimos, however, continued to hunt them for their own use; and from time to time officers of the Hudson's Bay Company tried unsuccessfully to revive the commercial industry. So too did the government in Cumberland Sound, about 1930; and a commercial company in 1949 at Churchill, where the Department of Fisheries imposed on the catch a limit of 600 animals yearly, and prohibited any slaughter by sportsmen. In 1951 Eskimo, Indian, and white fishermen killed at the mouth of the Churchill River 584 beluga, each measuring about ten feet long and weighing approximately 900 pounds; and they shipped 3,200 pounds of beluga steaks, carefully wrapped in one-pound packages, to Winnipeg, where they sold on the open market without difficulty. During the first half of the following season, the hunt opened so well that the Department of Fisheries raised the permissible quota to 700 beluga; and the actual catch totalled 699, of which one Eskimo hunter alone killed 283.[1] But only one year later the catch dropped to 599; and it continued to decrease until 1955, when the export of meat apparently ceased. Between 1957 and 1960 local hunters, mainly métis or Indians of mixed descent, killed annually about 400 animals, from which the oil, though not the meat, went south; but the extraction plant fell into disrepair and suspended operations in 1960, whereupon beluga fishing as a commercial enterprise passed out of existence.

More lasting, and also more profitable than the Hudson's Bay Company's beluga fishery, was the salmon and char fishery in Ungava Bay, although this too in the end suffered the same fate. Beginning in 1881 on the Koksoak River, it netted during its first four seasons 40, 24, 38, and slightly under 40 tons in rapid succession, all of which the company shipped to England on a small vessel equipped with a dry-air freezing plant.[2] From 1884 onward the company worked the George and Whale rivers in addition to the Koksoak, but at the end of that century Low reported that the fishery had declined everywhere, and in one season, 1897, had practically failed. We hear very little about it during the first three decades of the twentieth century, and what we do know has been summarized in an earlier passage (see p. 41).[3] The industry closed down altogether about 1931, and remained forgotten until the summer of 1954, when a commercial air pilot tried to revive it. He bought from the Eskimos around the Chimo air-base 2,584 pounds of salmon at 17 cents a pound, boxed it, and shipped it by air, on aircraft that would otherwise have travelled empty, to Roberval, where it was repacked and sent on to Montreal. The report on the first shipment, we are told, was not entirely favourable, but a later shipment received a better reception (Findlay, 1955, pp. 235–6).

[1]Can. Dept. Res. and Dev. Ann. Repts. between 1950 and 1953.

[2]After 1884 it shipped the salmon salted, because the freezing process had proved rather expensive.

[3]See also Dunbar, 1952, p. 11 and Dunbar and Hildebrand, 1952, pp. 93–4.

Meanwhile, in 1950, the Arctic Services Branch of the Department of Resources and Development had set up an experimental fishing station at Port Burwell to stimulate a fuller harvesting of the cod and seals in that district where the Eskimos were almost destitute. The experiment proved only partly successful, one reason being that the natives displayed little liking for salt cod. Then Ottawa tried other methods of expanding the economy of the Eskimos and making them more self-sufficient. It promoted small boat-building plants at Lake Harbour in the Eastern Arctic, and at Tuktoyaktuk in the Western;[1] but both these enterprises languished. Recalling then an experiment by its Wildlife Service during the 1930's on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it attempted to create an eider-down industry at Cape Dorset and in Payne Bay similar to the flourishing Icelandic one; but that too failed to take root, perhaps because the handling of wild birds as carefully as domestic poultry lay outside the realm of Eskimo experience. Undismayed, the government landed at Fort Chimo in 1955 ten sheep from the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, hoping that those animals might thrive as they have in the southernmost fiords of Greenland and replace the vanished caribou; but the half-starved sled dogs quickly wrote *finis* to that experiment. Ottawa then decided to investigate the possibility of exploiting the char that migrate up so many arctic rivers; and in the summer of 1958 the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources sent out from Frobisher, by air, a trial shipment of 1,500 pounds of char, which it distributed to a number of the best restaurants in Montreal and Toronto. Within a few days it received a repeat order for an even larger quantity, indicating that, if carefully handled and processed, this fish could find a ready market in southern Canada, and also in the United States.

Eagerly the department went into action, not on the char alone, but over a much wider field, attacking in the beginning those arctic districts where distress seemed greatest, and employing methods and principles that had been evolved in building up under-developed regions in other parts of the world. In the first summer season it sent in experts to assess the natural resources, and in the second it sent in other experts to help the Eskimos develop such resources as seemed capable of exploitation. Behind the experts stood the department's administrators, ready to finance the Eskimos with small loans from a fund—the Eskimo Loan Fund—which parliament had approved a few years earlier. In essence, therefore, the scheme was a "little Colombo" plan for arctic Canada, but with this difference, that the experts were permanent employees of the Canadian government, and their surveillance was more intense than would have

[1]Cf. Nichols, 1954, pp. 52–5; Ferguson, 1961, pp. 23, 30; and Can. Dept. Res. and Dev. Ann. Repts. 1952 and 1953, and Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ann. Repts. 1955–56, 1956–57. These boat-building schemes probably suffered from a lack of markets with ready capital. Very few Eskimos possessed the necessary cash to buy a boat, but had to borrow from the government, or from the Hudson's Bay Company; and the boat requirements of the company itself, which did buy a few from the Tuktoyaktuk plant, were strictly limited. However, should the iron deposits of the Great Whale River area ever be exploited (as seemed not unlikely two or three years ago) and the ore be shipped by sea, it may be worth investigating the establishment of a barge and small-boat yard at Great Whale River, and the complementary construction of a lumber mill at the mouth of some river flowing into James Bay which possesses adequate stands of suitable timber. The boat-building plant could then be run with Eskimo labour, the lumber-mill by James Bay Indians, whose economic condition is as precarious as the Eskimos'. The plant built at Lake Harbour freighted in all its lumber from Montreal.

been possible had they been working in a foreign land. The department had no desire to spend money and effort on palpably uneconomic enterprises, or in areas that were lacking in economic resources. On the contrary, it demanded that every enterprise it supported should become, if possible, self-sustaining, and that the natives who operated it should stand in due course on their own feet and no longer need outside support. In that way, it was convinced, the Eskimos would gain not only economically but socially and psychologically, while the government too would benefit from the reduction in its expenses for straight relief.

The districts in which the department has conducted economic surveys since 1958, when the program first took definite shape, are all, or nearly all, districts in which the local Eskimos had been living near the starvation level. Some useful results have already flowed from these surveys, and from the new or increased activities that they have stimulated. Thus the char fisheries at Port Burwell, George River, Frobisher Bay, and Cambridge Bay have added thousands of dollars to the incomes of the local Eskimos.[1] At George River alone they lowered the government's relief expenditures from $40,000 in 1957 to only $40 in 1960.[2] And in this and other districts the morale of the Eskimos, which had sunk to very low depths, began to show symptoms of buoyancy again.

Unhappily, the situation fails to inspire optimism. None of the measures the government has yet taken, nor all of them combined, have turned the tide of distress in the Arctic. They have not won the economic struggle. Some government officials recognize this, and look upon any increased exploitation of the region's biological resources as a mere stop-gap, a useful palliative pending the discovery of a permanent cure for its economic ills. Every year, indeed, it is becoming more and more clear that neither char, nor salmon, nor any other fish or mammal in the Arctic, swarms in numbers large enough to withstand the drain of large-scale commercial exploitation; that very few districts contain sufficient food resources to maintain their present human populations, and can certainly not support their increase; that beyond the tree-line there are no other exploitable resources[3] except perhaps oil and minerals, which the Eskimos themselves are unable to develop because they lack both the knowledge and the capital; and, finally, if we may trust the opinions of some of our scientists who study world-mineral resources, that there is little prospect of any considerable oil or mineral development in arctic or subarctic Canada within the very near future, except perhaps on the north and west coast of the Labrador Peninsula.[4]

[1]For details concerning the char fisheries of Ungava and Frobisher bays between 1958 and 1960 see Snowden, 1961, pp. 382–4.

[2]In 1960 each of the 25 Eskimos who worked the George River earned about $300 net during a fishing season that lasted less than two months. The catch was much smaller in 1961, and the net income per worker only about $150; but 1962 saw a catch roughly equal to that of 1960.

[3]The tourist traffic that once raised high hopes has failed to materialize.

[4]*The Montreal Gazette* disclosed on 2 November 1961, that Ungava Iron Ores (a company owned half by Premium and associated Canadian and American interests, and half by five German steel companies, including the Krupp and Mannesmann interests) is still investigating the possibility of developing the low-grade iron ores of the Labrador Peninsula in the vicinity of Hudson Strait. In the same region, about sixty miles from Sugluk, are large asbestos deposits which may shortly be mined, if the company that has leased them can find the necessary capital and markets.

CHAPTER 12

The economic problem (continued)

Down to the last decades of the nineteenth century economic conditions in Greenland broadly resembled those in arctic Canada. In both regions the Eskimos depended for their existence mainly on the seal, which they hunted at nearly every season of the year. The caribou, though less numerous in Greenland than in Canada, was the next most important animal, because it furnished warm fur clothing as well as nourishing meat; but neither one region nor the other held the fox in any esteem, because relatively few people in Europe or America could afford the luxury of expensive furs and the white fox had not yet caught the market's fancy. Numerous char followed the sea lanes to the mouths of home streams, as on this continent, although most of Greenland's streams issue directly from the ice cap that fringes its coasts, not from quiet lakes and tarns in which the char can spawn in safety. Other fish too frequented the deep fiords on Greenland's east and west coasts, particularly the caplin, which were even more plentiful than in Newfoundland. Seals and fish, accordingly, provided the staple diet of the Greenlanders, as they did of Canada's Eskimos.

A momentous change then occurred in western Greenland, a change whose cause or causes science has not yet succeeded in unravelling. For many centuries the Gulf Stream, which originates in the Gulf of Mexico, flows north up the east coast of the United States, swings to the east near Newfoundland, and crosses the Atlantic to Iceland and northern Europe, had stretched a weak arm from Iceland to the southern tip of Greenland, where the icy waters off that island's coast engulfed and absorbed it. Some time between 1850 and 1900 this arm unexpectedly gained strength and probably volume until it was able to force its way, 50 metres or more beneath the surface of the cold sea, up the west coast of Greenland to the latitude of about 65°N.; and the comparative warmth of its waters prevented many of the fiords along the southern stretches of the coast from freezing over for more than a few days or weeks during the months of winter. Thereupon the seals around which the Greenland Eskimos had built their lives retreated northward; but in their place the sluggish Gulf Stream water brought enormous shoals of cod and numerous halibut, which provided the southern Greenlanders with a new kind of employment, and a new economic base, commercial fishing, that has now held stable for over half a century. Whether the Gulf Stream's arm will one day shrink again, and the shoals of cod and halibut return to the waters from which they came, no one knows; but in the meantime the Greenlanders are thriving, as they have never thriven before, on their exports of salted cod, cod and shark livers, halibut, and shrimp; and in the milder climate of their southernmost fiords a few families are raising small flocks of sheep and poultry.

Canadian zoologists and oceanographers have sought in vain for signs of a similar change along the eastern coasts of Labrador and Baffin Island and in the region of Hudson Strait. There the climate seems not to have altered since at least the Christian era, and the same seals and fish frequent the coast today as were present 130 years ago when the Hudson's Bay Company established its post at Fort Chimo. If the bowhead whales and the walrus have become much scarcer, if the caribou have almost vanished from the land, that has been the work not of nature, but of our firearms, which ruined the ancient Eskimo economy throughout the Arctic—as they ruined the economy of the Indian buffalo hunters on the North American prairies—and forced on them an economy of the fur trade. Now we have ruined that fur-trade economy through the erratic and unpredictable changes in our own economic world. Science forbids us to hope that nature will come to the rescue of Canada's Eskimos as she did to Greenland's and bring to their shores also an abundance of merchantable fish. The solutions of our arctic problems rest not with nature, but with ourselves (cf. Dunbar, 1962, pp. 131–5).

The fish and game of that region can no longer supply the essential needs of any human beings, white or Eskimo. That at least is certain. If we are to keep it populated with Canadian citizens, we must provide them with most of life's necessities, just as we provide them for our police constables at Grise Fiord, Spence Bay, Sachs Harbour, and Inuvik. Hitherto we have not subsidized or paid our Eskimos to occupy the Arctic for us and uphold our sovereignty in that region, although their settlements and camps constitute more "effective occupation", in the sense that phrase carries in international law, than the solitary posts of our Royal Canadian Mounted Police.[1] Instead, we have insisted that they pay for almost all the necessities we send them as infallibly as do their white fellow-citizens in the Yukon, because they are now a part of our civilized world, and the ruler of that world is commerce.

It appears equally certain, too, that the government's efforts to help them make fuller use of the Arctic's wildlife, and in that way earn the money to pay for their necessities, have failed to produce significant results outside of two or three localities,[2] because the wildlife is not plentiful enough to sustain heavier exploitation than it is undergoing at the present time. Art-lovers, however, have discovered a new resource. Nature has endowed the Eskimos (and indeed human beings everywhere) with an innate desire for beauty, even though they can no more define what beauty is and means than we can; and in the era when our British and French ancestors were still painting their bodies with woad and shielding themselves from winter's cold fogs with the skins of wild animals, Eskimos were carving delicate figurines of seals, polar bears, and other animals on the ivory tusks of the walrus, and decorating them with concentric circles and other curvilinear designs. Their artistic skill has come down to their descendants, as we can see in the bird figures, the toy sleds and dog-teams, and the many other ivory curios that our museums have collected from modern Eskimos in Alaska and Labrador.

Walrus ivory is now rather scarce among Canadian Eskimos, and carving in ivory had died out in many districts before the opening of this century.

[1]We have employed some Eskimos as servants at our police posts, and a few have become "special constables" or auxiliary police.

[2]Port Burwell, on the fringe of the Arctic, may be one of these localities.

Nevertheless, in 1950, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, with government support (cf. p. 82), sent the Canadian artist James Houston, first to Port Harrison, then a year later to Cape Dorset, to search for some way of converting the latent artistic talent into economic profit. Houston encouraged the Eskimos in the two settlements to substitute for ivory the soft soapstone from which they had made cooking-pots and lamps for burning blubber, before Europeans supplied them with iron vessels. Their soapstone possessed a much coarser texture than ivory. Partly for that reason, perhaps, and partly because it can be obtained in bigger blocks, the figurines which the Eskimos began to carve from it were larger and less delicate than the ancient ivory ones. At the same time, however, they were more imaginative; and the originality and vigour of the sculpture quickly caught the fancy of art-lovers in the south. A brisk trade then sprang up in which the Hudson's Bay Company, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, and the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources all acted as intermediaries in placing the carvings on the market. From 1950, when sculpture in soapstone first began, down to the end of 1961, the stone figurines have sold as fast as they could be produced, inspected, and shipped out; and the craft has now spread to Povungnituk, Repulse Bay, and several other Eskimo settlements, including Coppermine in the Central Arctic.

Unhappily the market for art and handicraft objects is fickle, as both we and the United States have found with Indian baskets, beadwork, totem-poles, and silver jewelry. The successful art and curio dealer must unerringly sense the public's changing whims and try to provide new objects to whet its flagging interest. Houston has done this at Cape Dorset by fostering the making of prints from carefully selected Eskimo drawings, and, with the instinct of a business man, preserving their uniqueness and value by restricting their reproduction to fifty copies each. The prints too have found a bull market in the south, and with the carvings that Cape Dorset continues to produce have drawn that settlement's 330 inhabitants, for a time at least, out of the Slough of Distress and Despondency into which they had fallen on to the Hill of Self-Sufficiency and Self-Respect. In 1959 prints and carvings together poured into the settlement $22,000, a substantial sum that, evenly distributed, would have added $300 to each family's income. This revenue almost trebled in 1960, and when the final returns for 1961 came in, the total reached nearly $100,000.

Notwithstanding Houston's remarkable success with handicrafts, the cold analytical administrator will not let his imagination take flight, but will hold it firmly down to earth with dry, hard facts and figures. Cape Dorset is only one small Eskimo settlement in our Arctic, and it owes its relative prosperity to the driving qualities of one unusually capable man. No other settlement, except possibly Povungnituk, has attained equal success with its handicrafts, or seems likely to do so in the future; and even at Cape Dorset they have not brought affluence, but only freedom from distress and from dependence on government relief payments. To enjoy real affluence a man must possess an income that exceeds his expenditures on what he holds to be necessities, or near necessities, and that the Cape Dorset Eskimos have by no means obtained. Furthermore, no one knows whether the market will turn sour on Eskimo handicrafts, and if so, how soon. It may be difficult to maintain their present high quality if the art extends too widely; for many craftsmen are not artists and not all Eskimos are even craftsmen. Foreign imitations, again, may cut

into the market. I have seen a store window in Yokohama filled with "American Indian Totem-poles" that had never felt the British Columbia sun; and many a Canadian housewife may derive as much satisfaction from the "Hummel" figurine she bought in a 15-cent store as the sophisticated connoisseur from his genuine article. The art trade is beset with so many uncertainties, so many pit-falls, that beautiful prints and attractive soapstone carvings are not a safe base on which to build a people's economy; and they can never become such a base, indeed, though they may lighten the poverty of a few individuals and support to a small extent a base that is already established.[1]

We have seen how steady work on the northern airfields during the 1940's brought unexpected prosperity to a number of Eskimo homes, raised their standard of living and their morale, and perhaps improved their diet and their health, at least temporarily. The construction of the airfields, however, was a fleeting task that lasted two or three years only; and because their subsequent operation demanded skilled personnel, it did not prevent the Chimo and other Eskimos from lapsing into destitution again. The same "temporary boom and bust" conditions resulted from the construction of the D.E.W. Line in the 1950's, although in that instance a force of over 90 Eskimos was retained for maintenance work; and similar conditions would have followed the government's construction programs at Inuvik in the Mackenzie River delta, and at Frobisher on Baffin Island, had not these new administrative centres opened up a number of minor jobs for Eskimos in the government service. Even the Eskimo colony at Resolute Bay, in the arctic archipelago, to which place the government in 1953 removed three destitute families from Port Harrison—along with one Pond Inlet family to initiate them into their new environment, making in all 21 Eskimos, a number that through immigration had increased by May 1961, to 83—even that settlement does not derive its present prosperity, and the contentment of its colonists, from the relative abundance of game in the vicinity.[2] It derives them from the employment obtained by several heads of

[1]"One of the most successful, and certainly the most publicized, of the programs for minor resource development has been arts and crafts. Eskimo stone carvings are known and respected throughout the world and yield something like $200,000 a year to their makers. There is reason to believe that the market will remain strong into the indefinite future. Facilities have been given for the development of new art forms, as well as for other cottage industry. The graphic art at Cape Dorset has had the most extraordinary impact in North America and by next year may be sold in quantity in Europe. Clothing of various sorts, toys and so on are coming into production for sale as prestige items.

"As I said earlier, these minor resources are not a large part of the economic future of the north, except as a stop-gap and except as a further form of diversification for those who can no longer make a living from the country, and for those who may not be attracted to the type of employment that major resource development will eventually provide." (Robertson, 1961, p. 10).

[2]Of the 20 adult Eskimos living in the settlement in 1961, twelve spent most of their days in hunting, one carved soapstone figures, two (who were still youths) divided their time between hunting and attending the government school, and five worked permanently at the air-base, regulating their lives by its routine. Here is a rough calculation of the cash income the settlement was earning, excluding the returns from handicrafts and furs:

From R.C.A.F.	5 men at $400 mth for 12 mths	$24,000.00
Do.	4 men at $265.60 mth for 4 mths	4,249.60
From Dept. Transport	4 men at $265.60 mth for 2 mths	2,124.80
From Polar Shelf Project	2 men at $400 mth for 4 mths	3,200.00
	Total	*$33,574.40*

(From Van Z. de Jong, 1961).

families at the air-base, to the amenities[1] that the base's proximity has made available to them, and to the close links it maintains with the outside world for purposes that only incidentally include the colonists' welfare. It would be correct to maintain, I believe, that the economic prosperity (but not necessarily the social prosperity) of an Eskimo community today is roughly proportional to the amount of wage-employment it obtains, and not, as formerly, to the wild-life resources that exist in its neighbourhood.

Sooner or later every period of construction must come to an end, and most of the unskilled workers who have toiled on the structures must lay down their tools and give place to others who will occupy and use the finished buildings. In the Arctic that time seems to be approaching.

> "The employment opportunities for local labour, created by the construction of the Distant Early Warning line, the move of Aklavik, and other government construction programs have provided some much needed additional income for a number of those who were formerly dependent upon fur trapping for a livelihood. These and similar opportunities will occur for several years, but only a relatively small proportion can be counted upon to continue for longer than that. They therefore cannot be regarded as a cure for the problem of economic distress in these communities but merely as a short-term palliative. Full use must be made of the respite thus provided to develop more permanent sources of employment for a substantial number of those now engaged in trapping." (Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. Ann. Rept. 1955–56, pp. 101–2).

The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, after analysing current employment trends, estimated in December 1956 (Robertson, 1957, p. 5), that there were 1,270 jobs, half of them skilled and half unskilled, which might be filled by Eskimos within the ten years from 1957 to 1967. About 20 per cent of those jobs, it anticipated, could be expected from private concerns, mainly the Hudson's Bay Company and mining interests; the remaining 80 per cent would be openings in the government service. The Department of Transport might use 200 Eskimos as radio operators and 150 as meteorological assistants; the Department of National Health and Welfare could use a considerable number of young women as nurses and nurses' aides; and the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources would require teachers for the many new schools it was erecting in the Arctic, and janitors to take care of the buildings and to repair simple defects in the plumbing, the heating, and the electric lighting.

The ten-year period has now passed its mid-term. Will the department's estimate of 1,270 jobs for Eskimos be fulfilled? It seems unlikely. Murty's (1961, p. 60) figures for 1960 show this breakdown of the 307 Eskimos who, by his computation, had been steadily employed during that one year.

Employer	*No. of Eskimos Employed*
Depts. Northern Affairs and National Health	45
Dept. Transport	22
R.C.M.P.	11
Dew Line	17
Federal Electric Co.	69
Rankin Nickel Mine	58
Missions	2
Hudson's Bay Company	3
Miscellaneous	80
Total	*307*

[1]Electrically lighted homes, oil heating, movies two or three times a week, etc.

Independent sources give higher figures for certain items in this table, perhaps because they interpret the term "steady employment" more broadly, or include Eskimos working for agencies whom Murty may have overlooked. Nevertheless there seems no doubt that the total number of Eskimos continuously employed during the last few years, has at no time reached 600, and that 80 Eskimo workers at the North Rankin Inlet Nickel Mines lost their jobs when the mines closed down toward the end of 1962.[1]

It must have been deeply distressing to the government that out of the 1,270 jobs in the Arctic which it hoped might be filled by Eskimos before 1967, only 549 (by the highest estimate) had materialized by late 1961; and in the meantime the Eskimo labour force of over 2,000 males had been growing larger year by year. To watch 15 per cent of those jobs evaporate during 1962 must have added to Ottawa's anxieties.

Why should these jobs evaporate? Why should employment be so scarce? And why cannot the Eskimos fill all or most of those jobs that are even now available?

Jobs are scarce because the Arctic is still an undeveloped region inhabited, in the main, solely by Eskimos, by government officials, and by the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company. Its only exploitable resources (apart from handicrafts, furs, and a few fish) are minerals; and as yet these are little known and completely neglected, save for the nickel deposits once mined in Rankin Inlet. Remoteness from markets, transportation difficulties, and a very severe climate make it an unusually high-cost region, even on this continent, and whatever oil and minerals it possesses must compete with similar oil and minerals from such low-cost regions as Venezuela, Africa, and the Middle East. Large areas of northern Quebec may be solid blocks of high-grade or medium-grade iron ore, but if the world's markets can obtain in sufficient quantities, and at lower cost, as good or better ore from northern Sweden, Mauretania, and other places, our Labrador deposits may remain untapped until conditions change. Even if some of our mineral deposits are richer than those elsewhere, and we can mine them just as cheaply, so numerous are the political obstacles obstructing the flow of goods throughout the world today, so powerful the groups and cartels that control some of our industries, that we might find it impossible to market our products even after we had extracted them from the ground. Furthermore, science is rapidly improving its mining and metallurgical techniques, thereby making profitable the working of many easily accessible, low-grade ores that have been neglected for decades, and delaying the exploitation of perhaps richer ores that are more remote. For these and other reasons mining interests have hesitated to sink their capital in our Arctic (except, perhaps, in long-term operations designed to map and hold large oil-potential areas in our far north), and no mineral developments have yet occurred that would demand a substantial labour market. This is true, indeed, not of the Arctic alone, but of nearly all the Northwest Territories.

[1]Twenty-two of these 80 were taken on by the government for the maintenance of buildings previously serviced by the mines. The most reliable estimates of the permanently employed Eskimos that I have been able to obtain are:

1956–57	1957–58	1958–59	1959–60	1960–61	Late 1961
560	590	590?	?	?	549

"In the nine years from 1950 to 1958 the number of workers employed in the mining industry in the Northwest Territories (excluding Quebec) rose from 900 to approximately 1,200, a percentage increase of 33% indeed, but a numerical increase of only 300. About 80 of them were Eskimos, all employed in the nickel mine at Rankin Inlet . . . but one hopes that the impending development of the lead-zinc ores at Pine Point, on Great Slave Lake, will open up a number of jobs for the local Indians, and perhaps too for some Eskimos." (Jenness, 1962b, p. 367).[1]

In 1956 the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources was looking, not to the mining industry alone, but to trade, which meant in practice the Hudson's Bay Company, to open up a number of jobs for Eskimos during the next ten years. These trade jobs may still be available, indeed, if the company can find natives capable of filling them. But the situation in the north has changed with the increased costs of goods and labour, and with the collapse of the high prices the world was once prepared to offer for arctic furs. Today the fur trade alone no longer covers the expense of maintaining a chain of trading posts in the far north, and the "forts" of the Hudson's Bay Company have become general stores that derive less profit from the traffic in pelts than from the sales for cash of general merchandise.

"Price changes will, of course, vary according to the goods selected. However, it does seem abundantly clear that price changes do not explain the sharp upward trend in sales figures in the north in recent years. People across the north in total and on the average have much more money to spend than they ever had before, and they are buying more things with it than ever before.

I think there is little doubt but that the income in kind—the food and clothing from land and sea to which I referred—has declined, at least in relative importance. Certainly it has gone down sharply in proportion to the growing population. It is apparent, however, that that decline is being offset by the steady increase in the goods that are bought for cash."[2]

This statement by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories holds true both in the Mackenzie River basin and along the shores of the Arctic, where the predominantly Eskimo population is obtaining its cash from three sources: wage-employment, the sale of furs, handicrafts, char etc., and government grants. In 1950, when Cantley, grouping the first two sources together, credited the Eskimos with contributing only 40 per cent of the cash they were disbursing and assigned the other 60 per cent to government grants, much less cash was circulating in arctic communities, fewer Eskimos were working for wages, and neither handicrafts nor fish had become important money-earners. Today when handicrafts are flourishing, and the white-fox fur is selling at a slightly higher price than the average in Cantley's day, we can hardly be far wrong if we rank the three cash sources as roughly equal.

[1]Since 1958 the number of mine workers has declined, partly through increased automation, partly through the cessation or reduction of operations at two mines. Here are the figures: 1,227 (1958); 1,185 (1959); 982 (1960); 926 (1961); 910 (down to August, 1962). Cf. "The lesson to be learned, if indeed there is a lesson, is that mineral development must be undertaken as a source of supply for domestic or foreign mineral markets, and not as a means of colonization. To believe that colonization and mineral resource development go hand-in-hand is to deny the facts of mineral occurrence and depletion." (Buck and Henderson, 1962, p. 116).

[2]Opening Address by Gordon Robertson, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, at the 21st Session of the Council of the Northwest Territories, Fort Simpson, 10 July 1961, p. 4.

The clientele of the Hudson's Bay Company, in fact, has changed as much as its trade, and the clerk the company now requires for its "forts", unlike the trader of fifty years ago, must be a man who would not feel utterly at sea if he were suddenly transferred to its Winnipeg or Vancouver department store. He must speak and write English fluently, of course, possess an elementary knowledge of book-keeping, and not be completely unaware of the major events that are happening in Canada and the outside world. But where will the company find Eskimos who possess these qualifications? It might employ a few more sailors on the boats that supply its trading posts, and add to its staff of interpreters three or four natives who speak English well enough to make known the needs of their countrymen; but the hiring of these few extra sailors and interpreters will make no perceptible gap in the list of natives who desperately need wage-employment.

The ignorance of English, and lack of education and training, which prevent the hiring of Eskimo clerks by the Hudson's Bay Company, also prevent the natives from receiving any but unskilled jobs from the government. Yet there are many government posts in the Arctic today filled, at great expense, by white civil servants, who seldom stay there more than one or two years and then must be replaced. And replacement costs are high.

> "A company currently paying the lowest salaries at Frobisher, states that the costs of maintaining a person for a month average out at $923.00. This would include salary, meals, accommodation, transport, etc."[1]

Most of these posts could be filled equally well by Eskimos if they could receive the necessary training. The new schools which the government has erected in the Arctic were employing 90 teachers in the last months of 1962, its hospitals and nursing stations about 80; the weather and ionospheric stations, which we now man largely with students eager to earn enough money to carry them through college, could employ, perhaps, two or three dozen; and if we must have policemen to patrol the Arctic, enforce the law, and help all persons in distress, surely we could use responsible heads of Eskimo households familiar from childhood with the country and its people, rather than white men who come as strangers, serve their two-year term, and in most cases retreat to the south again? Before we can do all this, however, we must give the Eskimos the education and training our own youth receive. This is precisely the present-day policy of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. But its process is a slow one; it cannot reach maturity overnight. So although the Department of National Health and Welfare would gladly hire tomorrow two dozen Eskimo girls whom it could train as nurses for its northern service, it has not yet found one[2] who can pass the required matriculation examination; and it dare not place in charge of a health station an Eskimo woman, or a woman of any other race, who cannot read the labels on the medicine bottles, or understand why, if one small pill will ease a patient's pain and let him sleep, four of them given at once will not cure him completely,

[1]From Willis, 1959, p. 17, quoting a "Commercial study of the Frobisher Bay Airport" by the Economics Division, Dept. of Transport, dated 27 May 1959.

[2]Its staff includes one very capable Eskimo nurse who was born in Nain, on the east coast of Labrador, and trained in Newfoundland.

instead of sending him to sleep for ever. Neither can you give your farmers and industrialists accurate weather forecasts unless, in the far north as well as in the south, the meteorologists and assistant meteorologists who read the thermometers and the barometers have learned the significance of the decimal point and can read the book of tables.

Ours is a mechanical age, fast becoming an electronic one that will have little use for illiterate and unskilled labour. The key then to our Eskimo unemployment problem, as of unemployment in many other parts of the world, is education and training. Italy discovered two years ago that the thousands of unemployed and only semi-literate peasants in the Mezzogiorno, the region from Naples south, whom she was hoping would quickly find jobs in southern Germany and other labour-short areas within the Common Market, were not receiving the welcome she had expected because they lacked the necessary education, and she immediately initiated a crash educational program to remedy the situation. Here in Canada the nickel mine at Thompson, Manitoba, which employed 150 Indians during the construction phase, now employs only about 20 on a casual basis and 10 permanently, not because there was any racial discrimination against Indians—for the ten skilled men who have been retained on the permanent staff are acceptable to management and labour unions alike—but because all but these ten were unskilled. The iron centre of Shefferville, in the heart of the Labrador Peninsula, witnessed the same phenomenon; very few of the 110 to 150 illiterate or semi-literate Indians whom the mining company gladly employed during the construction period have steady jobs today. And should the iron ores of Ungava, or of the Great Whale River district, be exploited within the next decade, as seems not impossible (cf. p. 110), scores of Eskimos and their families will doubtless congregate there and earn good wages during the first few years; but unless they can be educated and trained in the interval, they will fall by the wayside again as the mine enters full production, and become an even heavier charge on the public purse than they are today.

CHAPTER 13

Eskimo education (1950–61)

Education is both a science and a technique, although it deals with mental phenomena, and seeks mental goals, not physical ones. In theory, therefore, educationalists should rank among the world's most fervid experimenters, since the political and social environments in which they work are forever changing, and they must constantly adapt their teaching to new conditions. China has now discarded her ancient literary education founded on the philosophical sayings of Confucius; Mohammedan countries no longer make the Koran the keystone of all learning; and every university in our western world, even Oxford, the stronghold of the "classical school" down to the First World War, is bending to the whirlwind of change that is sweeping the whole globe, and cautiously readjusting its calendar to meet the needs of an atomic age. Subjects as hoary as rhetoric and formal logic have been thrown into the waste basket, and others equally old are undergoing fresh examination. Little Denmark, whose people have always been noted for their ability to speak three or four languages, is today experimenting with three methods of teaching her children a foreign tongue—in this case English—and proposes to introduce into her schools whichever of the three methods produces the speediest and most satisfactory results.

Canada should be deeply interested in this Danish experiment, not only because she receives from Europe and elsewhere many immigrants ill-equipped to establish themselves in the Dominion owing to their ignorance or imperfect knowledge of English, but because among her citizens she counts more than 10,000 Eskimos, almost none of whom can read her daily newspapers or understand either her French or English broadcasts over the nation's radios.

It is one thing, however, to teach a literate European people long familiar with schools and the need for education, and quite another to convince of that need, and to educate, a primitive population that has no real knowledge of our civilized world, and no tradition of reading and writing, but looks upon the latter as a useless and rather difficult pastime which cannot fill the cooking-pot or warm the home, and so may be forgotten as soon as the school door closes. Learning to speak English fluently and accurately seems equally futile, for no Eskimos (with rare exceptions) expect or wish to leave their homeland and dwell in an unfamiliar country, far to the south. All an Eskimo needs, most

of them believe, is a small English vocabulary to smooth his relations with the white men who visit him, or hire him to work for them in his own Arctic—a vocabulary not unlike the "pigeon English" (*him one fellow go along kaikai*: "that man has gone away to eat") which used to be current over most of the South Seas. We may see the same situation, but in reverse, among our own countrymen; for many English-speaking people, born and brought up in Hongkong or Kobe, have never learned, or tried to learn, more than a few words of the Chinese or Japanese speech that echoes around them.[1]

It was unfortunate that the first missionary to settle in the Eastern Arctic, the Rev. E. J. Peck, printed his hymns and prayers in the syllabic script invented by James Evans and taught that system of writing to the Eskimos of northern Labrador and southern Baffin Island (see p. 16). It left the rival missions subsequently established by the Roman Catholic church no alternative but to use the same system, and thereby entrench it among all Eskimo communities from King William Island to Hudson Strait and James Bay. A century earlier the Moravian missions on the east coast of the Labrador Peninsula had taught the Eskimos of the Atlantic region to read and write in the Roman alphabet as used in Greenland, which differs very little from the English; and before the close of the nineteenth century the Eskimos in the Mackenzie delta had learned our English alphabet, either in Alaskan schools before migrating into Canada, or else from Alaskan natives with whom they traded and maintained close contact. From the Mackenzie delta the use of this alphabet passed into Coronation Gulf, beyond which it encountered the syllabic script introduced by Peck. Thus through the accident of history Canada faces this strange anomaly, that her Eastern Arctic has become a lonely island of Peck syllabics hemmed in between two larger and more populous regions, in one of which the Eskimos are using the English alphabet, in the other, Greenland, an alphabet that is almost identical. In the latter region, indeed, they have published a small but original literature in their script, and are printing a newspaper at regular intervals.

How long can this situation last in the Eastern Arctic?[2] And is there any advantage in prolonging it? Neither the syllabics nor the English alphabet represents with perfect accuracy the sounds in Eskimo dialects, but both permit of satisfactory communication, since letters and hymns written in one or the other script can be read and understood by Eskimos in other settlements, despite

[1]In 1914 the Canadian Arctic Expedition "skippered" one of its schooners with an ex-U.S. seaman who had been living for over twenty years among the Eskimos of arctic Alaska. To the uninitiated ears of many members of the expedition he spoke the Eskimo language fluently: and he even boasted that he would act as their interpreter when they reached the little-known region of Coronation Gulf. Greatly to his chagrin, however, he found the speech of the Coronation Gulf Eskimos completely unintelligible, although to his Eskimo wife it differed very little from her own north Alaskan dialect. What the "skipper" had learned was a jargon of about 200 words, most of them Eskimo, a few English, and two (*kai-kai*: food, and *hula-hula*: dance) Hawaiian, which the Alaskan natives themselves had developed from their intercourse with the mixed crews of whaling vessels.

[2]If the Quebec government, which in 1961 took over from the federal government all responsibility for the maintenance of law and order among the 2,000 Eskimos in northern Quebec, takes over also the responsibility for their education, will it continue to instruct them in English and foster the use of the syllabic script? Or, seeing that they number so few, and many of them already carry white blood in their veins, will it hasten their assimilation by imposing the curriculum of its French schools and allow the syllabic script to die a natural death?

ᐊᑯᓂᑦ
ᐃᑦᑯᒪᑲᓚᒥᒍᒪ

ᐁᐱᓕᐅᑉ ᐃᓄᓯᐊᑉ ᐊᒃᓚᑦᓴᒥᑦ ᐃᑲᓗᒥᐅᑉ

ᑕᑯᐊ ᐊᓯᒥᓂᑦ ᐁᐱᓕᐅᑦ ᐃᓄᓯᐊᑦ ᐅᓂᒃᑳᖏᑦ ᑐᓴᕐᓇᖅᑐᑦ ᐃᑲᐃᓇᓗᑎᒃᑯ
ᐅᓂᒃᑕᐅᔭᕙᓂᓂᒃ. ᐅᑯᓗ ᓴᒃ ᑯᔨᑦ ᑭᑭᑕᒥᐅᑦ ᐅᓂᒃᑲᓪᓚᐅᕆᓚᔾ-
-ᖏᓂᒃ ᐃᓅᑐᖃᐅᑦ ᐅᑯᓅᖅ ᐃᓕᕆᓚᐅᑐᓂᒃ. ᐅᑯᓂᐅᑎᖕᒍᔪᑕᐅ
ᐅᓂᒃᑳᖏᑎᒍᑦ ᑲᐅᔾᔨᔪᓯᑦ ᑭᖁᕆᐅᔭᕙᓂᒃ ᐊᑕᐅᑎᑯᑦ ᑕᒥᖕᒍ ᒪᓇ
ᐃᓇᐅᓕᑦ ᐃᒪᑲ ᑕᑯᑲᐅᑎᓚᐅᕆᒪᖏᑦ ᓄᓇᑲᑕᒥᖏᑦ
ᐅᓂᒃᑯᑎᒃ ᑕᐱᖁᓂᓂᑕᓂᒃ ᐃᓯᓴᓇᕈᔪᑦ ᑭᑯᓂᓪᒪᖕᒐᑕᒍ
ᑯᓕᔾ ᓇᒍᓇᕿᓂᖅᑐᑦ. ᐅᓯᖕᒐᓕ ᑕᑯᐊ ᐁᐱᓕᐅᑦ ᐊᓯᑕᖏᑦ
ᐅᑲᓕᒪᒍᑦ ᑕᒪᒥᒃ ᑐᕌᔭᐃᓇᑲ ᑭᕙᐊᓂ ᑕᓇ ᐊᓕᓇᑎᖕᒍ
ᑎᓇᓇᑎᖕᒍ ᐃᒪᐃᓕᖕᒐᔪᑦ ᑐᕌᖏᑲᒃ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᐃᓕᑯᕙᓂᖃᖕᒍᐊᖏᑦ
ᑲᓄᐃᓂᓴᑦᑐᒪᖕᒐᑦ ᐅᑲᒪᖏᑐᑦ ᐃᒪᑲ ᑲᓄᐃᑕᐃᓕᓂᖅ
ᒍᑎᑲᖏᑦᑦᒍᑦ ᐃᓕᑯᕙᓂ. ᐊᒪᒍ ᑕᑯᓇᓂ ᐊᑎᐊᒍᑦᒥᑦ
ᐅᑲᒪᓚᑦ ᐅᑯᓗᓂ ᐅᕙᐊᓚᐊ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᓄᓇᓄᑦ ᑎᑭᑦᑐᕙᓂ
ᐊᑎᑦᒥᑦ ᐊᑎᑲᓂᒪᑦ ᑲᒍᓇᑦ ᓯᓚᔭᕙᓂᑦ ᐅᕙᐊᐊᕙᓂᖕᒐᑦ.
ᐃᓄᓄᐊᑭᑦᑐᕙᓂᖅ: ᐅᑲᐅᔨᑦ ᐃᓚᖕᒋᑲᐅ ᑐᕌᑎᑯᖕᒋᑲᒃ ᒪᑭᑦ
ᐊᓯᒥᓂᖕᒥᒃ ᐅᓂᑲᑎᐊᒥᓚᐊᒍᒍᔪᐊᑦ ᐊᓇᑎᐊᒥᓕᖕᒍᑎᖕᒍ.

ᒣᓇ ᐸᓂᒍᔨᐅᑦ ᐊᓯᑕᖕᒋᑦ

Fig. 7. A page of *Inuktitut*, an Eskimo monthly magazine printed in syllabics by the government and distributed throughout the Eastern Arctic (July issue, 1962, p. 13).

numberless inconsistencies in the spelling. The syllabic script, being the simpler, can be learned by an illiterate people more quickly than the English alphabet—which was Peck's reason for introducing it; but outside the Arctic it is known to a few missionaries only. It cannot therefore help the Eskimos in their relations with other Canadians, or increase their opportunities for wage-employment. It may even handicap them in their education, for Eastern Arctic children who learn to read and write the syllabic script in their homes seem to progress more slowly at school than the children in the Western Arctic who learn the English alphabet only. Whether the script can in fact produce this effect is perhaps debatable; but it is noteworthy that these Western Eskimos in the Mackenzie delta speak English better than those around Hudson Bay, are less backward educationally, and appear more capable of standing on their own feet and working out their own salvation in the rapidly changing Arctic.[1]

With the growing importance of the Arctic, the inadequate educational system that the missions had established was bound to give way, sooner or later, to a broader and more comprehensive system operated by the government and patterned after those in Canada's provinces. When the change-over did take place, however, it brought vigorous protests from several quarters; and even twelve years after the event a writer in the daily press still belaboured the government for taking secular education out of the hands of the missions, and demanded that it be restored to them (Brown, 1961). This critic, one suspects, had failed to learn the lesson of history, that education, which now affects every aspect of human life, can no longer be left entirely in private hands. From the day when science began to construct giant telescopes to explore the mysteries of space, and equip expensive laboratories to unmask the innermost particles of matter, only a government that wielded vast powers of taxation over a whole people could finance and direct the education that civilization and its industries demanded. Even in the Arctic, where the educational needs of the Eskimos were less than those in more temperate regions, the missions had failed to prepare the natives for their entry into the civilized world because they lacked the money, the staff, and more than all else, a clear perception of the objectives at which a secular education should aim. We cannot arrest or reverse the tide of civilization: like the ocean, it rolls unendingly on. Anyone, therefore, who would restore to the missions the education of our northern citizens is merely repeating the idle gesture of King Canute, who rebuked the sea that washed against his feet when he landed on England's shore and commanded it to roll back.

More deserving of consideration is the anonymous missionary who wrote a thoughtful and well-informed article in the Oblate journal *Eskimo* (1958). He deplores the speed with which the government is hurtling into our crude, materialistic civilization a people who in their aboriginal state lacked our material possessions, but sensed, as did their Indian neighbours, the inner mysteries of our universe and nourished a spirituality (if I may use that term) for which

[1]As of 1 Jan. 1961, 46 Eskimos from the District of Mackenzie (which extends from Canada's boundary with Alaska to the eastern end of Coronation Gulf) had reached Grade 7 and upward: 15 were in grade 7, 14 in grade 8, 8 in grade 9, 4 in grade 10, 1 in grade 11, and 4 in grade 12. Only one Eskimo in the Eastern Arctic, despite its much larger population, had reached grade 7, and none beyond. (See this volume, p. 131).

there seems little place in a world run by fast-moving machinery and paper banknotes. He writes:

> "We feel, however, authorized to conclude that there is no reason for a radical and sudden transformation of the Eskimo way of life. If some evolution, more or less serious, in each case, must take place, precipitation must be avoided at all costs (p. 10).
>
> "The aggressiveness of competitive spirit of our ways have been presented as virtues. Money is to be the basic motivation of all activity and the value of a man is to be measured in dollars. Few realize that this teaching strikes at the very root of the Eskimo personality (p. 4).
>
> "An imbalance is bound to result since the Eskimo is brought to the point where he gives up his traditional values and finds nothing in the atmosphere of materialism to make up the loss. Talk of integration abounds but disintegration is the end product. . . . (pp. 4–5).
>
> "More and more today a certain secular tendency can be sensed. It is not expressed openly but many seem to think that the missionary has played a meritorious role but the time has come for him to step aside since the Eskimo no longer needs him. God grant that this error be corrected in time. The Eskimo caught in today's machinery needs the help of Christianity more than ever to come out victorious." (p. 10).

The missionary is right, but only half right. This present civilization of ours is indeed grossly materialistic, and its judgments have been warped by science's prodigious leap into the unknown world of matter. It is not really the government, however, that is hurtling the Eskimos into it, but civilization itself, which has flung its arms toward both poles as well as into space. The government is merely one of civilization's agents, as the missionary is the agent of his church. Until quite recently it neglected its duties in the Arctic by permitting only the missionaries and the traders to induct the Eskimos into civilization's ways. Now, driven by civilization's march, it is endeavouring to carry out those duties, and it has taken back from the missionaries the secular education of the Eskimos which it should never have renounced. Yet the day of the missionary has not ended, either in the Arctic or in southern Canada. His task is still what it has always been—to keep reminding us of the world that transcends matter, a world in which money and status and material possessions carry no meaning. This is the missionary's field, in which the government's secular education plays no role; and, like St. Francis, he will succeed in that field only in so far as he holds his own gaze on the unseen realm and scorns all worldly things that obscure his vision.

The transfer of education from mission to government hands was doubtless inevitable, but when it came it brought many unexpected and refractory problems in its train, because the Eskimos had not yet lost their primitive outlook and for economic reasons still retained many of their old migratory habits. The philosophy and objectives of the government's system, too, were very different from those of the missions. The latter had entered the Arctic with no other purpose than to save souls. Naturally, therefore, they had placed religious instruction at the head of their curricula, and had prayed that no radical changes would disperse the Eskimo population and disrupt their work of salvation. The federal government shouldered other duties, and sought other aims. Its task was, and is, to administer the Arctic as an integral part of Canada, to encourage the development of its resources for the benefit of the whole Canadian people, and to promote the welfare of its local inhabitants, the Eskimos. Religious beliefs, apart from the freedom to hold and propagate them, lay outside

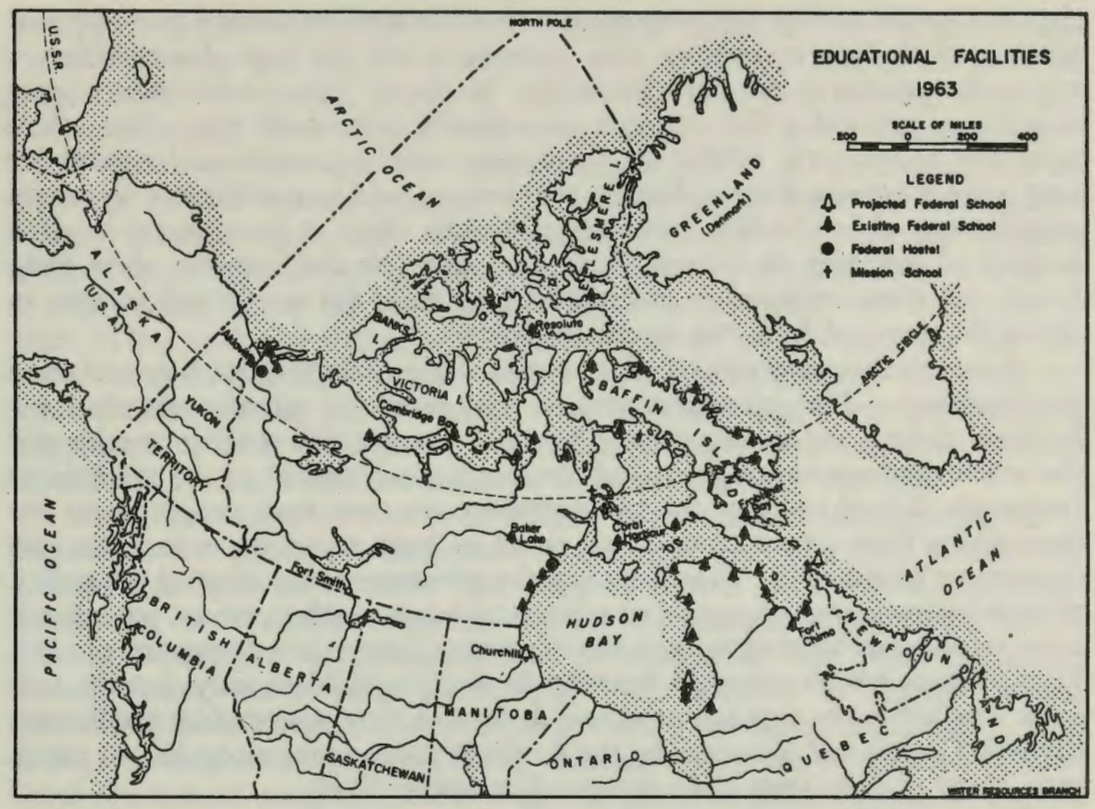

Fig. 8.

its jurisdiction; but education definitely lay within it as long as the federal government remained the region's sole administrator. The world was shrinking rapidly, and if only in self-defence the government had to give its Eskimos the educational facilities of other Canadians, equip them to fulfil the duties of Canadian citizens and enjoy, if possible, fuller and happier lives. Should their education, their economic welfare, or their health require their dispersal, their removal to other arctic districts or even to southern Canada, that too the government considered to be its duty, whatever its effect might be on the missions. And, as we saw, it did ship hundreds of tuberculous Eskimos to hospitals in southern Canada, remove some northern Quebec natives to islands in the High Arctic, the survivors of the Barren Ground Eskimos to Rankin Inlet, and some Eskimos and half-breeds from the Mackenzie delta to Sachs Harbour on Banks Island.

Since the 1940's, then, the federal government has been providing the educational facilities that the Arctic had needed since the beginning of the century; and with parliament willingly supplying the funds, it has now erected an astonishing number of attractive modern schools, and built for their teachers comfortable modern homes. Today more than 30 such schools dot the coastline of the Arctic (see Fig. 8).

That initial part of its task the government has found comparatively easy; far easier than to fill the schools with Eskimo children, day after day and month after month, as must be done if the new educational system is to bear fruit. Far easier, too, than to secure competent teachers, teachers who are willing to endure the climate and the isolation of the Arctic, and who possess at the same

time the special ability to interpret an unfamiliar civilization and provoke new patterns of thought in children who have never felt the heat of a midsummer sun on the prairies or the driving rain of a "northerly", have never seen a horse or a cow, a railroad, a field of grain, or a heavily laden fruit tree. Too often, especially in the early 1950's, the classrooms remained vacant and unused for long periods because Eskimo families that are not held in a settlement by wage-employment or handicrafts, and not maintained there at government expense because of infirmity or distress, must hunt and fish and trap for their daily bread, and these occupations commonly keep them for weeks and months in places far removed from the settlement schools.

It was these empty schools that presented the authorities with one of their first problems. They attempted to meet it by operating summer schools at the Eskimos' fishing and sealing camps; but with the sun still shining at midnight the attendance was so irregular, and the minds (and bodies) of the children so frequently drifted away to the streams where the char were running, and the bays where from time to time a seal raised its head above the water, that the experiment foundered.[1] More recently the government has adopted the policy of establishing hostels alongside its schools to house children whose parents are away trapping or hunting, or who live in another district (see Appendix, p. 136). Most of these hostels are small, housing six or eight children only; but the two it has attached to the new school at Inuvik (one of them operated by the Roman Catholic Church and the other by the Anglican) accommodate up to 250 pupils each, many of them from as far away as Coronation Gulf.

Now if it is advisable, or necessary, that a child should speak a foreign language and steep himself in a foreign culture (and our Eskimo children must, of course, learn either English or French) there are distinct advantages in transplanting him for a period, with the parents' consent, into the homeland of that culture, or at least to a place where its language will ceaselessly bombard his ears. No one will question that Eskimo children lodged in hostels or boarding-schools pick up English speech, and English ways of living, far more rapidly than in their home settlements and their local day-schools. Nevertheless, there can be dangers in this educational policy. Human beings are not automata; and it violates our conceptions of human needs and rights, it disorganizes the family and the society, arbitrarily to separate parents and children more than seems absolutely needful. This is what often happened in the Arctic, however, before and even after the Second World War. In 1916, when as yet there were no boarding-schools in the region, I came upon an Eskimo boy who had been taken from his home in very early childhood and raised in a mission boarding-school on the upper Mackenzie River. There he remained, year after year, cut off from his own people and beyond the sound of Eskimo speech. When at last he reached the age of fifteen, and could speak the French language fluently but had completely forgotten his mother tongue, the mission restored him to his relatives. And I found him, three weeks later, living with them in a primitive fishing camp at Shingle Point in the Mackenzie delta—a sad, lonely boy, unfamiliar with their way of life and unable even to converse with them except by signs.

Government officials down to a few years ago failed to supervise closely this gathering and enrolment of Eskimo children in mission boarding-schools,

[1] In 1952 Mrs. Houston, the wife of the artist J. H. Houston, conducted a tent school near her husband's post at Cape Dorset; but the results were disappointing.

and appeared quite unconscious of the hazards to Eskimo society in thus breaking up the family life. In 1956, however, they discovered that of the children lodged in the two mission schools at Aklavik no fewer than nineteen from east of the Mackenzie River delta had not seen their parents for at least two years. The Director of the Northern Administration Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs reacted promptly. He issued a regulation prohibiting the holding of pupils in hostels or boarding-schools for years on end without enabling them to visit their families; and he ordered that children be sent back to their homes during the long summer vacation, or, at the very least, once a year. Thus with one stroke of his pen he removed a grave injustice that had sorely troubled the Eskimos for many years; and by strictly enforcing his regulation, despite the heavy expense, he took a long step towards reconciling the parents to their children's absence, and winning their acceptance of an educational system which too many of them still consider needless.

The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, which is responsible for education throughout the Arctic, demands high professional qualifications from its teachers, who since 1958 have all held first-class certificates. In the Western Arctic they follow the curriculum laid down by the Alberta Department of Education for the schools of that province, in the Eastern Arctic the Ontario curriculum.[1] The teaching of English became compulsory from the year education passed into government hands, but as long as the mission schools, many of whose teachers were French, greatly outnumbered the federal ones, instruction might be given in either French or English according to the preference of the teacher. Today mission schools have disappeared, or virtually so, and all instruction must be in English.

Teaching in the Eskimo tongue has not as yet become a serious issue, because no white teacher in the Arctic, apart from three or four missionaries, can speak the language fluently, and no Canadian Eskimo has yet reached the stage when he can pass the regular teaching examinations. Greenland schools have always employed the Eskimo tongue as a medium of instruction, though in recent years they have restricted its use to the lower grades because of an overriding need for the Greenlanders to learn Danish. If it is true, as they have sometimes claimed, that initial teaching in Eskimo accelerates the learning of Danish later, then it might have a similar effect on the learning of English, and could profitably be used in Canada also during the next ten or fifteen years with children who are just beginning their schooling, or who have reached no farther than the second grade. In that event the government could employ as teaching-aides Eskimo girls who possess a reasonable command of English, but who will never become certificated teachers: it could entrust them, under supervision, with the first and perhaps the second grade pupils, thereby allowing the certificated teacher to concentrate most of his attention on children above those grades. However, this is a matter for experienced educationalists to decide, not a layman.

Two or three idealists have proposed that all schools in Eskimo territory should give courses on the language and culture of the Eskimos in order to preserve the wonderful record of their achievements and raise the sagging morale of the present-day natives. We know that the Celtic language and songs

[1] A veteran arctic teacher tells me that she does not slavishly follow the Ontario curriculum, which is often unintelligible to her pupils, but uses it mainly as a guide. The government is now preparing new textbooks to meet the special needs of Eskimo children.

of Wales have helped to preserve the independent spirit of that region's inhabitants, and that throughout the years when Poland was partitioned and ruled by foreigners its schools worked to keep alive the strong nationalism that burst into flower when the country was liberated. In Cyprus, too, school textbooks and school teachings have long joined with religion to foster two clashing nationalisms, the one Greek and the other Turkish, which threaten today to obstruct that island's tranquil development now that for the first time in its history it has become an independent nation. It would be a mistake, however, to compare these European regions with our Arctic, because our Eskimos lack all cohesion outside their family groups, and cannot comprehend the structure of a nation or understand the fires of nationalism. Their tiny communities lay isolated from one another in a hostile world where every stranger, including the Eskimo who lived only two hundred miles away, could be an enemy, and that world was so restricted, the outlook of the most travelled Eskimo hunter so narrow, that even today the Baffin Islanders feel no kinship with the Greenlanders, or with their fellow-Eskimos in the Mackenzie delta whose speech they understand only with difficulty.[1] They are a fragmented, amorphous race that lacks all sense of history, inherits no pride of ancestry, and discerns no glory in past events or past achievements. Until we Europeans shattered their isolation four centuries ago they were more rigidly confined than the dwellers in Plato's cave: no shadowy figures from the outer world ever flickered on their prison wall to provoke new images and new ideas, and not even a Mohammed could have drawn them out of that prison to unite them into a nation. Now at last they are emerging; but with their long background of fragmentation it seems to me very doubtful that any school instruction, or any educational "propaganda", can revive their drooping morale, or save their language from extinction—if in the end extinction is to be its fate. Only the economic stability which comes from steady employment, at wage-rates that permit a standard of living equal to that of their white fellow-citizens, will restore their dignity and self-respect; and they alone, not books or teaching, can preserve the use of their language, as the ambitious experiment still proceeding in Eire is making quite clear. We might momentarily lift their morale a little, and enlarge their vision of that wide world which is now embracing them, if we encouraged them to exchange broadcast messages in Eskimo with the Greenlanders,[2] and if we subscribed to enough copies of the Greenland Eskimo newspaper to distribute among all the larger settlements of our Arctic.[3]

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[1]The various Eskimo dialects have changed so greatly under the impact of civilization that Hans Egede, who established the first mission among them in 1721, would hardly understand the language spoken today by the descendants of his Greenlandic converts. Dr. Aage Bugge, a former Director of Education in Greenland and a leading authority on Eskimo dialects, informs me that an equally rapid change has taken place along Labrador's Atlantic coast; and in the Western Arctic a Point Barrow Eskimo who was helping me in 1915 to translate some folk-tales I had recorded in that district, frequently remarked that this or that suffix was no longer used except by very old people and would shortly disappear.

[2]This is perhaps being done, for it was announced on 10 April 1961, that "Eastern Arctic Eskimos received and understood broadcasts in Greenlandic."

[3]I can claim no credit for these suggestions, which were made by Dr. Trevor Lloyd, when he served as Canada's consul in Greenland towards the end of the late war. He suggested also the use in the Canadian Arctic of some Greenlandic school-books, and the employment of one or more Greenlandic teachers who possess an adequate knowledge of English.

Teachers in Eskimo schools, most of whom are married, receive salaries comparable to those of Ontario teachers and, in addition, a living allowance of $1,500 yearly to compensate for the high costs of the Arctic.[1] In the first years, when they were almost the only white families in the Arctic, they were expected to perform welfare work after school hours; but the added burden proved impracticable, and today special "welfare officers" and "northern service officers" carry out those duties. From the very beginning, however, a high percentage of the teachers have been unsettled, and the government unable to retain their services. They seem incapable of enduring the hardships and deprivations of a northern life for which pay and allowances provide no real compensation; and few remain for more than two years, many for only one.

So heavy, indeed, is the annual turnover, over 30 per cent,[2] that it almost drains the life-blood from the educational system, and imposes on the government constant trouble and expense. It gravely affects, too, the education itself, for not until his second year can the average teacher from the south, isolated in so unusual an environment, discern the problems and difficulties of his shy and unsophisticated pupils and devise ways and means of overcoming them: and the pupils themselves are slow in adjusting to new teachers who cannot understand their speech or share their thoughts. The problem is not confined to Canada, of course. It plagues our neighbours in Alaska also, whose administrators have tried in vain to solve it by such expedients as the raising of teachers' salaries. I myself cannot conceal a suspicion that its cause lies deeply rooted in our New World civilization, which demands an educational system that will train our children to earn their livelihood and perhaps enrich their pockets, but does not require that it should simultaneously enrich their minds and their lives. Universal education has multiplied many-fold the numbers of our teachers; but we have degraded teaching itself from a "calling" (in theory at least) to a profession, a profession which, like every other profession in our commercial world, demands pay and privileges corresponding to its own valuation of its services, and working conditions as favourable as those in other walks of life. Our Arctic cannot provide such favourable conditions. It is a hard environment for everyone, physically and mentally; and only certain temperaments which find it a challenge are able and willing to withstand it. A government can easily select well-trained teachers by studying the papers they submit in support of their applications. But how is it to determine whether they possess also the temperaments to rise above the difficulties of an arctic life, and the problems of teaching children who, however lovable, still speak and think in a different tongue?

"I believe that nowhere on earth is there a greater challenge to the educationalist than that which presents itself in the Northwest Territories". This was the opening statement of an address delivered on 31 March 1960, by the Chief Superintendent of Schools for the Mackenzie Educational District. He

[1]The living allowance varies somewhat according to the remoteness of the region and the number of the teacher's dependants, but $1,500 seems a fair average.

[2]37.5 per cent of the teachers resign at the end of their first year, 34.5 per cent at the end of their second year, and 31.5 per cent at the end of their third year. The turnover seems to be greatest in settlements that have the largest white population (e.g. Frobisher), presumably because of personality factors and greater friction. (Information from D. Grant, formerly long-range planning officer with the Northern Administration Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.)

might have added that the challenge faces not the educationalists alone, but the administrators; for at the time he spoke only 55 per cent of all Eskimo children of school age had been enrolled in the 33 schools that the government had erected for them since 1947, and not all the 55 per cent attended them with the regularity that we expect from children in southern Canada.

Only 55 per cent! And yet this was really a remarkable achievement, considering the fractionalization of the population, the huge area over which it was dispersed, and the wandering life that must always be the Eskimos' fate until they can find steady wage-employment. The attendance increased in an almost unbroken rhythm during the first ten years, and made a great leap forward in 1959 after the two large hostels in Inuvik opened their doors. The table below shows the progress that the government anticipates in the very near future, taking into account both the probable increase in the school population year by year, and the increased accommodation that will be available for it in the new hostels that are already under construction, or are sketched on the drawing-boards.

Eskimo school enrolment

	1951	*1960*	*1961 (est.)*	*1968 (est.)*
No. of children	245	1,783	2,600	?
% of school-age children	10%	55%	63%	100%

An unfriendly critic may object that so far from congratulating ourselves on bringing so near the day when we will have shepherded all Eskimo children into the classrooms, we should ask ourselves why the task should have taken us twenty years, when a country like Russia would have accomplished it in half that time. Perhaps it would.[1] But her conception of the relationship of the individual to the state differs from ours, and permits her to break up families and shuffle around young children in days of peace as freely as if they were conscripts in a wartime army. We ourselves have done this in the case of Eskimos afflicted with tuberculosis (see pp. 87–8); but we could justify that as a temporary emergency, like war itself, in which we have been forced, against our will, to inflict hardship on a minority in order to save both themselves and the majority. But we cannot consider a need so continuous as education an emergency, unless in unusual circumstances; and Christianity has taught us, rightly or wrongly, to place the liberty and happiness of the individual above the requirements of the state wherever there seems to be a clash of interests. Some administrators may protest that in the case of the Eskimos the circumstances are indeed abnormal, and that we may justly use coercion over a short period to educate them, and to integrate them into our society, because by so doing we shall save them from greater hardships in the future. It is a very difficult question: I for one do not feel qualified to answer it.

[1]The Soviet census of 1959 estimates that country's Eskimo population at 1,100, a drop of about 200 since the 1926 census, the last that listed them as a separate people. The *Soviet News Bulletin* of Ottawa, 20 May 1959, gives this information about them: "During the years of Soviet power the Asian Eskimos were given the opportunity to develop a written language in their native tongue. As early as 1932 special textbooks in their native language were put out to enable the Eskimo teachers to instruct children and adults. Russian is also taught in their schools so that the youth may acquire a knowledge of the science and culture of other peoples. Whereas in the first years of Soviet power all the Eskimos were illiterate, today illiteracy has been completely wiped out and many Eskimo young men and women have received a special secondary and higher education in the educational establishments of the country."

The government has succeeded in its school-building program, in recruiting the necessary teachers, and in drawing the children into the classrooms; but it has failed as yet to inspire in those children the eagerness to learn which we look for in white children, or even the wish to acquire a competent knowledge of English. In Cape Dorset, where the government has been operating a school ever since 1949, only one pupil had reached grade 5 by the summer of 1961, and his background of knowledge would hardly have qualified him for any classification in southern Canada above grade 3. As for the children's knowledge of English, the elder could stammer, with help, through a few simple sentences in their schoolbooks, but they could speak the language no more fluently than the average English child in a Toronto public school can speak French. An official at Sugluk, on the south side of Hudson Strait nearly opposite Cape Dorset, gloomily speculated whether the local school-children ever would learn enough English to carry on even the briefest conversation. Sugluk, admittedly, is a depressed community where the morale of the Eskimos is very low. In Resolute, where the Eskimo colony is more prosperous and comes into much greater contact with whites, the parents encourage the children to learn English and whatever else is being taught in their schools; and the children seem to be progressing fairly satisfactorily. The situation thus varies from settlement to settlement. Nevertheless, the over-all picture is very discouraging, save perhaps at Inuvik, which has existed for too short a time to show a clear pattern. Everywhere throughout the far north, indeed, education seems to be struggling against a series of road-blocks. The following résumé of school gradings in the Arctic (excluding northern Quebec) should make us ponder:

Grading of Eskimo school-children

Grades	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*
Pupils, Mackenzie District	167	90	78	43	39	23	15	14	8	4	1	4
Pupils, Arctic District	408	178	91	28	20	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	*575*	*268*	*169*	*71*	*59*	*24*	*16*	*14*	*8*	*4*	*1*	*4*

These are the official figures as of 1 January 1961. On that date no fewer than 86 per cent of all Eskimo children attending school were grouped in the three lowest grades, more than half of them in grade 1. Only 13 per cent were in grades 4 to 6; and only from 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent had passed into high school.[1]

Consider now this table:

Eskimo enrolments (male only) as of Jan. 1960

Grades	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
No. of pupils	273	149	77	32	28	14
Av. age of pupils	9.8	10.8	11.9	12.8	13.1	13.8
Av. age of white pupils in N.W.T.	6.4	7.6	8.8	?	?	?

These tables raise several questions. Why should Eskimo children be three years older when they enter school than the white children in the Northwest Territories? Why should so many of them end their schooling at grade 3? Why should only a bare handful of them attain proficiency in speaking and reading English when from the day they enter school they receive all their

[1]Report of Committee on Eskimo Affairs, 10–11 April 1961, Can. Dept. of N. Aff. and Nat. Res. (Mimeo.).

instruction in that language? And, finally, why should the Eskimos of the Western Arctic be so much farther advanced educationally than those in the Eastern Arctic?

It is not possible to answer any of these questions with certainty. Why do Eskimo parents not send their children to school at age 6, when white children begin their schooling? I have never seen the question asked, or answered. This, however, we do know, that the boy who begins his schooling at 9 years of age is 12 when he passes out of grade 3; and that may provide one answer to our second question—why so many of the children never advance beyond that grade. For at 12 years of age a boy brought up in a hunting community is well able to trap foxes, to fish for char and trout, and to shoot small game, even seals perhaps, to fill the family cooking-pot. He is approaching the age when he will be an adult, ready to take on the load his father carried; and he therefore performs, or tries to perform, all the tasks of an adult—as children of that age did in Europe down to two centuries ago, and still do in South America, in Africa, and in the Middle and the Far East. It would be interesting to know, then, whether those Eskimo boys and girls who reach grade 6 and pass on to high school are children who have spent the greater part of their years away from their parents—e.g. at boarding-schools, or are the children of Eskimos who benefit from steady wage-employment and can spend the whole year in a settlement. At Dorset and the majority of other settlements most of the children must accompany their parents every winter to trapping grounds far removed from the community centre, and are consequently unable to attend school at all except in the summer and the fall.[1] Even in summer the families usually remain intact at the fishing streams while the char are running, sometimes too at the sealing-grounds, although to the latter localities the male adults commonly travel alone.

We face a more complex problem when we ask why the Eskimos are so sluggish in learning English. True, it must be a very difficult language for the adults, since the structure is quite unlike that of their own tongue and requires a different thought-pattern. Their tongue, with its three numbers, singular, dual, and plural (the dual is fast disappearing), its personal endings, the two voices and the moods of the verbs, and the six cases of the nouns, is as intricate as classical Greek: and in conjunction with this complex grammar it takes on a polysynthetic form, that is to say, it builds up a whole sentence from one word by adding a series of suffixes, each carrying its own individual meaning. Thus it will say, in what we would consider one impossibly long word, "wooden house—going to build—really—at last—here—I", where we would express the same meaning, following a different order of thought and using twelve separate words, in this manner: "I am really going to build a wooden house here at last". Eskimo children, of course, learn their own language painlessly and unconsciously by imitating their parents and their playmates; and they would learn English just as easily if they were subjected to the same continuous indoctrination: but unless they are taken from their home environment to boarding-schools or elsewhere they rarely hear any language except their own. It is only when the child begins school that he enters an atmosphere of English, and

[1]It is for this reason that the government is speeding up the construction in Eskimo settlements of small hostels where the parents can safely leave their children during the winter trapping season.

then only in relation to his teacher and the topics that are dealt with in the classroom. Moreover, as soon as school ends for the day, the door that closes behind him shuts from his mind all the English words and phrases he has been struggling to memorize; and they seldom re-enter his consciousness until the schoolbell rings again the next morning. Under such conditions progress can hardly fail to be extremely slow, and also very superficial.

It is amazing, nevertheless, how many children in foreign countries do succeed in acquiring a useful smattering of English, even without the help of schooling. The small boys who used to clean my shoes in the squares of Mexican cities would proudly air the few words of English they had learned already and avidly catch up new words. But these children possessed what our Eskimo children lack, the desire to learn; and their elders encouraged them. Our Eskimo children seldom receive any encouragement from their parents, most of whom are even more indifferent to learning than their offspring.[1]

During the 1920's some Eskimos and half-breeds in the Mackenzie delta had petitioned Ottawa to send a competent teacher for their children, and had offered to pay his salary (see p. 48). Why then is it that now, when the government has dotted the whole Arctic with schools and competent teachers, the Eskimos do not whole-heartedly respond and endeavour to profit from them?

Here, perhaps, is the reason, if I am right in generalizing from the half-dozen settlements in Hudson Bay that I visited in July 1961. The Eskimos of today are a beaten people, bewildered by all the changes that have buffeted them since the beginning of the century, and unsure both of themselves and of their future. Fifty years ago they looked the white man proudly in the face, considering themselves his superiors or at least his equals. And so they were, as long as circumstances restricted the white man to the Arctic and made him as dependent upon its resources as the Eskimo. But the Arctic has changed. Today it is no longer possible for the Eskimo to "live off the country", disregarding that outside world of which he knows so little.

Yet what other way can he find of winning his daily bread? The white traders tell him that the furs for which they once clamoured are now valueless, or almost so, though they do not explain why. White "medicine-men" arrive suddenly from afar, force both him and all his family to undergo a medical examination, then carry one or more of them away, perhaps never to return, saying that they have contracted the coughing-sickness. The white missionary who condemns the religious beliefs of his ancestors, and talks of one great and good spirit dwelling unseen in the sky, counsels him to bear his troubles

[1]The following experiment would seem well worth trying, if the Canadian Boy Scouts Association is willing to support it.

Choose six Eskimo boys of about 12 years old from six different communities, and place them in three Boy Scout summer camps. There should be two boys in each camp to prevent them from feeling lonely, but they should be lodged in separate tents so that their regular companions would speak nothing but English. The six should be among the brightest in their school classes, and already possess a slight smattering of English; and they should remain in the camp for as long as possible, the minimum period being perhaps two months. At the end of the summer they should be returned to their homes. If their knowledge of English proves to be greatly improved the experiment should be continued and increased in scale. It might finally develop into a regular part of the schooling of a great many Eskimo (and northern Indian?) children until such time as all resistance or indifference to learning English has disappeared among both parents and children, and its use has become more widely spread.

with resignation, since life on this earth is but a transit to a longer and happier life hereafter. The white policeman who sometimes wears the fine uniform, or the white "northern service" officer who lives in the splendid house at the edge of the settlement, will give him money each month for his children and his aged parents, and tell the white trader to supply him with food and other necessities whenever he is in want. But none of them bring back the herds of caribou that disappeared after white men arrived, or restore the old fur values that kept the Eskimo prosperous and yet left him his own master. The once proud hunter has lost his freedom and his independence. Like the wild horse of the prairies, he has been harnessed to the white pioneer's wagon and forced to obey the white man's will. He asks no questions, makes no complaints.

> "The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
> But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes."

If the white school-teacher says his children must go to school and learn English he does not hinder them; but he himself has no interest in learning more than the few words requisite to let the white man know his needs. He in sunk in apathy. Whatever happens, the white man will provide.

This virus of apathy has infected the Eastern Eskimos more deeply than the Western, which partly explains why more school-children in the latter area have reached the higher grades and possess a greater knowledge of English. The Mackenzie delta Eskimos possess also an educational tradition which is absent from the Eastern Arctic. Between 1890 and 1910, when the original inhabitants of the delta were fast succumbing to the diseases and the debauchery brought among them by the whalers, their kinsmen in northern Alaska, among them some ex-pupils of the United States schools at Barrow, Point Hope, and other places, streamed across the international boundary into the delta, or entered it by way of Herschel Island, and gradually took over the whole region.[1] At the same time about a dozen white men, deserters some of them from the whaling ships, others adventurers who descended the Mackenzie River, settled among them for longer or shorter periods to try their luck at trapping and trading, married Eskimo women, and left behind them a number of half-breed children. By the 1920's the children had grown up, and given the region a vigorous, enterprising stock that spoke its mother tongue, Eskimo, but possessed a limited knowledge of English and a respect for reading, writing, and learning of every kind. These half-breeds, with two or three pure-blood Eskimos, then took over the leadership in the Mackenzie delta and made their influence felt in Coronation Gulf. From the late 1920's down to 1958 the two mission boarding-schools at Aklavik kept alive this flickering torch of education brought in from Alaska, and finally passed it on to the big new government school at Inuvik, which a few years hence should be turning out a steady trickle of Eskimo students ready to pass their matriculation examinations.

Meanwhile, however, the current situation in education is gravely disturbing, because education is so unready to play its part in the economic crisis that has broken over the Arctic since the war. As the Deputy Minister of Northern

[1]This explains why the dialect spoken in the Mackenzie delta in the middle of the nineteenth century, as recorded by the missionary Emile Petitot, seems so unlike the dialect spoken there today, which differs very little from the Barrow and Point Hope dialects.

Affairs and National Resources warned his "Committee on Eskimo Affairs" on 10–11 April 1961:

> "Fur prices had taken an unfortunate downward turn. White fox, the main animal trapped by the Eskimos, had steadily dropped in price from approximately $25 per pelt last year to a present value of $9.75. This drop of 60% had been faced by no other producer in Canada. The problems facing the old way of life on the land were probably worse than at the time of the Committee's last meeting. It was therefore now even more important that the Eskimos be educated towards the new way of life in alternative employment away from the land. The steadily increasing Eskimo population required more educational facilities."

The Education Division of his department had long foreseen this need, and for several years past had tried to meet the emergency by offering vocational training courses to promising youths and girls. It sent them to training schools in Aklavik and Yellowknife where they could learn domestic science, carpentry, mechanics, and other trades; to Churchill for apprenticeship courses in plumbing, electricity, and mechanics; to Barriefield, Ontario, for a four-month training course in the operation and maintenance of diesel engines; and it arranged with the management of the nickel mine in Rankin Inlet that more than a score of its Eskimo workmen should receive instruction in underground mining (including drilling and blasting), to qualify them for work in other mines should the Rankin Inlet property close down. Up to December 1960, no fewer than 130 Eskimos had enrolled for vocational training of one kind or another, which would seem to indicate that the younger men are definitely turning away from the hunting and trapping existence of their forefathers, and looking to wage-employment for their livelihood.

Unhappily, much of this vocational training founders on the rock of "Inadequate English". At Yellowknife one class had to receive a speeded-up course in English before it could even begin its training; and the Federal Electric Company, which employs a considerable number of Eskimos, advised the government to teach them English first and give them vocational training afterwards. Some of the training, again, was ahead of its need; for it is useless to turn out fifty carpenters or diesel operators if the Arctic today can offer jobs to only ten, and the trainees' imperfect knowledge of English makes them ineligible for employment elsewhere. The government has found remunerative work for a fair percentage of its trainees; and, if the Arctic had opened up as rapidly as it expected, it could probably have placed them all and many more. But development still lingers, for how many years longer no one can foresee; and the permanent posts that the region offers today—teachers, doctors, meteorologists, aircraft pilots, aircraft mechanics, etc.—are nearly all highly skilled or professional jobs that call for an education equal to matriculation and usually higher. Indispensable to all permanent wage-employment, in fact, is a sound knowledge of the English (or French) language; and this knowledge the schools which our Eskimo children are attending in the Arctic, except possibly Inuvik, have not yet succeeded in imparting to more than two or three pupils.[1]

Just as this book was going to press I received the following letter from an English lady, Miss Margery Hinds, who for about ten years taught Canada's

[1]For the weaknesses of Eskimo education in neighbouring Alaska, see Jenness, 1962a, pp. 62–3.

Eskimo children in the new government schools. She has kindly permitted me to quote her letter *in toto*, omitting only the first and last paragraphs. It reads as follows:

". . . since I discussed education of Africans with Africans from various countries of that continent, I have wondered why Eskimos appear to have made less progress than Africans in the same length of time—i.e. about 12 years.

"Do you know how far advanced is the most advanced Eskimo who has received all his education in Federal schools in the north? Apparently some Africans take their entrance examinations for university, i.e. English exams, for entrance to an English university.

"Why is it that pupils I considered intelligent as beginners, at Cape Dorset and Arctic Bay, have not fulfilled my hopes?

"Possible explanation. Curriculum not planned for Eskimos, and thus is merely a veneer. Curriculum should be built on to what is already there so that it is a continuous development from the known to the unknown. A curriculum planned for primary schools of the Mackenzie is not suitable for primary schools of the eastern Arctic because of differences of background and environment.

"Teachers with the highest university degrees are not necessarily the most suitable for teaching beginners, especially beginners in newly-opened schools. Those experienced in teaching beginners and able to adapt their methods might do better. An ethnologist or sociologist who knows Eskimos should interview applicants selected for positions in the primary schools for Eskimos.

"Teachers should make an effort to learn the Eskimo language. An effort should be made by the administration to ensure *continuity*, i.e. continuity of staff and continuity of school-work. It seems that the repeated breaking-up of existing conditions almost every year has contributed greatly to the frustration of Eskimos and their lack of interest in education.

"I am told that Eskimos are not really interested in education. Is this because an Eskimo is of a primitive race? Is it because the type of education he is offered is unsuited to a primitive race; especially the education offered to beginners?

"It would be interesting to know whether the Eskimos of the Labrador have made greater educational progress than those of the Northwest Territories and Northern Quebec. If so, why?

"Having given 14 years of my life to teaching in the far north I am disappointed that results seem so poor . . . ."

Appendix to Chapter 13

It was hardly to be expected that the missions, which from the beginning of the century had assumed the task, wilfully neglected by the government, of giving the Eskimos a smattering of our education, would surrender that function without a struggle. They could not oppose the decision of the Northwest Territories Council to build secular schools and to staff them with government teachers; but they naturally wished to retain in this new educational set-up a prominent place for religious instruction. The hostels which the administration planned to erect alongside its schools provided them with this opportunity.

"Church-run hostels in Government-owned and Government-erected buildings are now becoming the order of the day and modern Government day schools where the Eskimo children will receive their education are fast being erected. Within a short time, some 5 or 6 of these hostels will be erected and the opportunity to give the Eskimo children Christian training is before us.

"The need of an airfield and an expansion of Government facilities have made the Government consider moving the whole town of Aklavik. When this comes to pass, All Saints Residential School [the Anglican school in Aklavik] will be no more, but a Government-built hostel for accommodation of the children will be opened in its place and will be run by the Church. All Saints Hospital will also be replaced by a Government hospital, and a new mission will be built. This costly and ambitious programme will not be finished until 1961 but the interesting factor of such a change is that with it the complete control of education in the schools will then be assumed by the Government. Aklavik will have the second of three hostels being built by the Government for our Anglican children in the Arctic. It is hoped that at Fort McPherson, the first of these will be finished by 1958. This will replace the present small hostel for 20 boys, which was opened as a temporary measure by the Diocese in the old mission house." (Marsh, 1957, p. 14).

Today, therefore, we have in Inuvik, the new administrative and educational centre which the government hopes will replace Aklavik, a large federal school with accommodation for 625 pupils, 500 of whom can live in the two hostels that flank the school building. The Anglican church operates one hostel, the Roman Catholic church the other; but the children share the same classrooms and possess a common playground. Alongside the federal school at Chesterfield Inlet is another hostel capable of housing 80 children. Here the government purchased the hostel building from the Roman Catholic mission, but left the operation of the hostel in the mission's hands.

A responsible official in the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources recently set forth very clearly his department's policy in establishing these hostels, and its future plans for them:

"The large hostels in the Mackenzie District and at Chesterfield Inlet are the consequences of an agreement with the churches which provided education long before the Government took any responsibility. The churches operated residential schools; when it was agreed that there should be a general system of Government education, hostels were built to replace the old church schools, but with the change that the children would attend the local day school, and thus mix with the local children of whatever race. Contracts were entered into with the churches concerned to operate the hostels on Government account.

"To carry on into the next phase of the educational program, and to supplement the large residences, the Administration is now embarking upon a program for the building of small hostels in units which will hold eight students under the supervision of a local resident house-mother and house-father. These units will be built close to Federal schools to look after children living in the general area, though not in the community itself. They will be close enough to the homes of the children to make the general atmosphere familiar and to permit more continuing contact between parents and children than the larger hostels permit.

"With the relative newness of Government education, most northern children are in the early grades of schooling. It will not be very long before there is a large number in the upper grades. It is at this time that a new role for the large hostel is planned. If the present experimental program with small hostels is successful, it will be expanded to look after the youngest children who benefit most by close contact with their homes. The older ones will be better prepared to go some distance to live in the larger institution. Only in those institutions, attached to relatively large schools, will it be possible to give the kind of education in the higher grades that children elsewhere in Canada receive in the city schools or consolidated rural schools. Gradually the age level in the big hostel is likely to rise, and they will swing over to the service of older children. . . .

"The first of the small hostels came into operation only in the autumn of 1960, and it will be many years before they are sufficiently widespread to look after a major proportion of northern children. At the moment, however, the combination of small hostels for younger children and big hostels for the older ones seems to present the best possible solution to the dilemmas that arise in bringing education to the scattered population." (Phillips, 1961, pp. 15, 16).

One would imagine that the missions' long history of devoted service to Eskimo welfare would have rendered them ideal supervisors of the large school hostels. Unhappily they carried into that field their internecine feud, a feud that seems too deep-seated for the present generation to eradicate. At the Inuvik school they have silently separated the children into the "lost" and the "found" according to the hostel in which the boys and girls are quartered; and until the government intervened they even segregated the two "flocks" in the common playground by erecting a fence down the middle. More recently missionary pressure has obliged the Ottawa administration to follow in the Northwest Territories, where there are no Indian or Eskimo reserves, a provision of the Indian Act governing the appointment of teachers to Indian reserves in southern Canada,[1] and to post none but Roman Catholic teachers to communities that are predominantly Roman Catholic, Anglican teachers to those that are predominantly Anglican. Thereby it has injected the religious problem into the educational system itself.

Such a policy, however, threatens to bring its own retribution. From the United States in 1946 came the "Canadian Interior Mission", a segment or offshoot of the Pentecostal movement that invaded arctic Alaska about forty years ago. From 1946 to 1950 it operated a mission at Eskimo Point, on the west coast of Hudson Bay, whence it transferred four years later to Maguse River. In 1956 another branch of the same movement opened a mission at Chesterfield Inlet, but was frozen out of that stronghold of the Roman Catholic church within twelve months and moved away to Rankin Inlet and Whale Cove. In the Western Arctic Pentecostals set up a mission during the 1950's at Aklavik, where both the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics have laboured since the 1920's. Thence the faith leaped to Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik, and in 1960 to Resolute Bay in the arctic archipelago. It has already proselytized a considerable number of Eskimos, in one community all or most of the population; and it may well proselytize many more in the years ahead. Thus Christianity's northern chariot, hitherto drawn by only two quarreling horses, has now become a troika.

What should be the administration's answer if this third faith, which has operated at least one school in arctic Canada (i.e. at Maguse River), requests it to build and entrust to Pentecostal management a large hostel in some community where it has converted a majority of the inhabitants? Can the government support, or grant privileges to, the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches, and deny the same privileges to the Pentecostals or the Jehovah Witnesses? Or should it exclaim, "a plague o' all your houses", and remove from the control of any church every federal hostel in the Northwest Territories?

[1]Section 120 of the Indian Act passed by parliament in 1951 reads: "Where the majority of the members of a band belongs to one religious denomination the school established on the reserve that has been set apart for the use and benefit of that band shall be taught by a teacher of that denomination."

CHAPTER 14

Eskimo health (1950–60)

The reader will recall that in 1945, when the federal Department of National Health and Welfare became responsible for the health of Canadian citizens, it immediately opened a major campaign against the plague of tuberculosis which was ravaging the Eskimos and the northern Indians from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We need not linger over the slight reorganization of its line of battle in 1945, when it joined its Eskimo and its Indian health services into one unit under the command of the veteran Indian health officer Dr. P. E. Moore; but before we record the victories that unit is beginning to chalk up on its operations' blackboard let us outline some of the peculiar features of the battleground, and note the special measures that the Northern Health Service is taking to cope with them.

During the last forty years archaeologists of several countries, working in close cooperation, have taken long strides forward in tracking down the origin of the Eskimos at the dawn of history, and in unravelling how they came to make their home in arctic America and on the coastline of Siberia immediately opposite Alaska. Much still remains obscure; but today we know that their ancestors were wandering over parts of northern Alaska, and hunting the wild caribou in the basin of the Firth River that enters the Arctic Ocean on the Canadian side of the International Boundary, 3,000 years before Christ and perhaps even 5,000. We know, too, that they were living in the Eastern Arctic before 1000 B.C., because in several places, e.g. near Igloolik in the extreme north of Hudson Bay, at Cape Sparbo in the northeast corner of Devon Island, and in Independence Fjord near the northernmost tip of Greenland, we have uncovered Eskimo encampments that predate the first millennium before Christ. Behind the present-day Eskimos, then, stretch many long centuries of isolated existence in an arctic waste where the climate prohibits the growth of many bacteria, fungi, and viruses that thrive in more temperate regions and occasion the influenza, malaria, and other diseases that afflict the human race. Climate combined with isolation preserved the Eskimos' ancestors from most of the widely spread diseases to which they may have been subject before they settled in arctic America, keeping them a wonderfully healthy people until the white man broke into their solitude. The skulls that we unearth in their ancient graves never show marks of syphilis, as do some Indian skulls in South America; and the teeth, unlike the teeth of many Eskimos today, are not eaten away by caries, even though gritty food and hard usage have often worn them down to the gums. Epidemics of influenza, diphtheria, measles, smallpox, and virus pneumonia seem to have been entirely unknown, and any immunity or resistance to those diseases which the Eskimos may have possessed in the remote

past was not transmitted to their modern descendants. Consequently, to the microbes that find a friendly host in civilized man these dwellers in arctic America were virgin territory, open to invasion as soon as Europe's navigators mapped out a route. Smallpox, brought to America in the early seventeenth century, swept away one-quarter or one-third of Canada's Indians before the country had been even half explored (Heagerty, 1928, p. 56). It may have decimated the Eskimos also; but perhaps it stopped short at the edge of the forest, for no Europeans were at hand to record the limit of its depredations. In any case the arctic coast-dwellers failed to escape the measles and other diseases that followed it two centuries later, ravaged the natives unhindered, then retreated for a period while their victims struggled to recuperate.

One disease, tuberculosis, lingered and became endemic: by 1950 it was crippling from 15 to 20 per cent of the Eskimo population in Canada's Arctic. Yet so isolated were certain segments of that population that as late as 1914 families living between Coronation Gulf and the Magnetic Pole knew neither tuberculosis nor influenza, and to outward appearance suffered no complaints except one that may have been food-poisoning, and simple coughs that afflicted them for a few days each autumn when they moved from their draughty tents into almost air-tight snow huts. Then white men, and Eskimos from the Western Arctic, began to enter their territory. Within fourteen years an epidemic of influenza carried off an estimated 30 per cent of the Coronation Gulf natives; and in 1931 a government doctor diagnosed no fewer than 19 cases of tuberculosis among the approximately 100 Eskimos who gathered that winter around the newly established settlement at the mouth of the Coppermine River (see footnote, p. 46). So high a morbidity clearly indicates that, in the case of at least two diseases, these last remnants of the primitive population possessed neither immunity nor built-in resistance.

The harsh climate of the Arctic, and the grim struggle for food and shelter, have created several hazards to human health which even we Europeans cannot entirely overcome. Every winter of his life the Eskimo has been cabined, cribbed, and confined inside a tiny dwelling, cheek by jowl with the rest of his family, in an effort to keep out the howling blizzards and the intense cold. I have spent the greater part of a winter in the one-room log cabin of an Eskimo trapper in the Western Arctic, and many weeks of two other winters in snow huts, the typical winter dwelling at that period of all Eskimos east of the Mackenzie delta. With its five or six other inmates I stretched out at night on the wooden floor of the cabin, or on the half-moon-shaped platform of the snow hut, almost atop my neighbour on account of the narrow space: and I can unhesitantly attest to the accuracy of the following statement by Dr. J. S. Willis, of the federal government's Northern Health Service:

> "A high percentage of the Indians and Eskimos live in comparative squalor. Housing is small, overcrowded, usually devoid of sanitary facilities and sometimes difficult to heat with the fuel resources available. Only the natural refrigeration of the north keeps down the incidence of bowel diseases such as gastroenteritis, dysentery and typhoid fever." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Wel. 1961, p. 3).

Should so contagious a disease as tuberculosis, influenza, or measles attack one member of such a household, it will probably strike down all of them unless preventive measures are taken immediately.[1]

[1]About 1956 a tuberculous Eskimo, accidentally left behind in the Eastern Arctic when the medical survey party sailed south, infected his entire family before the ship revisited his settlement the following summer.

Another hazard to health in the Arctic is poor clothing. Without warm clothing no Eskimo can hunt or make the round of his trap-line day after day in weather that may reach 50°F below zero; and no Eskimo child can toddle or romp in the snow outside its home without the risk of freezing. In the old days when caribou were plentiful the problem was not so difficult, for the fur of that animal is warmer than the finest Australian wool. But now that caribou are scarce and in many regions lacking, the hunter and his family must buy some of their clothes at the trading stores; and these inferior garments increase the danger of respiratory troubles from which nature has tried to shield the Eskimos by making their nose passages narrower than those of other races. Respiratory troubles, in fact, particularly broncho-pneumonia, are today responsible for an infant death-rate among the Eskimos several times greater than that of white children in southern Canada.

A third hazard to health is malnutrition. In pre-European days the Eskimos starved to death when the hunting failed; but the fresh meat, and the fresh or sun-dried fish, that comprised virtually their whole diet, contained all the proteins, carbohydrates, fats and vitamins necessary for perfect health. Today game is not so plentiful, trapping and wage-employment seriously interfere with hunting, and the population is rapidly increasing. Along with the clothing he buys at the trading store, therefore, the Eskimo must also buy food; and how much does he know about a balanced diet? So the average family that marches away to its trapping-ground each autumn carries with it a disproportionate amount of flour, baking-powder, and canned goods, which may all be rich in carbohydrates, but deficient in other dietary needs. True, the head of the household counts on his rifle to supply the family with a certain amount of fresh meat; but usually the quantity of game he manages to shoot is very limited, and the foxes he traps inedible except to his dogs. It is hardly surprising, then, that malnutrition was fairly widespread before the war, and probably is still, despite family allowances to lighten distress, and the efforts of both the government and the Hudson's Bay Company to guide the natives in their store purchases by supplying 'fortified' flour and lists of the foods that are most nourishing. Certainly the Eskimos on the east coast of Hudson Bay appear no better nourished than their Indian neighbours, about whom a medical team remarked a few years ago:

> "In a previous study of the Canadian Bush Indian evidences of marked malnutrition were found and it was concluded that: 'Many characteristics, such as shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia, so long regarded as inherent or hereditary traits in the Indian race, may at the root be really the manifestation of malnutrition. Furthermore, it is probable that the Indian's great susceptibility to many diseases, paramount amongst which is tuberculosis, may be attributable amongst other causes to the high degree of malnutrition arising from lack of proper foods'." (Vivian *et al.* 1948, p. 505).[1]

[1]Cf. this account by a Pentecostal missionary of the diet of Eskimos on the west coast of Hudson Bay:

"The winter of 1950–51 was an extremely hard one for the Eskimos, for the caribou had not gone through that part of the country on their southward migration. White foxes were scarce, making trapping activities fruitless. Fifteen Eskimos in the Eskimo Point and Padlei areas died of starvation. All of the Eskimos were living on relief rations, made up mainly of white flour which could barely sustain life in that climate. The flour is used by making an overgrown pancake or bannock. Enormous quantities of white flour are shipped into the north each year along with lard and baking powder. Flour and baking powder are mixed together with water and fried slowly over a primus stove in a steel frying pan. This is the basis of their diet when they have no meat." (Ledyard, 1959, p. 111).

What is true of the James Bay Indians may be equally true of many Eskimo groups, for Dr. C. Earl Albrecht, Deputy-Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, observed comparable effects from ill-health among the natives of northern Alaska during the years when he was Controller of Health in that Territory. I reproduce a passage from his letter, even though I have quoted it in an earlier report (Jenness, 1962a, p. 49):

> "The Eskimo, when his health was improved and the toxic effects of active tuberculosis were reduced, became a different type of person. This is nothing unusual but in this instance it was most dramatic. Those of us who served in the Armed Forces in Alaska discovered that the Eskimo was a superior soldier. He was reliable, hard working, and endeavoured to achieve. The competition for ratings as determined by inspection invariably led to superior ratings by the army inspectors. The regrettable situation was that their health was so poor, and they were so riddled with tuberculosis, that they could not demonstrate their real ability."

These observations by highly competent medical men make me wonder whether I have been mistaken in attributing the low morale and visible apathy of so many Canadian Eskimos (the Sugluk villagers offer a notable example) solely to the loss of their economic freedom and to their dependence on government charity. It may well be that malnutrition, together with tuberculosis and its after-effects, are equally responsible for their depressed condition.

It should now be evident that the vigorous battle which the Department of National Health and Welfare has been waging since 1945 against Eskimo (and Indian) tuberculosis (see pp. 85–6) secures a very vital front in its Eskimo health campaign, but one front only. Equally important is its preventive-medicine program, which seeks to protect the Eskimos from the numerous epidemics that have assailed them since the end of the Second World War. Diphtheria, as we noticed earlier, swept part of the Eastern Arctic in 1944, typhoid attacked another part in 1945, and poliomyelitis ravaged a wide area in 1948, a year in which measles invaded the Western Arctic. Measles broke out a second time at Fort Chimo in 1952, following an epidemic of influenza, and brought death to about 10 per cent of its victims: it then spread over both shores of Hudson Strait and into Frobisher Bay, where it carried off twenty more Eskimos. Thereafter for a few short years the Arctic escaped any serious plagues; but in 1958 influenza swept the whole area from the Alaska boundary to Labrador, and in 1960 it attacked the Western Arctic again, causing sixteen deaths in Pelly Bay alone.

Meanwhile the Department of National Health and Welfare had swung into action with an energetic campaign of vaccination, inoculation, and dental care. In 1955 it examined almost 80 per cent of the entire Eskimo population between Northwest River in southern Labrador and Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island: it inoculated them against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, immunized them against poliomyelitis with Salk vaccine and also treated their teeth. From the late 1940's it had been vaccinating Eskimo children with BCG to protect them against tuberculosis, and in 1945 it began to inoculate the inhabitants of certain settlements against typhoid.

In this manner the health department is steadily pushing ahead with its program. Every summer the government's ice-strengthened vessel, the *C. D. Howe*, sails north from Quebec to the settlements of the Eastern Arctic carrying a hospital and a team of doctors, X-ray technicians, nurses, and dentists, while a similar team reconnoitres the Western Arctic from the Mackenzie delta to

Cambridge Bay. Its plans provide for the erection of a few more nursing stations in the Arctic, to be staffed, in part at least, by Eskimo girls as soon as they acquire sufficient education and training. From past experience it knows that the campaign will be very protracted as long as the population remains scattered and difficult to reach; also that no government can supply the region with services comparable in quantity and quality with those in southern Canada. Nevertheless, it is waging a hard battle, as hard as its funds and its staff permit.[1] Here is its own picture of the work ahead:

> "Because the services of eye, ear, nose and throat specialists have been available in the past only on a sporadic basis, there are good grounds to suspect that there is a high incidence of defects of vision and hearing. The incidence of orthopaedic defects, herniae and gynecological disorders due to the primitive conditions of childbirth, is unknown but probably greater than in Southern Canada.
>
> "There is a high incidence of dental defects, particularly in the younger age groups, with strong evidence that this incidence is on the increase. . . .
>
> "This picture of insufficiency of health services may look dark, but it is much brighter than it was even ten years ago and is getting brighter every year. A few years ago some [Eskimo] citizens were fortunate if they saw a doctor and dentist for a few minutes once a year (e.g. on the annual Eastern Arctic Patrol by C.G.S. 'C. D. Howe'). Most citizens get more than this degree of service now and none is denied medical assistance if his plight becomes known.
>
> "It is on the side of public health services that the lack is most evident. Unfortunately these services are the most costly to provide under the northern conditions of scattering of the population, transportation to many communities only by air, conditions of weather and climate. . . .
>
> "Compared with public health and treatment agencies working for citizens in Southern Canada, Northern Health Services has the task of trying to cope with proportionately more sickness and death, much more widely scattered over inaccessible country, in generally worse weather, with more limited transportation facilities, poor communications, and with limited funds. The problems to be overcome are not so much those of public health or medicine per se as of logistics. It is not a difficult matter to have a nurse give an injection of penicillin or a dose of diphtheria toxoid to an Eskimo, and have an X-ray technician make a film of his chest, once they are on the spot. It is the business of getting them there at the right time with the facilities they need that presents the major problem." (Can. Dept. Nat Health and Wel. 1961, pp. 3–4).

Dollars and cents can never express the true value of medical services, but we will realize more fully the intensity of the effort which the health department has made to provide our Eskimo fellow-citizens with medical care approaching the care that we demand in southern Canada, if we compare the cost per Eskimo of this service in 1961 with its cost in 1939, remembering that in the latter year the Eskimos numbered only about 7,000 as against a population today of over 11,000.

In 1939 Canada's total medical expenses on behalf of the Eskimos amounted to $29,480, or a little over $4.00 per head of population; and of that $4.00, roughly $3.00 went to pay the salaries and living expenses of the four white doctors and five white nurses who composed the medical staff (see p. 70). In the fiscal year 1961–2, according to an estimate kindly furnished me by the Northern Health Service of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Canada spent over $3,000,000, one hundred times the amount she spent in 1939,

[1] By the end of 1961 it had reduced the number of Eskimos undergoing treatment for tuberculosis in various sanatoria from a high of 703 in 1956 to 279. This figure, 279, included every known case of active tuberculosis, since the health department, for climatic and sanitary reasons, refuses to treat such cases in their homes.

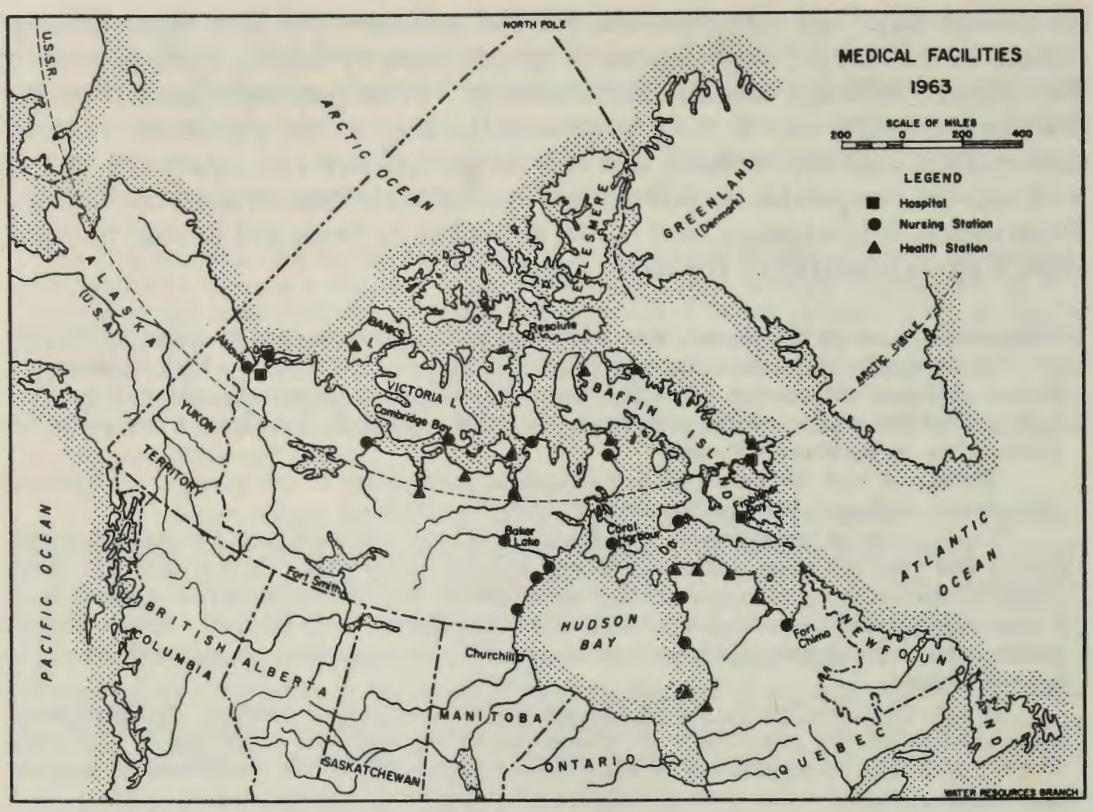

Fig. 9.

to provide her Eskimos with medical care; it broke down the total into the following items per head of population:

	Expenditure per Eskimo
Hospitalization	$199.29
Transportation to hospital	24.50
Local health services at nursing stations	57.78
Administration	3.74
Total	*$288.31*

The pen of the then Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources has given us this summary of the progress that the Department of National Health and Welfare achieved during the decade 1950–60:

> "Through the diseases that we introduced to them, the appallingly low standard of housing, the extent of poverty, and inadequate nutrition, the incidence of disease and disability has been very high. The Northern Health Service of the Department of National Health and Welfare has taken very energetic steps in recent years. To take a look at tuberculosis alone, in 1953 there were 686 Eskimos in sanatoria for treatment. Examinations were stepped up to discover as many cases as possible, and steadily more were found. In 1955 there were 1356 Eskimos in sanatoria, and in 1956, 1578.[1] That figure may not carry the burden of significance that it ought to. Perhaps it means more to say that in 1956 approximately one Eskimo out of every seven was in a sanatorium suffering from tuberculosis. The program has been effective. In 1957 and 1958 the numbers dropped,

[1]This figure refers to the total number of Eskimos treated in sanatoria throughout the year. The very much lower figure quoted on p. 143 from the Department of National Health and Welfare gives the number of Eskimos actually in sanatoria at the end of the year. During 1956 a large number of Eskimos, who had been brought south merely for checking or were already cured, were returned to their homes.

and in 1959 there were 940 Eskimos in sanatoria. That amounted then to, perhaps, one Eskimo out of twelve. It is still a shocking figure, but the gain over a few years has been remarkable and is continuing. The incidence of disease and early death among them and among the northern Indians is still appallingly high, especially the incidence of infant mortality. These are in large part the result of inadequate housing and ignorance about sanitation and prevention of disease. Housing programs are being introduced and welfare and public health work is being increased." (Robertson, 1961, p. 13).

It is too early yet to judge the success of the health department's vigorous program, which has still not reached its maximum expansion. Nevertheless, the outlook is promising. Statistics for the three years 1957 to 1959 suggest that although both the death rate and the birth rate are still exceptionally high (as indeed they must always have been for the race to endure and survive the perils of the Arctic), the death rate has begun to drop while the birth rate, one of the highest in the world, remains fairly constant.[1] They suggest, further, that the drop in the death rate results from a reduction in the ravages of tuberculosis and the decrease in infant mortality, both undoubtedly brought about by the government's health program. Here are the relevant figures as given by Murty (1961, p. 79):

	Mortality rates (per 1,000 pop.)		*Incidence of T.B. (per 1,000 pop.)*	*Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)*	
Year	*Births*	*Deaths*		*0–1 mth.*	*0–12 mths.*
1957	47	24	121	114	255
1958	52	26	102	112	257
1959	47	17	83	72	210

The incidence of tuberculosis, though now decreasing, is still exceedingly high, about eight times its incidence among white Canadians (Willis, 1962, p. 20); but respiratory diseases that attack infants in their first year of life far outweigh its contribution to the very high death-rate. Approximately 50 per cent of the Eskimos who die each year are infants less than one year old: in southern Canada only 10 per cent of the deaths are infants. Approximately 23 per cent of all Eskimo babies who are born alive succumb during their first year, nearly half of them during their first month: in Canada as a whole the mortality for the first year is only 3 per cent. Eskimo infant mortality, in fact, is seven times higher than in the rest of Canada, as the health department has revealed in its published chart (Fig. 10). And in a second chart (Fig. 11) it has shown that half these infants succumb to respiratory diseases.

In his challenging paper 'Eskimo mortality and housing' Dr. J. S. Willis (1960, pp. 7–8) suggests four reasons for this infant death rate:

"They are being exposed as never before to a wide range of infections.

"Since most of them do not have the benefit of continuous warmth and shelter, of constantly adequate nutrition and of a sanitary environment, they are extraordinarily vulnerable to these infections.

"Laid low by these infections the conditions of their environment aggravate their disease. Since the same infections often afflict their parents, they may go from bad to worse because of diminished parental care.

"Only a few have the benefit of immediate medical care and many never receive any such care."

[1]Dr. Willis reported that the birth rate among Eskimos in 1961 was 59 per 1,000 (Canadian national average 26.9 per 1,000), and the infant mortality rate 193 per 1,000 live births (Canadian national average 27 per 1,000).

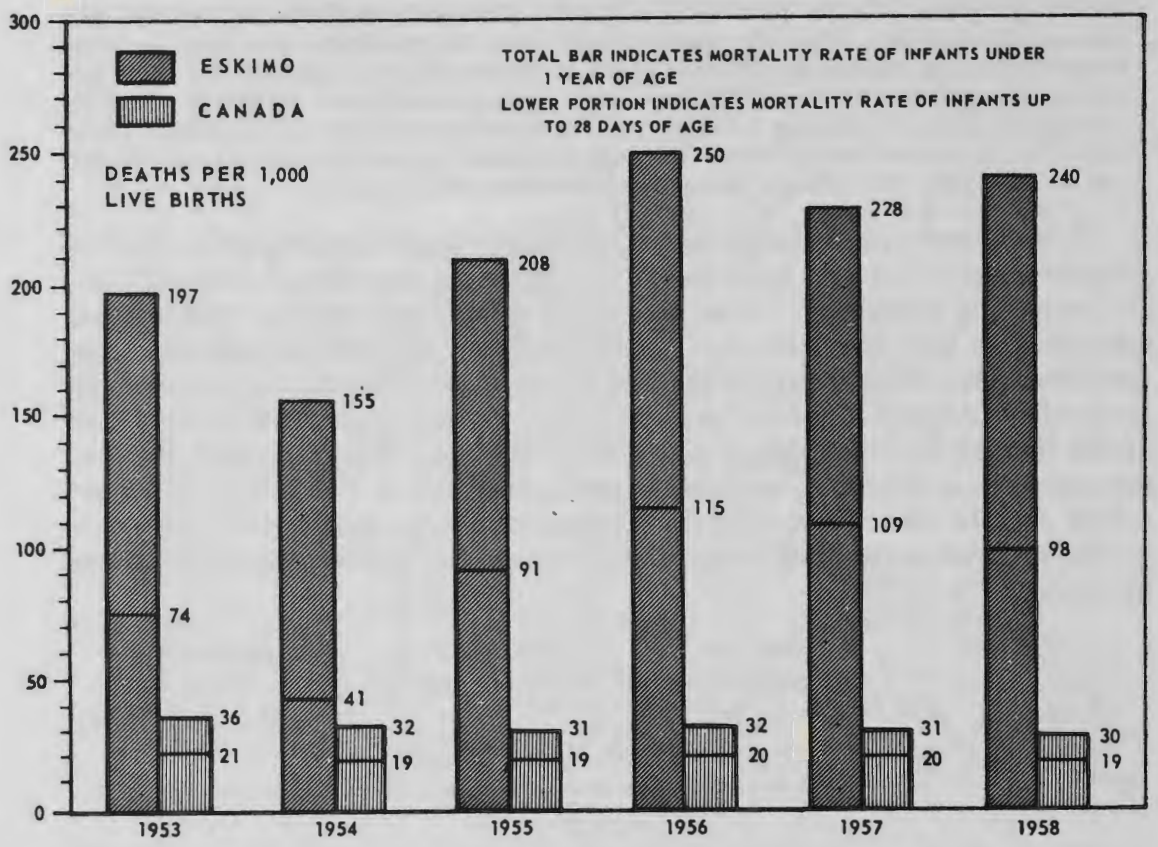

Fig. 10. Eskimo and all-Canada neonatal and infant mortality rates, 1953–8. (Chart 2 from Willis, 1960, p. 6).

It is not too difficult to bring up a baby in a warm house with running water, sanitary facilities, and a nurse or a doctor in the neighbourhood, but it is infinitely more difficult to raise it in a tent or a snow hut far removed from any settlement, without heat save from a small primus stove that must cook the food and melt all the snow or ice that is needed for drinking water, while the temperature outside may range anywhere from the freezing point to 50°F below zero. I have seen a mother crouch down in the lee of her sled, during a winter migration, withdraw her naked baby from under her fur coat, and calmly change its tiny caribou-fur diaper, although the temperature was 30°F below zero and a thirty-mile-an-hour gale was whipping the snow against our faces. It seemed miraculous that either the baby or the mother could survive such exposure.

Seen in perspective, then, the government's health program operates on this general plan:

Through continuous vaccinations and inoculations it will immunize the Eskimo people against those communicable diseases, whooping cough, diphtheria, typhoid, measles, smallpox, and poliomyelitis, that have ravaged them since the beginning of the century. Tuberculosis it will hold in check with BCG vaccine, and by evacuating all active cases to well-equipped hospitals in southern Canada, whence convalescents will be sent north again to recuperate in welfare centres among their own people. Once it has brought tuberculosis

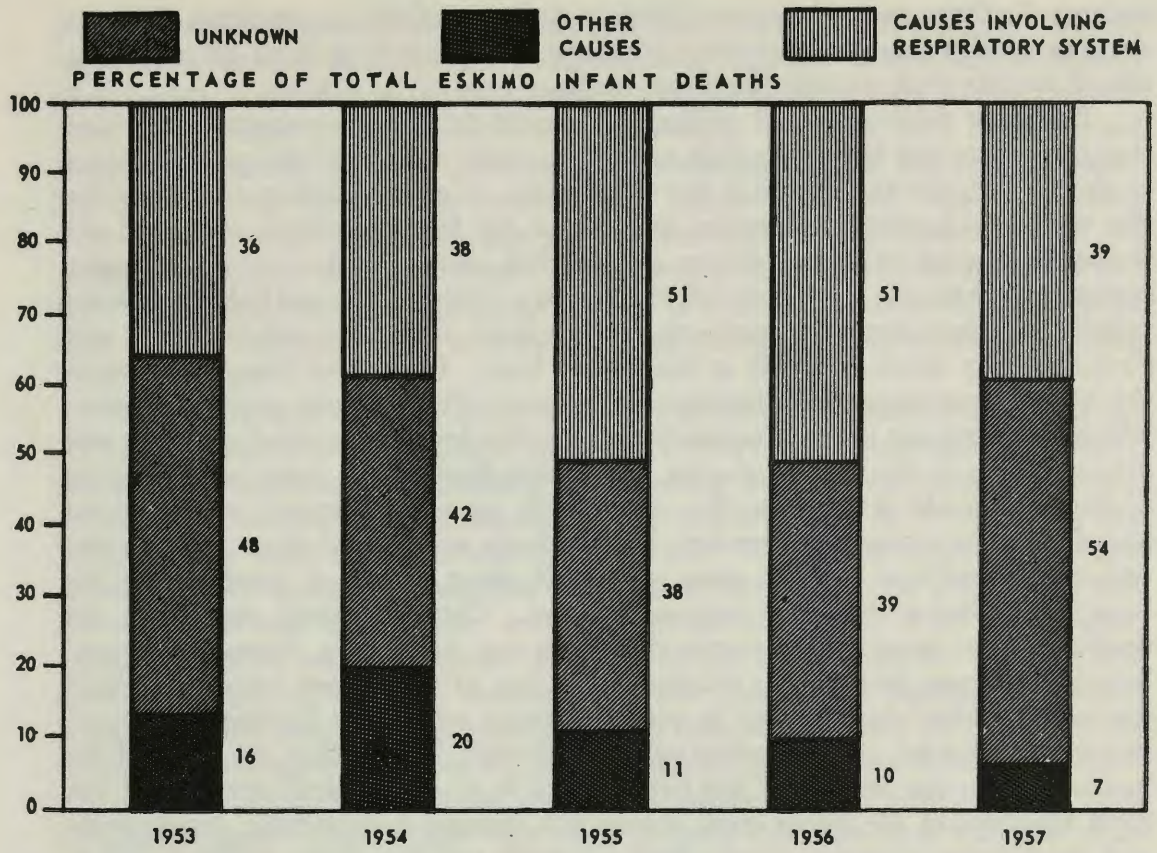

Fig. 11. Stated causes of Eskimo infant deaths, 1953–7. (Chart 3 from Willis, 1960, p. 7).

under control it will use the surplus beds in the hospitals at Inuvik, Chesterfield, Frobisher Bay, and Pangnirtung[1] for the chronic care of aged Eskimos, and of Eskimos whom disease prevents from resuming their former mode of life. The excessively high infant mortality must be reduced by other methods, and the government will attack it from two directions. Spearheading the main attack will be the staff of the health department's nursing stations, who will visit expectant mothers in their homes, give them pre-natal care at the nursing stations, assist them at delivery and teach them how to take care of their new-born offspring. Supporting this direct assault will be an indirect one, based on the conviction that infant mortality can never approach its low level in southern Canada unless the Eskimos possess warmer and more sanitary homes. Here the initiative passes to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, which is already shipping to the Arctic each year approximately 150 new dwellings—well-insulated, one-roomed wooden houses equipped with

[1]The Canadian Department of National Health and Welfare (1961) rated the capacities of these four hospitals in 1960 as follows:

Location	*Rated Bed Capacity*				*Operated by*	*Nursing Staff*	
	TB	*Gen.*	*Total*	*Bassinets*		*R.N.*	*Asst. N.*
Inuvik	50	30	80	16	Government	25	20
Chesterfield	—	31	31	3	R.C. Mission	1	5
Frobisher	—	14	14	5	Government	5	5
Pangnirtung	18	15	33	2	Anglican Mission	2	2

sanitary facilities and oil stoves—which it makes available to destitute Eskimos without charge, and sells to other Eskimos at a price that most of them can afford, despite their present lilliputian incomes (but cf. p. 104).

Canadian taxpayers will willingly support this health program provided that the authorities keep it flexible enough to meet whatever changes take place in the Arctic; for the region is far from static, as events during and since the late war should constantly remind us. These last few years have witnessed the semi-urbanization of many Eskimos at Churchill, and at the Arctic's three largest settlements, Aklavik, Inuvik, and Frobisher Bay, where white and Eskimo fellow-citizens rub shoulders with each other every hour of the day and in Inuvik and Frobisher Bay drink together at the public bars. In each of these settlements the health department has discovered Eskimos suffering from venereal disease, which was rampant in the Mackenzie delta in the days of the whaling-ships, and probably also in the Eastern Arctic, but which disappeared from our far north in the first decade of this century. It died out, or was eradicated, in Greenland also during the nineteenth century, but suddenly reappeared there towards the end of the late war and has since spread all along the coast, confronting the local authorities with a very serious problem. Ottawa's health authorities are fearful lest the same problem arise shortly in our Arctic too, through the conjunction of three factors: the increasing number of white men who are visiting the region today; the freedom in sexual relations which the Eskimos condoned in earlier centuries, and probably still regard more lightly than we do; and the breakdown in the morale of the natives, visible in many small settlements but most apparent in the larger ones, where it is causing considerable drunkenness and an epidemic of minor crimes such as assault and disorderly conduct (see p. 160).

Another significant change is emerging from the health program itself. Year by year it is slowly reducing the death rate, even though this still remains about 2½ times higher than in the rest of Canada; and with its lowered death-rate the Eskimo population is increasing at the rate of nearly 3 per cent annually.[1] Here, if we allow for minor inaccuracies, are the population figures for recent years:

Eskimo population

1951	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1960*
8,646	9,978	10,245	10,569	10,751

Families are a little larger in the Mackenzie delta than elsewhere, the result, perhaps, of longer medical care, greater natural resources, and slightly higher incomes: in that region the average family contains 6 members as against 4.8 in the Arctic as a whole. Everywhere the population is younger than in southern Canada, so that if living conditions improve, and the death rate continues to diminish, the rate of growth may very well accelerate. The addition to the population of 300 or 400 individuals each year will then severely tax the local resources in fish and game as well as the opportunities for wage-employment,[2] unless new developments occur which are not now visible above the

[1]Another estimate gives a growth rate of 3.3 per cent.

[2]Even at the prosperous Eskimo colony at Resolute, in the arctic archipelago, where five of the twelve households are earning $400 a month each the year round from wage-employment, a recent observer warns against allowing any new colonists to settle there on the ground that the same resources, though adequate for the present settlers, are limited and the prospects of increased wage-employment not at all favourable.

horizon: and the government's far-sighted but costly health program will be sadly disoriented if the Eskimos' living standard, already so low that it impairs their health, is allowed to fall any lower.[1] The housing scheme of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, too, may need to be revised sharply upward in order to provide new dwellings, not for the present population alone, but for the fifty or more new families that will come into being year by year—unless, indeed, the government succeeds in siphoning off the surplus population to places where it can be gainfully employed and provided with satisfactory homes by private capital. If it cannot siphon off the surplus, then it must reconcile itself to constantly mounting relief costs and increasing demoralization.

One more fact we must firmly keep in our minds. Enduring health in the Arctic requires, even for Eskimos, much more than medical care and satisfactory housing. It requires warm clothing, a nourishing diet, and the sense of security that comes from an adequate income, either in cash alone, or in both cash and kind. These three requisites closely interlock. But just as important as economic security is social adjustment and harmony; for in arctic settlements that for weeks on end lose contact with the outside world and with one another except by radio, one maladjusted person may set his neighbours on edge and disrupt the life of a whole community. For this reason mental health and physical health both demand steady, but not excessive activity on tasks that are visibly rewarding, and a status in the community that preserves the individual's self-respect and the esteem of his neighbours, whatever their position, their race, or their religion. More than one stark tragedy has disclosed that the stern climate and the long cold nights of the Arctic can be as merciless to human misfits and idlers as are the busy worker bees to the drones that seek shelter in their hive at the approach of winter.

[1] A very recent rise in the value of sealskins should give some assistance, particularly in the Eastern Arctic.

CHAPTER 15

Shadows of an uprooted society

Prior to the Second World War, and even after the end of that war, official reports continued to inform the Canadian public that its government was taking proper care of its Eskimo citizens in the far north, and that all was well in its arctic domain. Following the regular annual survey of the Eastern Arctic during the summer of 1947 we were told that

> "The situation at all points of call was found to be generally good. It was a fair year for foxes and the supply of native food generally was satisfactory. The health of the natives was good in all regions, with no epidemics and most cases of death due to old age. The statistics of births and deaths show great improvement over the previous year." (Can. Dept. Mines and Res. Ann. Rept. 1948, p. 155).

Reports of this character lead the reader to infer that the Eastern Arctic was free from distress at this period, or that any distress that did occur was being quietly and efficiently handled by the Hudson's Bay Company, in accordance with that company's agreement to take care of all destitute hunters and their families as long as it enjoyed a monopoly of Eskimo trade (see p. 54). In reality, neither inference would be correct. The condition of the Eskimos, far from improving, had deteriorated since the early 1930's, when the government was distributing to needy natives ammunition, food, clothing, and medicines, even buffalo hides and buffalo meat. By the late 1940's distress had spread wider than ever. The Hudson's Bay Company could not accept responsibility for the whole population; and the thirteen (1950) police posts in as many districts, whose personnel could patrol their beats only once or twice a year, and in any case were usually moved elsewhere every two years, often failed to hear of what was happening beyond their immediate neighbourhood until it was too late to take action. So every few years tragedies occurred similar to those recorded from the Magnetic Pole region during the grim winter of 1934–5 (see p. 51), and from the Barren Lands behind Hudson Bay during the winter of 1946–7 (Mowat, 1959).

In 1945, however, an important change occurred. A few months earlier, in August 1944, parliament had passed the Family Allowance Act ordaining that the parents or trustees of all children under 16 years of age, whether Eskimo, Indian, or white, should receive a monthly allowance for the children's maintenance of $5 for a child under 6 years, $6 for a child between 6 and 9, $7 for a

child between 10 and 12, and $8 for a child between 13 and 15.[1] Parliament entrusted the Department of National Health and Welfare with the administration of this act, and that department, having at the time no staff in the Arctic, arranged that the Department of Mines and Resources should act as its agent. In its turn the latter, by agreement with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, made the local police officer its registrar or sub-registrar in every main Eskimo centre and, where there was no police post, some white resident, preferably another government official or a post-manager of the Hudson's Bay Company. During 1945, the first year in which the act became effective, the government distributed family allowances in only eight Eskimo settlements;[2] but by March 1951 it was issuing them for every Eskimo child that was eligible, 3,648 in all, or more than one-third of the total Eskimo population.

At first no family allowances were paid in cash or by cheque, because very few Eskimos were accustomed to handling money or familiar with monetary techniques: instead, the government provided them with equivalent credits at the trading stores. Only in 1953 did it amend the regulations to permit payment by cheque to individuals who seemed capable of managing their own affairs.[3] It restricted, too, the goods that they could buy with their credits or cheques, to ensure that they would be used to benefit the children for whom they were issued. Thus with his Family Allowance—and also with the Old Age Allowance to which persons of 70 years and older became entitled in 1948,[4] the Eskimo had to give priority to serviceable clothing and to the nutritious foods which the Department of National Health and Welfare carefully listed for his guidance.[5] With the credit he might receive for relief, on the other hand, he could purchase not only food and clothing, but traps and other articles that could help to make him self-supporting again.

It was Ottawa that drafted these sensible regulations, and that instructed its field officers to allow no Eskimo to starve if aid was possible, enjoining them at the same time not to encourage sloth and thriftlessness. It was the field officer, however, whether he was a government police officer or an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had to interpret and apply the regulations according to the circumstances of individual Eskimo families and his judgment of their needs.

[1]Until April 1949 the total allowances underwent a graded reduction in families of five or more children under 16 years of age.

[2]Eskimo Point, Baker Lake, Chesterfield, Pond Inlet, Pangnirtung, Fort Chimo, Port Harrison, and Cambridge Bay.

[3]"The first cheques were issued to Eskimo parents in July, 1953. There are now approximately 150 Eskimo families receiving payment of allowances by cheque, out of a total of 1,652 active Family Allowance accounts." (Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Wel. Ann. Rept. 1954, p. 102). In 1960 the government decided that only a very few Eskimos were incapable of spending their allowances properly without surveillance or control. Save for these few cases, therefore, it now mails its cheques directly to the families entitled to them, and no longer imposes any restrictions on their use.

[4]This payment, authorized by the Northwest Territories Council, amounted to only $8 a month; old people requiring more than this sum could provide applied for relief.

[5]Cf. Can. Dept. Nat. Health and Wel. Ann. Rept. 1950, p. 100. The list drawn up in 1948 was revised and the ration scales liberalized in 1953, and again in 1958, to cover the special needs of patients on their way to and from hospitals, of convalescents, of families one of whose members was tuberculous or recovering from that disease, of expectant mothers, etc.

Fig. 12. Annual cash income per family.[1] (Average for four-year period, 1948–51, taken from Christensen, 1953, pp. 22 a and b).

Region	*No. of families*	*Av. no. fox skins*	*Av. price fox skins*	*Income*				
				All sources	*Trapping*	*Local work*	*Family allowance*	*Relief*[2]
Western Arctic	254	16,368	$10.02	$846	$587	$ 60	$178	$ 21
Southampton Island	55	1,850	6.72	572	236	197	118	21
Central Arctic	385	6,722	7.28	337	132	57	134	14
Baffin Island	540	4,502	7.71	334	81	70	167	16
Northern Quebec	507	6,673	6.54	454	124	81	146	103
All regions	1,741	36,115	$ 8.41	$452	$184	$ 72	$154	$ 42

1. Computed by the Hudson's Bay Company.
2. The figures for relief cover only the support paid through the Hudson's Bay Company's trading posts, whether paid by the company itself, or by the government. Virtually no money was in circulation during this period; payments normally took the form of orders on the Hudson's Bay Company.

The confrontation of the local policeman with the local trader in the system of administering government allowances and relief drew strong condemnation from Cantley, who wrote in 1950:

> "When the responsibility for the issue of relief was taken from the traders and vested in the R.C.M.Police, and later, when the administration of family and old age allowances was also added to the Police duties, two distinct sources of supply were opened to the Eskimos. Previously they had had to look to the trader for everything they needed and as the average trader was not prone to giving much for nothing, they had to get out and earn their living either by hunting or trapping.
>
> "Now they have found that if they cannot or will not stand on their own feet they can go to the Police and get at least sufficient in relief or family allowances to keep them going without having to work for it or pay it back. The effect over the past few years has been to encourage the natives to look to the Police for free issues of necessities and to the trader for the non-essentials which furs and other produce will buy. From that it is only a step to complete dependence." (p. 46).

He recommended, accordingly, that all responsibility for the issue of family allowances, relief, and old age pensions, should be transferred from the police to the Hudson's Bay Company, and that the latter should administer them in collaboration with, and under the direct supervision of, the Department of Resources and Development. That department, however, refused to accept his recommendation, partly because it shrank from repeating its pre-war sin of passing on to another tasks that were really the government's responsibility, but mainly because it planned to station its own administrative officers in all the larger settlements, and in some of the smaller ones. So while there still exist a number of districts in which the police remain the government's welfare agents,

> "In some locations the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources is taking over Eskimo relief and welfare work and the R.C.M.Police members will then devote more time to police functions." (Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. 1961, p. 114).

The weakness of human nature soon produced in many districts numerous cases of that total dependence on government subsidies which Cantley had predicted. A memorandum prepared by a government official in 1956 reported that

> "In certain areas where relief payments have been substantial for some years (e.g. Fort Chimo, P.Q.) it is extremely difficult to get the natives interested in any employment, even when opportunities present themselves." (Can. Dept. N. Aff. and Nat. Res. 1962, p. 2).[1]

Before the end of the Second World War legal authorities had pronounced that the Eskimos, though they might be classified as Indians, were not wards of the federal government but Canadian citizens, entitled to all the rights and privileges of other citizens and, in addition, the special privilege of hunting in the islands of the arctic archipelago. Because they are more backward than other citizens, however, they have needed (and still need) more aid from the federal government than citizens who live farther south. Just how much aid they needed in 1952, and how much they were receiving, shows up in an interesting table (Fig. 12) which the Hudson's Bay Company compiled about that time, when money was rarely seen in many parts of the Arctic and the government was funnelling nearly all its financial aid through orders on the "Bay", because that company held a virtual monopoly of trade everywhere outside the

[1]See further the appendix at the end of this chapter.

Mackenzie delta. The table reveals, in high relief as it were, how small was the total cash income of the average Eskimo family between 1948 and 1951, how the government was contributing over 40 per cent of that income, and how little a man could earn by trapping, except perhaps in the Western Arctic. It reveals too, that wage-employment was so scarce in those years that its contribution to the family income averaged less than half the income a man could gain from trapping, and little more than one-third the amount the government was handing out to Eskimo families, even to some that sat idly in their homes and earned nothing. It is true that those four years 1948–51 marked a period of ebb in the Arctic, when there was less employment than either before or immediately after, since the northern airfields and ionospheric stations had gone into operation before 1948, and the recently finished chain of the D.E.W. Line did not advance beyond the planning stage until 1952 and perhaps later. Yet even when employment reached its peak in 1960 it provided steady jobs for fewer than 600 Eskimos out of a total labour force (excluding females) four times that number. Indeed, if we look back over the last thirty years to the crash of white-fox prices in 1930, we may safely assert that throughout that whole period very few families have been able to wrest even the meagrest living from their arctic environment without frequent support from the outside.

The passing of the federal Old Age Security Act in December 1951, confronted the Northwest Territories Council with an embarrassing dilemma. Barely three years earlier it had issued an ordinance granting every Eskimo 70 years of age and older a pension of $8 monthly; and now parliament had suddenly boosted the amount to $40,[1] which would give old and infirm grandmothers larger cash incomes than the sons to whom they looked for support. At first the Council hesitated to apply the act exactly as parliament had worded it, lest it should weaken the sense of responsibility for aged kinsfolk that nearly all primitive peoples entertain, and the Eskimos perhaps more than most. On the other hand, it realized that any modification it made in the act's provisions would lay itself open to a charge of discriminating between citizens of different racial origins, a policy which it had scrupulously tried to avoid ever since the war ended. Ultimately it decided to follow the letter of the act, and at the same time to initiate the Eskimos into our money and financial methods by paying selected individuals their pensions and family allowances by cheque (see footnote, p. 151).

Another problem that came up about this time added to the Council's malaise, since it too raised the question of racial discrimination. It was the old, old problem of liquor. The government had steadily adhered to the system introduced by Finnie in the 1920's, under which white men might buy a specific ration of alcohol for "medicinal" purposes, but under no circumstances were permitted to sell or serve it to Eskimos (see p. 36). Cantley reported in 1950, however, that in the Mackenzie delta, the home of "moonshine" in the days of the whaling vessels, the Eskimo muskrat trappers who traded in their furs at Aklavik were camping close to that miniature metropolis during the summer months, idly gambling away their fur money and making home-brew; for they had observed how the white man who set out trap-lines next to theirs could obtain rations of "medicinal" liquor without difficulty, and they resented the flagrant discrimination. Probably, too, as in Greenland, where alcoholism

[1]The amount was raised to $55 monthly in 1957, and to $65 in 1962.

today menaces the prosperity and contentment of the inhabitants,[1] the monotony of a winter spent in hunting and trapping creates

> "a craving for festivity and gaiety, and if liquor is available, a whole community may be seized by a common psychosis." (Bugge, 1952, p. 48).

Whatever the cause or causes, the emergence of this liquor problem at Aklavik struck the Northwest Territories Council a particularly hard blow, because that district's nearly 2,000 inhabitants included 600 Indians, who neither enjoyed full citizenship status nor came under the jurisdiction of the Council, but under the jurisdiction of the Indian Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration; and, understandably, that department's policies did not always coincide with those of the Eskimo administration of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. So it came about that in 1954, when the Council proposed to cut the Gordian knot of its liquor problem by granting medicinal permits to every applicant in the Northwest Territories, Eskimo, Indian, or white, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration bluntly refused its consent. For a few years longer, therefore, "Eskimos who lived a civilized life"—those, for example, who worked for wages on the D.E.W. Line—might drink intoxicating liquor without interference, while their brothers and cousins who trapped and fished for a livelihood were still denied the "privilege". Then, on 1 July 1958, a simultaneous amendment to the Northwest Territories Liquor Ordinance and a proclamation by the Governor-General in Council removed restrictions upon Indians consuming intoxicants in licenced premises in the Northwest Territories; and six months later a proclamation and amendment to the Ordinance granted full privileges under territorial legislation to Indians and Eskimos in the Territories.

A few other administrative changes during the past decade have affected in various ways the welfare of the Eskimos. The most important, perhaps, were the setting up of transit centres at Frobisher, Churchill, and Cambridge Bay to take care of Eskimo patients travelling to and from southern hospitals; the opening of rehabilitation centres in Frobisher and Inuvik, to retrain Eskimos who through sickness, disappearance of game, or other causes are unable to follow their earlier ways of life; the establishment of foster homes for neglected and homeless children; and the organization of a special unit in the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources to handle these and related activities. The Arctic is changing so rapidly that it is unnecessary to discuss them in detail. They are significant in this place mainly because they reveal how earnestly the government is striving to mitigate the hardships of life in the far north and to provide its Eskimos with the same services as are available to their fellow-citizens in southern Canada.

We have now reached at last the title of this chapter, "Shadows of an uprooted society"; and it is time to clarify the use of this term "uprooted society" in relation to the present-day Eskimos, and to describe the "shadows" that are darkening its surface. I have long since convinced the reader, I hope, that from the end of the Second World War to this present year, the Canadian government has honestly striven to redeem its neglect of the Eskimos during

[1] 'Udvalget for Samfundsforskning i Grønland', 1961.

the pre-war period, and to give them a place alongside other Canadians in the sun of the Dominion's prosperity. If now we briefly tabulate the measures it has taken to reach this goal, we shall be in a better position to judge whether the term "Uprooted society" justly applies to our Eskimos today, and understand what I mean by "shadows" that darken its surface.

The federal government has been aiding the Eskimos in the following ways:

1. Family allowances. Pensions for the aged, the blind, the disabled and, in northern Quebec, for needy mothers, the last being provided by the provincial government.

   In 1960 there were 161 Eskimos receiving pensions on one or other of these counts; and one Eskimo, who had served for many years at a Royal Canadian Mounted Police post, had been granted a civil service pension on retirement.
2. Free schooling for all children, with free board and lodging for pupils who live away from their families in hostels or special homes.
3. Free vocational training for a selected number of Eskimos, with maintenance grants to their families during the training period.
4. Free, or nearly free, medical care, with free hospitalization and free transportation to and from hospital.[1]
5. Free homes for the aged and infirm. There are two such homes. One, at Aklavik in the Western Arctic, is owned and controlled by the federal government, which employs an Indian and his Eskimo wife to operate it. The other, at Chesterfield in the Eastern Arctic, is owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Mission, which receives $4.50 a day (since April 1962, $6.00) for each aged inmate whose admission the government has approved. Eskimo inmates receiving Old Age Security payments are expected to contribute all but $5 from their monthly cheques.
6. An increasing number of free houses for indigent Eskimos, and of nearly free houses for others, under a newly formulated low-cost housing scheme. The government also stores fuel oil in bulk for these houses, thereby considerably lowering the cost of heating them.
7. Government officers in all the larger communities to promote handicrafts and other activities, or organize relief programs such as timber-cutting in winter on the Peel and lower Mackenzie rivers, and to watch in general over the welfare and health of the Eskimos.
8. Relief, in cash or kind, for all Eskimos who need it. In 1958 and 1959 about 50 per cent of the Eskimo population was receiving relief.

No other Canadian citizens, I think, receive so much aid, or enjoy so many privileges, without contributing far more heavily to their cost. It is true that the Arctic is a hard region in which no white man would voluntarily set up a life-time home and bring up a family; that if the Eskimos moved away it would be totally uninhabited, save for the workers at such mines as we judge profitable to exploit, and at the airfields, weather stations, and scientific outposts that we believe useful to maintain. Some day, perhaps, we will hire Eskimos to operate the mines for us, and to man the weather and the scientific stations: but at the present time they lack the education and the training. Even now, however, their occupation of the region contributes to our security, because one of their settlements is as valid a symbol of sovereignty as an army airfield; and it can discourage foreigners (who may not always be friendly) from seeking to gain a footing in what we consider our territory, just as effectively as a two-man police post. During the Korean war, in fact, the United States enrolled for the defence of northern Alaska two battalions of Eskimo scouts, some of whom

[1]Largely for statistical purposes, but also to train them in the ways of civilization, and to voice their equality with whites, the Department of National Health and Welfare levies the same charges on Eskimos as on other citizens. In actual practice, however, very few are either able to pay, or expected to do so.

were close kinsmen of our Mackenzie delta Eskimos, and a high-ranking military authority declared that they

> "constitute the most alert, most intelligent, most patriotic people living in this section of the country. Their services in a time of emergency would be most valuable." (Alaska Health Survey Team, chap. 4, p. 55).

From the coldly practical standpoint of the country's defence, therefore, quite apart from any obligations we may feel towards our Eskimos, the money we have been pouring out to help them may be money wisely spent, just as wisely as the fire insurance premiums we unhesitatingly pay on our business stores and our homes.

Money, however, is a mere tool, worthless apart from the results which it helps us to accomplish; and only time will reveal whether all our activities in the Arctic today, and the millions of dollars we are spending there, are sinking ineffectively into a bottomless abyss or strengthening the foundations of a greater Canada. Only time, too, will tell us whether all the aid we are extending to our Eskimos will renew their vitality and their resourcefulness, or bury them deeper than ever in the slough of their despond. Our aid is all-embracing: it enters into every phase of their lives, helps to mould all their activities. We have taken into our hands the well-being of every individual Eskimo, from the baby on its mother's back to the aged widower tottering towards his grave; and natives who, as recently as the days of my youth, had never seen the face of a white man and never sought the help of any stranger, have become "welfare cases" to a people they cannot resist and whose speech and civilization they are now too old ever to comprehend. The little assemblages of Eskimos scattered over the Arctic have indeed been uprooted and become welfare societies, for whose prosperity and contentment we have made ourselves responsible until such time as they reach the "age of discretion" and can take their fate into their own hands.

What then are these "shadows" which are darkening their faces?

In previous pages I have described their low morale, the apathy that has overtaken them—so unlike their energy and vigour prior to the twentieth century, and their indifference to education, either for themselves or for their children. Game may be growing scarcer in certain regions; prices of furs may be so erratic that they discourage trapping; but the Eskimo of earlier years would have been too proud, too independent, to sit idly in his tent waiting for some one to offer him a dole. He was a man of enterprise and character, and if living conditions became difficult in one locality he and his wife packed up their belongings and migrated to another. As late as the 1920's Eskimos from the Mackenzie delta were drifting over Banks Island and the northern part of Victoria Island to hunt and trap the foxes in that uninhabited and almost unexplored region, just as their own fathers had drifted into the Mackenzie delta after their firearms had well-nigh exterminated the caribou in northwest Alaska. A hundred years ago, even fifty years ago, the Eskimos enjoyed adventure for its own sake, and laughed away the hardships it often brought in its wake. Almost every European (and American) arctic expedition employed them, and praised their faithful service and unfailing cheerfulness. An Eskimo from the Atlantic coast of Labrador accompanied Sir John Franklin down the Mackenzie River to the Western Arctic in 1825; eighty years later Eskimos from Etah in

northwest Greenland helped Admiral Peary to reach the north pole; and today two Eskimos are assisting our government scientists to explore the little known coasts and waters of the arctic archipelago, the while their brothers and cousins, alas, despondently trap a few foxes on the east coast of Hudson Bay, carve a few figurines from soapstone, and wait for the aircraft from the south to bring them family allowances and old age pension cheques. The spirit of enterprise still lingers within them; but it lies submerged beneath a tide of economic distress and social disorganization that has swept them off their feet and overwhelmed them with a feeling of complete helplessness. Fast as their numbers are increasing, much faster proportionately than Canada's white population, faster still grow the government's expenditures on relief for them, as shown by Murty's table (1961, pp. 36, 37):

		Direct expenditures on Eskimo relief[1]			
Year	*Population*	*Percentage on relief*	*Expenditure in E. Arctic*	*Expenditure in W. Arctic*	*Total expenditure*
1957	9,978	31	$ 47,496	$12,402	$ 59,898
1958	10,245	52	$129,502	$32,631	$162,133
1959	10,569	49	$120,153	$54,925	$175,078

As the population continues to grow, relief expenditures too may grow; but they can never cure the sickness of the soul that is consuming the Eskimo people. That sickness will yield to one remedy only, honest, rewarding work, as Goethe tried to teach us in his Faust. In that direction, and in that direction alone, lies the Eskimos' redemption.

During the last few years other clouds have been casting their shadows over the scattered population of the Arctic. In the smaller settlements the Eskimos are demoralized and confused, knowing neither where they stand nor what the future bears in store for them: they have ceased to struggle against

[1]In October 1962, when this work was almost ready for the editor, the Welfare Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources issued a much more accurate statement of Eskimo relief expenditures during the preceding five years. Here are its figures, slightly rearranged to make them more readily comparable with Murty's:

		Eskimo relief expenditures		
Year	*Population*	*Expenditure in E. Arctic*	*Expenditure in W. Arctic*	*Total expenditure*
1957–58	8,989	$131,000	$ 35,000	$166,000
1958–59		$176,000	$ 53,000	$229,000
1959–60		$170,000	$ 91,000	$261,000
1960–61		$187,000	$ 92,000	$279,000
1961–62	11,453	$228,000	$107,000	$335,000

I should remind the reader (as I myself have been reminded) that our Eskimos are one of the few under-privileged groups in our society for whose economy we have been unable to provide the usual indirect buttresses. We underpin our farmers with acreage payments, butter-support prices, hog subsidies, and the like; our fishermen with support prices and unemployment insurance, and the sectors of our population that cannot appeal for either subsidies or price supports we strengthen with unemployment insurance and winter benefits. So 'respectable' are now these economic props that we can employ them without criticism in any part of the social structure that appears to need them. Our Eskimos, however, and some of our northern Indians, cannot qualify for them because their manner of life departs so widely from the norm. Consequently officialdom has classified most of the aids we grant the Eskimos under the tainted title 'Relief', even though some of them would seem to be just as respectable as farm subsidies.

what appears irresistible and brood passively. Larger settlements, however, are now arising, semi-urban communities where the Eskimos are gathering around the new schools and nursing stations, the administrative posts and the airfields; where whites from the south too are gathering, and creating more activity, more excitement, more opportunities for wage-employment, and more distractions.[1] In those settlements, Aklavik, Inuvik, Frobisher, and Churchill, the Eskimos are definitely the underlings, although in all except the last they dominate in numbers. Many of them have no economic roots in these places, but are transients *en route* elsewhere, convalescents awaiting recovery before returning to their homes, or temporary visitors who drift in to "see the sights" when they find the opportunity, and drift home again when "city" life becomes too difficult. Others establish permanent homes, nearly all as government employees working on menial tasks, because their education and training fit them for no other. Only a few (e.g. the handicraft-workers at Cape Dorset and Povungnituk, and the muskrat-trappers at Aklavik) remain their own masters,[2] and even they find no place in the society of whites beyond their local environment because they speak so little English, and know so little about the outside world. Their hunting skills, their ability to find their way in winter over a pathless land and build a snow hut for shelter when darkness overtakes them, these count for nothing in the white man's urbanized environment. That environment calls for new skills and new knowledge which the Eskimos have yet to acquire.

Everything in these new "metropoles" drives home to them their inferior status. It is the white man who directs and supplies everything. His home with its four or more rooms is larger and more luxurious than any dwelling the Eskimo can build for himself from logs or scrap lumber, or the one-room, prefabricated house that the government brings in for him. If the government appoints an Eskimo to some classified position in its civil service and moves him to one or other of its two new administrative centres, Frobisher Bay or Inuvik, it will provide him with a government-built home serviced with light, running water, and sewerage; but if he decides to migrate there of his own accord, to visit some kinsman perhaps or to look for a job, he must erect a tent or build a shack outside the serviced system and draw his water by bucket from a pond or river. So the outskirts of both these "planned" towns are sprouting slum suburbs of the type that existed before the war at Brewery Creek, within three miles of Canada's capital city, and that still survive in its vicinity and near other cities in the Dominion.

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[1]Christensen wrote in 1952 (1953, p. 7): "The economy of the Canadian Eskimo is beset by the same difficulty as was known in Greenland before the improvement in the fisheries, namely that it is necessary for the economy that the Eskimos live scattered, while many other forces seek to gather them in 'colonies'. Not alone do the 'colonies' attract the Eskimos because something is always happening there and there is a possibility to earn money, but it is also necessary for the institutions, schools, missions and health authorities to have the Eskimos in the vicinity in order to do their work." Between 1956 and 1959 no fewer than 1,104 Eskimos (10 per cent of the population) left their homes and migrated to other places in search of work, or of better living conditions. Three hundred and twenty-one went to Frobisher Bay, 407 to a rehabilitation centre in Rankin Inlet, 75 to another centre in Whale Cove, 48 to Sachs Harbour and De Salis Bay, and smaller numbers to other places (Murty, 1961, p. 50).

[2]In the sense that the independent farmer is his own master, as opposed to the labourer on a communal farm.

To the unsophisticated Eskimo, then, who arrives from Victoria Island, Clyde River, or the region around the Magnetic Pole, our new arctic "metropoles" with their government buildings and comfortable homes equipped with all the luxuries we take in from southern Canada, are not the earthly paradises of which he has perhaps heard rumours, but places where he quickly loses his identity and his hopes, and becomes a mere cipher in a proletarian population. If he is married and bringing up a young family he may stoically accept his debasement and hope that the future will retrieve his lot; but if he is young he is likely to rebel, as so many of our own young people are rebelling in this confused and troubled age. Such a rebellion simmers today in all the Arctic's larger settlements, and now and then spills over in a wave of juvenile delinquency that is giving the government great concern. Since 1950, when Cantley drew attention to its presence at Aklavik, Ferguson (1961) has described its symptoms at Tuktoyaktuk, which has become for some of Aklavik's young blades a summer holiday resort, where they can dissipate the days in gambling and making home-brew, and sun themselves in the admiration of the local teenagers:

> "Criminality, as defined by the European administration, is almost wholly confined to this [teen-age] group. The total of offences arising at Tuktoyaktuk during the summer of 1957 amounted to more than thirty and seventeen persons were convicted. All offences arose from drinking although some of the charges were for disorderly conduct. Fifteen of those convicted belonged to the teen-age group. Admittedly, five of these persons were from Aklavik but the important fact is that they were identified with and part of the teen-age group." (p. 62).

From Aklavik itself, and from Inuvik, come similar reports of disorderly conduct arising from drunkenness, and of the prostitution that invariably accompanies it. The Eskimo colony at Churchill is experiencing the same ferment, while at Frobisher Bay young women report that it is no longer safe to venture out after dark, especially at weekends when Eskimos and whites both throng the local beer parlour. So common indeed is crime in that settlement that the government recently contemplated the building of a jail, or the establishment of a penal colony at Lake Harbour, an old settlement seventy-five miles to the south that has been recently denuded of its inhabitants through the drawing power of its larger and lustier neighbour. To add to the administration's problems, drunkenness, prostitution, and crime are now being followed by both gonorrhoea and syphilis;[1] and the Pandora's box of evils we white men have donated to our Eskimos may shortly overflow and pour back its contents on ourselves.

What has gone wrong with our high-minded and well-planned program in the Arctic? Why should the fine schools and nursing stations we have built there, the earnest efforts of our civil servants, and the Christian doctrines imparted by sincere missionaries, so grievously miscarry and merely smooth the paths of many young Eskimos to the beer parlours, the police courts, and the jail cells?

[1]Cf. p. 148. The Northwest Territories Council, at its meeting in Cape Dorset in August, 1962, "took the advice of the Frobisher Bay Eskimo community and imposed restrictions on beer sales in Frobisher Bay". At the same meeting Dr. Willis, of the Northern Health Service, reported that "illegitimate Indian births in the Territories average 34 per cent. For Eskimos it was 31 per cent in the Aklavik–Inuvik area, but only 4.8 per cent elsewhere, which compares with the national average of 4.3 per cent". (*Ottawa Journal*, 8 August 1962). For statistical purposes the Department of National Health and Welfare lists as illegitimate all children whose mothers are unable to name the fathers.

Perhaps we have failed to learn one of history's main lessons, the history that is still being written not only in our Arctic, but on every continent of our globe. Individuals, small agglomerations of people like our Eskimos, and great nations all have this in common, that they cannot be dragged like oxen unwillingly along the "path of progress", but must march unhindered, on their own unfettered feet. Just as you cannot cram a child with learning as you fill a cup with tea, but can only help it to teach itself and by its own efforts acquire knowledge and wisdom, so you may pour men, money, and machines into a region to raise its standard of living, but unless the inhabitants themselves take hold—whether they live in Bolivia, the Congo, or the Arctic—unless they themselves can direct the men, spend the money, and work the machines, you are not aiding them, but in some cases only driving them deeper into the quagmire. And when an individual is sunk in a morass of ignorance and economic misery, or a nation mired down with wars and misgovernment, he—or it—cannot rise to the hill-top on which you may be standing unless he himself makes a supreme effort to struggle out of the bog and climb steadily upward. Japan, it is true, pulled herself out of the feudal age a century ago and became one of the world's leading nations, and Soviet Russia, after two world wars and a civil war, has become perhaps the strongest military power. But to climb unaided, as those nations did, demands a heavy toll in human suffering, heavier than we believe is necessary in the world of today. The generous Marshall Plan of the United States saved western Europe from much of this suffering, while her magnanimity to Japan quickly lifted that nation back on to its feet after the Second World War. Other nations, other peoples, can help the backward ones; they can supply the money and the tools, the schools, the books, and the teachers; but unless the aided nation (and the children in the schools) make an adequate response, the aid is dissipated and the money wasted. It is on stepping-stones of themselves that men and nations rise, not on the stepping-stones left behind by others.

In our Canadian Arctic we have supplied the schools and the teachers, but we have failed to convince the Eskimos that their children should speak and read English fluently, and also acquire some measure of education to win for themselves a securer, and, one hopes, a less sordid life. We have set up a complex government in their territory, but offered them no real place in it; and, what is worse, we have not inspired any hope that there will be real places for them, which is one reason, perhaps, why the local councils we have fostered in several places failed to take root. We, or the missions, have banished their old dance-houses as strongholds of heathenism, not realizing that they were community centres that gave each band or group of families its stability; and we vainly try to substitute for them churches and schools that we build after our own designs and lock with keys that we keep in our own hands.[1] We have destroyed their old hunting and fishing existence, but not brought within their reach another way of life that will replace it; the cooperatives we have established cannot replace it, for while they may promote a more effective use of the local resources, they cannot add to those resources, which we now know are, in most districts, quite inadequate to support the present population. We have deprived the earliest pioneers in the Arctic of all initiative, and we wonder that they should now act like robots or degenerates.

[1]Since 1960 the government has undertaken to pay 50 per cent of the cost of any community centre that the Eskimos may build or operate.

Cantley correctly diagnosed at Aklavik the second main cause of Eskimo delinquency, long seasons of idleness; and he prescribed two antidotes, leadership and work:

> "Anything, therefore, that can be done to provide competent leadership and work for these people during the seasons when they can neither trap nor hunt to advantage would solve most of the moral problems and help more than anything else to build up a more industrious and self-reliant people." (1950, p. 35).[1]

Many people have imagined that because the Eskimos' amorphous societies lacked organized governments, and considered each individual the equal of every other, they necessarily also lacked leaders. That was not so. In pre-European days each band or settlement possessed its unofficial leader or leaders, men whose force of character or superior skill and prowess in hunting gained them acknowledged influence over their fellows. Ikpakhuak, who adopted me as his son, was such a leader, although his little band in Dolphin and Union Strait, at the western entrance to Coronation Gulf, counted only six or eight families. A far greater leader, venerated by all the Eskimos in Bathurst Inlet, was the shaman-philosopher Ilatsiak.[2] These two Eskimos were true leaders, dignified in bearing and grave of speech, as befitted men who carried in their hands the lives and destinies of their kinsmen and neighbours. But the qualities and skills that brought them to the forefront under the old dispensation would not necessarily have made them influential in the new; and we who are strangers, ignorant of the language and thoughts of the Eskimos, have tried to lead them the whole way ourselves, instead of training selected individuals of their own race to guide them during at least the first stages of the journey. We do not expect the team of eminent doctors we recently sent to southeast Asia to train every Malayan who wishes to practice medicine, nor the agricultural experts we lend to India or Ceylon to teach every farmer the sprays and fertilizers he should use on his crops. It is the native teachers and administrators of those countries that we try to train, for they know their land and people much better than we can. Perhaps we would have speedier success in our Arctic if we made a greater effort to seek out Eskimo leaders, and train them specifically, first for the humbler jobs in education, health, and government, then as soon as possible for the higher.

The government is, indeed, doing exactly that, but at a pace that may be far too leisurely, considering the speed with which the Arctic is changing. Education, now more than ever needed in every walk of life, even the most humble, is a slow process in all countries; and it has been particularly slow in the Eastern Arctic where three-fourths of our Eskimos live out their days. Five years will probably elapse before a single Eskimo in that region reaches matriculation standard, and in five years, with probably 1,500–2,000 more Eskimos in the north struggling for a livelihood, the situation may be worse than today. It may be that for a brief period we shall have to accept lower educational standards in order to draw a few Eskimos into the teaching, nursing, and other professions from which they can influence and lead their people.

[1]One wonders if Cantley remembered the First World War, with its ceaseless polishing of brass buttons and steel chains, and its useless parades designed solely to keep idle soldiers from relapsing into degenerate drunks.

[2]For these two men see Jenness, 1923, p. 93 *et passim* and Finnie, 1940, p. 34 *et passim*.

Or perhaps, through special educational and training programs in southern Canada, we can speed up their rate of progress so that they can take over more quickly some of the jobs in the Arctic that they are unable to carry out today.

In the larger settlements of Greenland municipal councils have taught that island's inhabitants to manage their local affairs, and trained them for the full self-government that was granted to them after the late war; but the Greenlanders had taken their first steps in education two hundred years before, analphabetism had been virtually eliminated, and some of them could speak and read Danish as fluently as their own Eskimo tongue. The Northwest Territories took a step in the same direction shortly before 1950, when Aklavik was still the chief administrative centre of the lower Mackenzie River and the Western Arctic, by giving its nearly 2,000 inhabitants a municipal council; but Aklavik was a multi-racial community where white men and Indians composed half the population,[1] and the opinions and wishes of the dominant whites inevitably outweighed those of the two other races. As the annual report of the Department of Mines and Resources for 1943 patronizingly remarked (p. 18), and repeated in its report for the following year:

> "Even though they may not always quite understand the meaning and purpose of the law, the natural tendency of the Eskimo is to obey it. Their communal life has taught them that the wishes of the individual must be subordinate to the good of the majority, and this has made them especially easy to deal with. For a number of years the Government of Canada has been paying special attention to its Arctic citizens, in order to keep them independent, self-reliant, and self-supporting, and with this object in view has put forth continuous and unremitting efforts to preserve the natural resources of the country so that the Eskimo may continue to be the admirable race they now are."

Later administrations have been less smug and more conscientious than this one twenty years ago. To restore the Eskimos' high morale and sturdy initiative the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has instructed its "northern service officers" to consult the local population on all local affairs, and to encourage them to accept at least some of the responsibility for local decisions. But our Eskimos have no tradition of organized councils, or of what we call democratic government; and they have not yet produced new leaders of their own race. So the way is long and hard. The fishing, boat-building, and handicraft cooperatives that the government has promoted in recent years, even the consumer cooperative at Resolute Bay, all lean heavily on the advice and guidance of white men. In Alaska too, whose Eskimos have a longer tradition of education than ours, and have sent fifty or more students to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, the reindeer cooperatives have failed, and the consumer-store cooperatives have faltered, because their Eskimo managers have been unable or unwilling to assume the full responsibility.[2]

The Eskimos vitally need leadership from their own people. But leadership by itself will accomplish nothing unless they also obtain wage-employment. Both their livelihood and their health rest on steady, remunerative work: and it is education's main task to equip them for the kinds of work that life will demand from them. Therein lies the core of the Eskimo problem: and we would know better how to educate them, and train them for their future, if we could settle more clearly in our own minds how and where they can best serve

[1]Cantley, 1950. For Aklavik at that period see footnote, p. 80 (this volume).

[2]For the history of cooperatives among the Alaskan Eskimos see Jenness, 1962a, pp. 34–5.

themselves and Canada.[1] Because the Arctic is their traditional home, the only home with which they are familiar, all or nearly all of them would prefer to remain there; and we ourselves would gladly see them remain, because no one else now covets their land (unless for purely military reasons), and if one day it should reveal valuable resources, they will be on hand to help us develop them. At the present time, however, they cannot make a living there unless we provide about half the necessary income, and to provide that proportion of their income gratis, as we are doing now, degrades and demoralizes them, and shoulders the rest of Canada with an unwelcome burden which we are finding more troublesome every year.[2]

Appendix to Chapter 15

Marjorie Findlay, a McGill University geographer, has described how family allowances and relief were being administered about 1954 in the Ungava region, where steady wage-employment had become so scarce after the military vacated the Chimo airfield that most of the Eskimos reverted to winter trapping to obtain the cash income they needed, although the region was not rich in fur-bearing animals and a trap-line seldom earned its operator more than $250 for

[1]Soviet Russia, using more imperious methods, perhaps, may have been more successful in dealing with its approximately 1,100 Eskimos in the vicinity of Bering Strait, whose condition in 1920 was as miserable as that of their kinsmen in Canada's Eastern Arctic. The *Soviet News Bulletin* which I quoted earlier (p. 130) contains this statement: "Soviet Eskimos enjoy full and equal rights and take an active part in the political, economic and cultural life of the country. Kalya, an Eskimo from Chaplino, is a deputy to the Magadan Regional Soviet of Working Peoples' Deputies. Vasily Yemron, Natalia Rukantak, Vera Analkvasak, Valentina Kagak, and others, teach in their native settlements. Yuri Anku is a pilot in civil aviation, and Angu, Palya and Aniniya are mechanics at repair shops. Other Eskimos work as radio operators, mechanics, motor-men, and medical workers. Dora Angu, a young Eskimo woman of the village of Chaplino, teaches her native language at school. She received her education in the regional national teachers' training school at Anadyr. Alitku, an Eskimo too, has been in charge of the postal department for over 20 years, and his neighbour, Nanuktak, is chairman of the producers' artel."

[2]The 'Report of the Royal Commission' (1959) contains this passage (p. 6):

"The Indian in the Mackenzie District is in a transitional stage. Few of the adults have received an adequate education and therefore have difficulty in obtaining employment requiring a degree of technical skill. The Indians have a strong desire to have their children educated and many stated to the Commission that if the Indian was to compete for job opportunities, education was a necessity. The Commission is in agreement with this view and recognizes that the educational facilities, and, in particular, the technical schools now being provided in the Northwest Territories will go a long way towards meeting the education needs of the Indians. However, it is also the Commission's view that education alone will not solve their economic problems. Unless job opportunities for the graduates can be found, their education will have been of little benefit to them since they will not be able to make use of their new skills nor will they have had the training required to enable them to make a living from the Indians' traditional pursuits of hunting, trapping and fishing."

a whole season. To prevent any natives from starving, therefore, the government was supplementing the Family Allowances with extensive relief. Miss Findlay writes (1955, pp. 94–6, 112):

> "Early in the fall, that is September, there begins the round of collecting stores, food, clothes and equipment for the winter, through the media of 'debt', Family Allowances and relief rations. The Eskimo families are either making a last call at Chimo or Payne Bay Posts by peterhead in order to collect them, or else they have been living at the post all summer and collect them before leaving. The Port Burwell Eskimos are so far from Chimo that they make only the one trip for stores during the year, and that one usually in late summer.
>
> "It is the man of the household who lays in the stores. Firstly, he goes for 'debt' in the fall to the Hudson's Bay Company office adjacent to the store. The Post Manager has every able-bodied man listed according to his hunting ability and it is understood that the amount of debt a man gets will be regulated by the Manager's estimate of his efficiency as a hunter. The figure varied from $10.00 to $40.00, according to those Eskimos who were asked. It is expended mostly on traps and ammunition and if there is any left, on essential foods.
>
> "Secondly a man goes to the R.C.M.P. Office for Family Allowance. The allowances are the same as in the rest of Canada . . . but here the Eskimo takes them in goods. He lists his requirements, and insofar as the Police Sergeant judges them reasonable, he makes out a requisition form up to the value that the particular family is allowed. The Eskimo takes the order over to the Company store, receives the goods, and the bill goes to the Department of National Health and Welfare.
>
> "The requisitions usually start with flour, sugar, milk and pablum, and may also include small quantities of pilot biscuits, raisins, rolled oats, sweet biscuits and syrup. The use of milk and pablum is to be encouraged, according to the Department of National Health and Welfare's instructions to the R.C.M.P. But the money is chiefly used for clothing, tent material, needles, thread and ammunition. These are the supplies that cannot be got on the relief ration.
>
> "Finally from the same R.C.M.P. Office the Eskimo collects a slip for relief rations for his family. This he also takes over to the Company store. He receives the flour, lard, tea, salt, matches and soap, carries them away in old flour bags, and the bill, this time, goes to the Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources.
>
> "With his groceries, his ammunition, traps and a few new articles of clothing, the families leave in their peterheads for their winter camps. They usually go in groups. . . . There is a similar exodus from Payne Bay. . . . [In Ungava Bay] the annual family income from all sources, that is, trapping, Family Allowances and relief, and the additional summer employment . . . rarely reached $1,000.00."

The reader should perhaps note that guns, ammunition, traps and certain essential foods are sold by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Eskimos at greatly reduced prices. This feature of Canada's arctic administration interested the Danish official Christensen, who was well acquainted with his own government's monopoly of all trade in Greenland. In his report on Canada's administration cited earlier he wrote (1953, p. 24):

> "The rising prices of consumers' goods which have taken place since 1939 combined with the poor prices of fox pelts have contributed to the deteriorating situation of the Eskimos. However not to the extent one might have expected, since the sales prices of the company have not gone up as much as the same goods in more southerly parts of Canada. The price of a typical 'family outfit', that is the normal purchases of necessary goods by a family, was in 1939 $98. In 1952 the price of the same outfit is $126, thus there is only a rise of about 20%. For Canada on the whole the prices rose 134% during the same period. The reason for this is supposed to be partly the rather modest prices charged for 'basic commodities' which probably means that the company's policy has a tendency to consider the welfare of the Eskimos, and partly that freight rates are kept fairly low."

CHAPTER 16

Scanning the near horizon

Canada has been blessed and cursed by nature in about equal measure. Latitude and relief give her a variety of climates ranging from warm and rather dry through temperate to frigid arctic. The world's two largest oceans wash her shores, offering themselves as highways and bringing her abundant fish; but the Arctic Ocean that presses on her northern coastline still shuts that region off from the rest of the world and, counting man its enemy, lends him scanty support. Lakes and ponds conceal nearly half the land surface: many abound in fish, but others are almost lifeless. On the land itself hard rock outcrops over thousands of square miles, limiting to small pockets such agriculture as the climate permits, but beneath its exterior crust it yields an untold wealth of minerals to men who possess the money and the knowledge to find and extract them. An immense belt of valuable evergreen trees, interspersed with birch and poplar, fringes the northern edge of Canada's fertile plains, but beyond the forests stretch the bare rock and the useless tundra of the Arctic, where the climate forbids agriculture and the scarce animal life, including man, must struggle hard to maintain a precarious foothold.

The Arctic offers very little of value to mankind today except its minerals, of which there are numerous traces; but their discovery in payable quantities, their extraction, and their transportation to the regions where we most need them demand very heavy outlays in men, money, and knowledge. We in southern Canada possess the knowledge, possibly too the capital; and whatever we lack, other nations will gladly supply if they believe they can reap a profit. But there is one thing we possess which they do not, a considerable labour force right on the ground, a labour force of Eskimos desperately in need of work, whose hire will cost far less than any unskilled labour we can bring in from the outside, and who will serve us just as efficiently. The operators of the North Rankin Inlet Nickel Mines conclusively proved these last two statements; for during the four years of their operations they provided continuous employment to nearly 80 Eskimos above ground, and to a few below the surface, and both management and workmen were well satisfied.

Let us briefly recapitulate some of the details about our Eskimo labour force that were set forth in earlier chapters. In 1960 it numbered 5,329, of whom 2,750 were men between the ages of 15 and 54, almost two-thirds of them, indeed, under 34, since the Eskimo population is much younger than our own. Nearly all were dependent for their livelihood on fishing, hunting, and trapping,

but a considerable percentage secured sporadic wage-employment during the short summer, and a handful—fewer than 600—worked for wages the whole year round. These last were relatively prosperous and the envy of their kindred; but their number was too small to ameliorate the miserable condition of their fellows. Broadly speaking, over 2,000 men between the ages of 15 and 54 were earning no cash income at all beyond the $300 (approximately) that they gained from their trapping and a slightly larger amount, perhaps, from casual labour and handicrafts. On this income of less than $700, supplemented by family allowances and relief, they were bringing up families larger than the average families in the rest of the nation. But their living standard, we need hardly add, was deplorable, almost as low as that of the down-trodden peoples in the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands, or of the fellahin population in the Nile valley.

Each year this Eskimo labour force adds about 75 male workers to its ranks. And each year also the expenditures of the government on straight relief grow heavier (see p. 158), without raising the living standard to any appreciable extent or significantly increasing the amount of wage-employment. Our government is spending large sums of money in the Arctic on defence projects, weather stations, communication and transportation facilities, and, in the Eskimo settlements, on public buildings such as schools and nursing stations and on adequate housing for whites and non-whites. Most of the jobs its expenditures finance demand training and a fair knowledge of English; and, unfortunately, hardly a score of our Eskimos possess as yet these qualifications.

We must not minimize the earnest endeavours of our administrators since the war years to explore and develop our far north, and to train the Eskimos to march side by side with us in exploiting its resources. Only eighteen years have passed since the government took in hand the redemption of the Arctic, and it cannot build a New Jerusalem in the twinkling of an eye. It has certainly made great progress during those eighteen years; and the region is changing fast. But faster still has the rest of the world been changing, and no one can say when its hands will reach out and grasp at the Eskimos' door-handles. Neither we in southern Canada nor our Eskimos in the Arctic are yet ready for that eventuality, and we must speed up our efforts in the north lest everything we have done so far be swept away in mankind's surge, and the last state of the Eskimos become worse than the first. We would not wish to see a repetition of the horrors of the whaling days in the Mackenzie delta, or of the misery and degradation that followed the building of the airfield at Fort Chimo. And we cannot rest content with a wide-open northern frontier half of whose inhabitants are dependent on relief, and three-fourths of them unable to speak or understand either English or French.

Our Arctic today urgently needs two things:

1. A minimum of 2,500 permanent jobs offering fair wages;
2. Some speedy method of teaching Eskimos to speak and read English fluently, and greatly increased vocational and professional training so that they can fill those 2,500 jobs.

In our form of society the supplying of 2,500 jobs devolves on private enterprise rather than on the government, although the latter can offer considerable

encouragement and also provide a few jobs itself. On the other hand, education and training are direct responsibilities of the government; but, in training particularly, government and private enterprise can work hand in hand.

Let us consider, first, the jobs that the Arctic can offer now, or that may become available there within the next ten years.

Disregarding the D.E.W. Line stations which have passed beyond the construction phase to one of maintenance only, and the North Rankin Inlet Nickel Mines that have already folded up, the Arctic cannot firmly promise more than 550 permanent jobs at this moment, or a very much larger number at any fixed date in the future. A handful of Eskimos can continue to be servants and interpreters at the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, and at government police stations and air-bases. They can be janitors and caretakers of government buildings and, given a little more training, serve as semi-skilled workmen—carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and tractor operators—at the larger settlements of Aklavik, Inuvik, Frobisher, and Churchill. In from five to ten years time we should have Eskimo assistant school-teachers and perhaps four or five fully qualified teachers; nurses' aides and a few registered nurses; aircraft mechanics and possibly one or two pilots; and some assistant meteorologists at the weather stations, unless by that time the stations have been automatically equipped and no longer need permanent staffs. But without a revolution in the economy of the Arctic, without the development there of some large enterprises such as the opening of three or four important mines, the government alone will hardly be able to provide remunerative jobs for more than perhaps 5 per cent of the Eskimo population; and it must either find employment for most of them outside the Arctic, or by steadily increasing its relief payments allow them to remain in that region as unneeded and unwanted guests of the rest of Canada.

Some one may interject at this point—Government can do things that would bankrupt private enterprise; for example, it can prosecute and finance a war. Surely, then, it can provide all the jobs that are needed in the Arctic, without the forced conscription of Eskimo labour that would violate our democratic principles. Can it not use Eskimo (and Indian) labour to build roads that will connect the eastern ends of Athabasca and Great Slave lakes with the west coast of Hudson Bay, thus facilitating the exploration of a region that shows promise of valuable minerals? Can it not harness the Koksoak, the Grinnell, or some other river in the Eastern Arctic, organize an Eskimo cooperative, build for it a large spinning and weaving mill at Fort Chimo or Frobisher, import some surplus cotton from the United States, and with Eskimo workers directed by expert white managers produce special textiles that will sell at competitive prices in southern Canada and elsewhere? To avoid the taint of "sweated labour" it might unionize its Eskimos, pay them the same wages as the textile workers at Madoc and other manufacturing centres, and provide them with comfortable homes, and with health and educational facilities, not inferior to those of unionists in Ontario and Quebec. Or again, could it not build an ore-crushing plant somewhere in Coronation Gulf, extract the native copper that is widely disseminated through the diabase rocks of that region, and ship it out by way of Bering Strait, thus giving 500 or 1,000 Eskimos in the Western Arctic the year-round employment they so greatly need?

The government could do all these things, and it could do them without that conscription of labour to which totalitarian regimes have resorted in order to speed up the industrialization of their countries. But the government's revenues must come out of the pockets of its taxpayers, and are the Canadian people prepared to pay the extra taxes these and similar projects might involve? The cost of building and maintaining the roads I have just suggested, and of building and operating the industrial plants, would so far exceed their value to us today, and the value of their products, that we would be subsidizing the Eskimos, and subsidizing them more heavily than now, merely to keep them in the Arctic; we would be wasting their labour, and wasting our own money and resources, on uneconomic enterprises not needed at this time for either the progress of Canada or its security. Unless they led, unpredictably, to the discovery of minerals that would repay immediate exploitation, within a very few years parliament would probably force the abandonment of both the roads and the industrial plants to plug that wasteful drain on the government's budget. It seems worth noting, indeed, that during the last quarter of a century the Soviet Union has greatly reduced the amount of money and effort she was expending on the exploration and development of the Asiatic Arctic between the two world wars. Even a totalitarian society, it would seem, cannot run forever on deficit financing.

Private enterprise has found nothing of interest in our Canadian Arctic except minerals; and the exploitation of minerals depends not only on their abundance and accessibility, but on world demand and world prices. If Canada is fortunate, the next ten years may see the large-scale exploitation of the iron deposits in Ungava Bay, followed soon afterwards, perhaps, by similar exploitation of the iron exposures near Great Whale River. If the asbestos out-crops near Sugluk cover a sufficiently wide area, and possess the high quality that has been claimed for them, they too may be opened up during the present decade. We know that the region of Admiralty Inlet, in the north of Baffin Island, is highly mineralized, also certain districts just west of Hudson Bay; but both areas need further exploration. Our Western Arctic, although less favoured in some respects than the Eastern because it lies outside the strongly mineralized Precambrian belt, holds excellent prospects for oil, and in the Coronation Gulf region may contain larger concentrations of copper than we have yet discovered; but some experts question whether either its copper or its oil will be economically exploitable before the end of this century. The mining world is doubtless fully alive to all the possibilities and prepared to risk some of its capital when conditions appear favourable. Meanwhile our officials can only watch and wait, knowing that the opening of two or three big mines in or near the fringe of the Arctic may go a long way towards solving the problem of Eskimo employment, provided that the government for its part plays its cards wisely.

Does it possess any high-value cards? I think it does. It can encourage the mining world to invest capital in the Arctic by granting concessions for a certain period, by smoothing out some of the transportation difficulties, and by offering other inducements with which the ordinary citizen is not familiar. Aid of this nature, of course, can never make poor ores richer, and requires very careful administration to prevent abuse by unscrupulous speculators; but if the government employs it to reduce some of the very high operating costs

in the Arctic, it may tip the balance from a certainty of loss to the possibility of a profit, and bring about the opening of a mine that without it would remain only a prospect.

The government can go still further. It can boldly lay all its cards on the table and invite the mining industry to cooperate with it, not as a patriotic duty, but in its own best interest. It can draw to the mining community's attention the idle labour force in today's far north, the 2,000 and more Eskimos willing to go anywhere within the Arctic, and perhaps outside it, to win a decent livelihood for themselves and their families.[1] Some have already proved their steadfastness and ability at various unskilled jobs—on the airfields, the D.E.W. Line stations, and the North Rankin Inlet Nickel Mines; and the few who have received a little training in carpentry, tractor operation, oil-well drilling, and similar occupations have acquitted themselves well. They will not ask for paid holidays (at least not yet), or demand some of the other rights and privileges that would be obligatory in the south, but may not be practical in the far north. The government, which now carries most of them on its relief rolls, might offer to recruit them, to pay part or all of the cost of transporting them from their present homes to any place within the Arctic or on its fringe, and to make whatever provision seems most desirable for the care of their families. In some cases it might do even more. It might offer to pay half or all their wages for one year, or for two, if their employers will accept them as apprentices, promote their further education, especially in English, and give them special training that will qualify them for more skilled jobs.

Might it not be well, also, to put a few teeth into any government offer to collaborate so closely with the mining industry in developing our Arctic? For more than half a century Alaska has seen its progress delayed through the insistent claims of labour unions in the United States to control the recruiting of workers for two of the state's main industries, the Gulf of Alaska salmon fisheries and the lumber and pulp operations in the Pan-handle. Effectively, if not intentionally, they excluded most of the permanent residents of Alaska from any participation in those industries by setting up their recruiting offices in San Francisco and Seattle without maintaining close connections with Alaska itself. A prominent economist (Rogers, 1960, p. 122 *et al.*) who has lived in the Pan-handle for many years declares that outsiders continuously "milked" the region without making any contribution to its progress or development; and he noted approvingly how the Klukwan Iron Ore Company, which had just leased 527 acres of Indian reservation land adjacent to its own block of claims, had announced in September 1957, that an outstanding feature of its contract with the Indians was a preference of employment and on-the-job training for members of the Indian village. The economist then demanded, on strictly economic grounds, not for purely humanitarian reasons, preferential and prior employment rights in the Pan-handle for *all* residents, whether white men or Indians. His reasoning would suggest that if we in Canada had demanded a similar preference for residents of our Northwest Territories before the opening-up of Yellowknife, we might see today 300 or 400 prosperous and upstanding Indians working alongside white men in that town's gold mines, instead of idling all summer in their tents and wooden shacks along the shores of Great

[1]The 1,104 Eskimos who left their homes between 1956 and 1959 to seek better living conditions (see footnote p. 159) attest the truth of this statement.

Slave Lake and the banks of the Mackenzie River, waiting for government treaty payments and welfare allowances.[1]

The reader must not misunderstand me. I do not suggest that the government should *legislate* to force on the mining world any such preference in employment for residents of the Northwest Territories. Compulsion might arouse fear of inefficient and expensive workmen bankrupting what might otherwise have been profitable enterprises, and might discourage the investment of idle capital in our far north just where it is most needed. The leaders in the mining world are not stupid. They know that their difficulties and their costs greatly increase if around their mines and metallurgical plants lives a depressed population–Indian, Eskimo, or white–maintaining itself only through government subsidies; and if we can convince them that a preference for local labour will gradually raise the living standard of that population without endangering the efficiency of their operations or cutting down their profits, they will cooperate with the government voluntarily. I myself believe that we shall never remove from the Northwest Territories, or from the mining world that operates in the Territories, this incubus of destitute Indians and Eskimos until we find remunerative jobs for them; and that since mining appears to be the only important industry that can flourish in our arctic regions, the government should invite that industry to sit with it around a conference table, and to thrash out in common some cooperative method of providing these jobs, and of providing also the education and the training so necessary today for steady employment.[2]

At this moment, alas, neither the 2,500 jobs that our Eskimos need, nor one-quarter of that number, are anywhere within sight; and we have no firm scale from which to calculate when they will be. Some observers, noting how slowly mining has pushed northward during the 1950's, and how few new jobs it has created in the Northwest Territories (cf. p. 116), fear that its advance during the 1960's may be equally slow, slower than the increase in the Indian and Eskimo population, whose prospects of full employment would then become dimmer than ever. Others, however, are more optimistic. They see on the Belcher Islands, around Great Whale River, and in Ungava Bay, the immense iron deposits that are lying untouched in a period when the world's industries are demanding more and more steel; they observe the bright prospects of rich mineral deposits elsewhere in northern Canada and of oil in the arctic archipelago; and they feel confident that the next ten years will bring a tremendous upsurge of mining in both northern Labrador and the Northwest Territories. With that mining, they believe, will come so great a demand for labour that it will strike from our relief rolls all the Eskimo names that have accumulated on

[1] A senior official comments: "In all government contracts we do put in a clause requiring a preference for local labour. But how does one assess its fulfilment against the employer's assessment of the qualifications he needs? The plain hard fact is that unless local employment is, on balance, profitable (as at Rankin Inlet), it is virtually impossible to make such a regulation effective. Another factor, of course, is prejudice: that too we must try to overcome. But again it is hard."

[2] "Very few Indians [in the District of Mackenzie] are engaged in steady wage employment. At Yellowknife for example only two Indians were employed by mining companies at the time of the Commission's visit and the highest number which local government officials could recall being employed at one time over the past seven years was five. If as the Commission believes, many of the jobs call for unskilled labour and are being filled by persons new to the District and country, there would seem to be no reason why the original inhabitants, the Indians, should not be employed by these companies." (Roy. Com. 1959, p. 5).

them during the past quarter century, together with the new ones which we are adding year by year. One large mine, they point out, might absorb 500 Eskimo workmen, thereby setting 20 per cent of the Eskimo population on the road to prosperity and well-being. And even as I write steel magnates in the United States and in Germany may have decided to open just such a mine in Ungava Bay (see foonote, p. 110).

True it is that if these big steel companies decide to sink $200,000,000 of capital into the exploitation of Ungava's iron ores, and the giant Asbestos Corporation Limited develops the asbestos deposits in the same region, then not just 500 but perhaps even 1,000 Eskimos may find employment there, the majority in the actual mines, the rest in the supporting activities that will grow up all around—the water-works and the power lines, the roads or railways that will carry the ores to the sea, and the harbour works with their shipping. The final number of Eskimos employed may well depend on the rapidity with which the government can recruit them, or facilitate their recruitment by the mining companies; for in a region like Ungava Bay, which is virtually inaccessible from the land[1] and can be reached by sea only during three months of the twelve-month year, time becomes correspondingly four times as precious as elsewhere, and a big company will fly in labour from the south rather than brook a delay of one or two months.[2]

We may note, in passing, that the movement of several hundred Eskimo workers and their families into new mining communities would lighten some of the administration's heaviest burdens in the Arctic; but it would also introduce one or two new problems. It would cut in half the relief expenditures of the government, but it would leave on its hands, in settlements drained of their inhabitants, vacant schools and idle nursing stations sorely needed in the migrants' new homes. These, however, are minor troubles which government departments will take in their stride, provided they can see the Arctic's economic crisis on the road to a final solution, and the Eskimo people being converted from a crumbling prop in the slowly rising edifice of a Canadian nation to a sturdy pillar bearing its full share of the load.

No one can gainsay that mining *may* expand in northern Quebec and elsewhere as rapidly as our optimists hope. That would not mean that we could expect a sudden call from the industry for 500 or 1,000 unskilled Eskimos to present themselves at work the next day. Jobs can only come gradually, and for several years longer, no doubt, we would need to keep a high percentage of the population on our relief rolls. Even this, however, would not worry us, for any money we spend on keeping them healthy and relatively contented in the Arctic will be money well spent, if only it leads within a reasonable period to the ultimate goal, their full employment and their integration into the national life.

"Within a reasonable period": In that word "reasonable" lies the heart of our problem. Fate spins blindly, and no one can confidently predict what will befall our far north from the revolution of her wheel. We cannot be certain that the mining world will risk large amounts of capital during the next ten or

[1]It seems rather unlikely that the mining companies will extend any of the southern Labrador railways to Ungava Bay, at least during the early stages of development, unless they discover in the intermediate region more promising signs of minerals than are known today.

[2]For the need of education and training in order to retain jobs after the early construction phase see p. 119.

twenty years in exploiting our northern ores, or that the region will witness during that period any other enterprises capable of absorbing its fast-growing labour force. We can only speculate, tempering our hopes and wishes with the dispassionate opinions of our experts, who at the present moment hesitate to pronounce any definite opinions because the problem is too complex.

Unhappily, our ship of state cannot wait for their opinions to crystallize. It sails steadily on, and its officers must steer the course that seems to them most favourable. For the moment it is the optimists who are steering our arctic vessel; and whoever has the welfare of the Eskimos at heart will pray that their hopes and predictions come true.

Today therefore, they are pressing vigorously on with the program they have pursued so steadfastly throughout the 1950's. They are building a few more schools in the Arctic, erecting a few more nursing stations, and supplying the Eskimos with more prefabricated homes to replace the hovels in which many are still living. If they can accelerate this program they will do so; but in any case they will hold fast to the present policy, and with government subsidies keep the Eskimo population virtually intact within the bounds of the Arctic for ten or twenty years longer, while private enterprise organizes its campaign and opens its attack on the untouched mineral wealth of the Northwest Territories. In preparation for that onslaught the government, which has already converted Frobisher Bay into an important administrative and educational centre, may construct a second administrative centre at Rankin Inlet to regulate all the activities of an awakened Eastern Arctic, while Inuvik regulates the activities of the Western.[1]

Rightly or wrongly, I myself cannot share the optimism of these officials, but doubt whether mining will expand in the Northwest Territories during the next ten or twenty years fast enough to create employment for most of our jobless Eskimos, and an almost equal number of impoverished Indians. A gentleman's agreement between the mining world and the government to give job preference to local labour may help a little, but it cannot affect the number of jobs that will open up, only their distribution. One industry, of course, will stimulate others, and a successful mine may create a demand for so many ancillary enterprises that it becomes in the end the nucleus of a small town. But neither our Eskimos nor our northern Indians, with rare exceptions, possess as yet either the capital or the knowledge to set up these ancillary enterprises—such as banks, hotels, dry-goods stores, and tailoring and hair-dressing establishments; so that it is only in the mines themselves, and in the transport activities connected with them, that they can hope to find much employment during the earlier years. The activities of the government itself will expand, no doubt, side by side with mining activities, and it should be able to provide a few extra

[1]It is unfortunate that Frobisher lacks an economic base; for geologists see little prospect of important mining developments in its hinterland, and its insular position and short navigation season discourage any commercial or industrial activity. One wonders, therefore, whether Churchill might not have proved a wiser choice for an administrative and educational centre, since its railway, especially when supplemented by a road (as it may be before many years) provides year-round connection with southern Canada, its summer shipments of grain give it a little commercial activity, and the nickel ore of Rankin Inlet, we hope, is only a foretaste of the rich mineral wealth held in store for us by the Precambrian rocks in the hinterland of Hudson Bay. It is true that Churchill lies in the province of Manitoba, not in the Northwest Territories; also that its docks cannot easily be lengthened, apparently, to handle more shipping, or the navigation season safely extended beyond its present three months because of harbour ice. But are these difficulties insuperable?

jobs. But if our Eskimo population continues to increase at its present rate, by 1970 it will need not 2,500 jobs, but more than 3,000, and a hundred additional ones each succeeding year.

Presuming that my fears are well founded, and that mining will advance northward very slowly, what will be the situation in the Arctic at the end of this decade?

As far as employment is concerned it may be very little better than it is today, however high the level of government expenditure, if we continue as now to keep nearly all our Eskimos in the far north. Even if mining should supply jobs for 1,000 Eskimo men, and government agencies for 500 more, they will still leave about 1,500 with no choice but to "live off the country", struggle to earn a few hundred dollars from casual labour, trapping, and handicrafts, and knock on the government's doors for a large proportion of their needs. The living standards of these 1,500 men and their families will be as low as today, and their morale probably far worse, despite—or rather because of—the growing number of youths who will have passed out of grade 6 or high school and become more conscious than their fathers of the riches that life can offer the fortunate ones. Mounting juvenile delinquency and increasing crime may then force us to supplement our schools and churches with the jails that have already been mooted, and the process of civilizing the Eskimos which we have always considered our mission will require only the building of one, or perhaps two, venereal and mental hospitals to become complete.

To any one who is acquainted with the vicissitudes of our Eskimos since the beginning of this century, the prospect I have just painted is deeply disturbing. Like the power we have recently discovered in the atom, it raises the whole question of man's place in the scheme of the universe and his worth. And what I have pictured can come true. For we are putting most of our eggs into one basket, staking the future of the Eskimos on the hazards of the mining industry in the far north, and making little provision for any alternative or additional economic base should industry fail to live up to our hopes.

To be sure, the government has diligently searched for alternative or supplementary bases in the Arctic; but it has failed to find them in that region. To the best of our knowledge, the far north contains very little of value to us except minerals.[1] But why should we confine our Eskimos to the Arctic? If nature

[1] ". . . there is one broad generalization that I believe can be made about the possibilities in our north. I think it is safe to say that no substantial economic development is likely to be based on renewable resources. By renewable resources I mean the resources of the soil in the form of agriculture or timber or the resources of the water in the form of commercial fisheries. There is too little arable land and the climatic disadvantages under which biological products have to labour are so great that they are not likely ever to be in a position to compete successfully on any large scale with products of the same kind from kindlier climates.

"I should hasten here to add that I do *not* mean that there are not and will not be forest stands of substantial value in the north; that I do not mean that there will not continue to be commercial fisheries of value, such as the present one on Great Slave Lake; and that I do not mean that there will not be farming, ranching and gardening of a subsidiary type at certain places in the western territories. The trapping and trading of fur will also continue, as in the past, to have its place and to provide the livelihood of many people. I think, however, it is safe to say that none of these things—nothing based on the renewable resources of the north with the sole exception of hydro-electric power—can ever be sufficient in scale to form a substantial economic base or to provide an important addition to the national income of Canada." (R. G. Robertson, "The north: its problems and its possibilities", speech delivered to the Ottawa Canadian Club, 17 February 1961).

now denies them a livelihood in their ancient homeland, why should they not migrate elsewhere—to the St. Lawrence River basin, to Manitoba, or to British Columbia? They are citizens of Canada, and Canada is wide. Within its confines they may disappear as a separate people, as several Indian tribes have disappeared before them: but surely it is preferable that they should succumb struggling for a better life in southern Canada than rotting away in the Arctic on government doles. It is only their distinctive race and culture that will disappear, and these are already vanishing. Their descendants, one hopes, will inherit the race's buoyancy and self-confidence, and emerge as resourceful and enterprising as their ancestors.

They will need help, of course, to migrate south, and help to establish themselves after they reach southern Canada; but so did the Frenchmen and the Englishmen who crossed the Atlantic not so long ago, and the Italians and others who are coming here today. In the early 1940's the British and Canadian governments cooperated in settling many hundred Czech refugees on farmlands in northern Saskatchewan and the Peace River region. I myself am a native of New Zealand, but the Canadian government paid my passage to Canada and kept me in the Arctic for three years, optimistically hoping for repayment, if not in cash then in services.[1] Governments no less than individuals must invest their money and efforts to obtain the rewards they are seeking; and our Eskimos will repay whatever we expend on them if we give them those basic rights of all human beings, education and training, and help them to find the jobs that will most benefit them, and us.

It may tax the ingenuity of our educationalists and administrators to discover the quickest and most efficient method of educating and training them. The Eskimos' greatest handicaps are their inability to understand either English or French, and their lack of any tradition of learning a foreign language or of adapting themselves to a life outside the Arctic. One of the main handicaps of our educationalists, on the other hand, is their lack of experience in teaching an unalphabetic people whose tongue they themselves are unable to comprehend. Both Holland and Australia have encountered this problem in New Guinea, and have developed educational techniques that may suggest useful innovations to us.[2] Certainly the techniques we have employed hitherto are far too academic and leisurely to produce the swift results we so urgently need. Eskimos recruited into our army and brought south would probably learn more English in six months than their brothers and cousins in the Arctic are learning in six years. And until they become reasonably familiar with our tongue it will be very difficult for them to hold down even casual jobs in southern Canada.

Education, training, and wage-employment can sometimes go hand-in-hand, as in the nursing profession and in certain types of apprenticeship; but even this approach demands prior knowledge of the local speech. I have met numbers of Italian youths but recently arrived from their home country and unable to utter more than twenty words of English: they were eagerly searching for any jobs that would maintain them for a few weeks or months while they familiarized themselves with their new environment and learned our tongue. In nearly all cases, happily, hands were being outstretched to help them: friends and relatives who had come to Canada earlier; Italian clubs and churches that opened

[1] I have long since repaid its investment with my taxes.

[2] Several countries in southeast Asia have accepted and adapted an Australian method for teaching their nationals English. See Jenness, 1962a, p. 63.

wide their doors to newcomers, offered them disinterested advice and buoyed up their morale; or some Italo-Canadian who in nostalgic kindness gave free lessons in English to recent immigrants from his motherland. I have also seen at least one tragedy—a young cabinet-maker from a small Italian city whose Canadian sponsor had died or moved away, and who found himself, three days after landing in Montreal, sent out to drive logs on the Upper Ottawa River, although he understood neither English nor the French-Canadian dialect of his fellow-workers, and had never seen a river that carried enough water, except in flood, to reach his knees.

There are probably not twenty Eskimos in our Arctic today who could travel alone to southern Canada, as did this Italian cabinet-maker, engage a room in a hotel, and order a meal in a restaurant. All the rest would be more helpless than five-year-old children, unable to comprehend why they should pay to ride in a street-car or bus when weary of walking, and as likely to hand a conductor a ten-dollar bill as a ten-cent piece. They would see no friendly hand outstretched to welcome them, no one who would recognize that they were Eskimos and not Chinese, or to whom they could explain their difficulties in their own tongue—unless, by the sheerest good fortune, they encountered a retired missionary or a Royal Canadian Mounted policeman in whose memory still lingered some words of their speech, or one of the five or six ex-hospitalized Eskimos whom the Canadian government has retained in southern Canada. They would feel more lost and lonely than Gulliver when he stood on the palm of the giant's hand, surrounded on every side by dreadful precipices: for as yet they do not know the ways of a great city and are incapable of living in one alone.

We cannot, therefore, bring them south singly and let them fend for themselves, as must our immigrants from Italy and other countries. We should bring them in family groups, settle them in small colonies, and watch over them as zealously as a sergeant watches over the 'other ranks' who have been committed to his charge. The colonies should be neither too large nor too small; not so large that the colonists can live their own lives with little reference to their white neighbours—for without continuous contact with us how will they learn our language and understand our way of life—yet not so small that they fail to give their members solidarity and support. Six or seven families would seem to be an absolute minimum, and twelve or fourteen a suitable maximum: this would make a colony of from thirty to sixty individuals of all ages, closely corresponding in size and character to the average Eskimo community before the Arctic was disturbed by Europeans. It should be located on the outskirts of a city rather than within it, so that the colonists will have more privacy and freedom of movement; but, what is more important, it should be close to places of education, employment, and entertainment, so that the Eskimos will be forced to merge with the general population, the children with white children in the schools and playgrounds, the adults with white adults who have many of the same interests as themselves and are carrying out similar tasks. As far as possible, too, the education of these colonists should be combined with 'training-on-the job'; and their jobs should be such as will provide them with a comfortable livelihood in any part of Canada, and not relate specifically to the Arctic.

It is regrettable that the government should have quietly buried, in 1956, the well-conceived plan of the Department of National Health and Welfare to

resettle in southern Canada the families of convalescent Eskimos who would never again be fit to endure the hardships of their earlier life in the Arctic (see pp. 96–7). The plan should be revived immediately, for the condition of our Eskimos is too grave to permit unnecessary delay. They urgently need, indeed, not just one colony in southern Canada, but five or six; and even then, unless the colonies are larger than seems to me advisable, they will only drain off the excess 300 persons that the present population is adding to its relief rolls each year. They will not relieve in any way the prevailing unemployment, but merely prevent it from becoming worse. I believe that the best brains the government can muster should be busily planning these colonies, for, unless I am mistaken in anticipating only a slow advance of mining in the north, the Eskimo problem will become more difficult every passing year.

May I myself suggest one small scheme which seems on the surface eminently practical, but needs closer study before it should be taken up in earnest.

At the present time at least a dozen government vessels, several of them icebreakers that maintain lanes of open water for freight ships in the lower St. Lawrence River during the winter months, operate each summer in arctic waters and call at various Eskimo settlements. One of them, the *C. D. Howe*, is now a well-equipped hospital ship that from early July until the end of September services the inhabitants of twenty or more arctic districts. Not one of the vessels, as far as I know, carries a single Eskimo seaman, although most Eskimo youths are able to handle small inboard and outboard motors, and travel considerable distances along the arctic coast each summer in motorized schooners from fifteen to thirty feet long. These youths, accustomed to navigating in ice-strewn waters, offer excellent sailor material which we have totally neglected. Could we not make six or seven of them, together with their families, the nucleus of a small colony in or near Montreal, apprentice them as seamen, and train them on the icebreakers in the St. Lawrence during the winter and in the Arctic during the summer? They could pass spare hours with their families in Montreal, attending special classes in English and other subjects. The same colony might include five or six young Eskimo women who would take the full training course of a nurse or a teacher if they possess the necessary education, and, if not, train for some other work in either northern or southern Canada.[1]

Should this pilot "Eskimo Nautical School" succeed, and its first pupils graduate with credit from their training, as one hopes they would, the government should expand the program as rapidly as possible; for the day may not be far distant when it will need a body of Eskimo seamen and navigators to knit together the scattered settlements in its far north and keep them in contact with

[1]Cf. "The Gronnedal base [in Arsukfjord, S.W. Greenland] differs from other Danish bases in having to be self-supporting in supplies and services. Besides the many duties devolving upon officers and men there has to be military training, and a certain minimum of manpower is required for the defence of the base. A number of young Greenlanders receive about six months' training as volunteers with the base personnel, and on board naval vessels sailing in Greenland waters. They render good service as interpreters and local guides, receiving in return excellent training in the use of small arms, navigation, and practical seamanship, while improving their knowledge of Danish and the Danish way of life in daily contact with the Danish personnel. The Greenland Command is responsible for a wide range of duties, including off-shore and in-shore surveying, fishery protection, inspection of the extensive system of lights and beacons, sea-rescue services, ice reporting, and so on, the work being often carried out under exacting conditions". (Royal Danish Min. Foreign Aff. 1961, p. 187).

the outside world. Even before the convulsion of the late war the traffic in fine furs had ceased to defray the cost of maintaining trading posts throughout the Arctic; and no one can predict with confidence that white-fox furs, which are still the region's principal product, will one day regain their popularity and command their former high prices in the world's luxury markets. Accordingly, we must face the possibility, perhaps indeed the probability, that the Hudson's Bay Company, which virtually monopolized all trade and transport in our far north before the Second World War, will close its outposts there within the next ten or twenty years, as in 1942 it closed the posts it was operating on the Atlantic coast of Labrador north of Hamilton Inlet (see p. 81). If that happens, the federal government will itself have to shoulder the full burden of arctic transport: in its own, or in chartered vessels, it will have to freight north each summer, and distribute to every small settlement, sufficient supplies to maintain the entire population in the Arctic for the succeeding twelve months.

Denmark has trained some of its 30,000 Greenlanders, first cousins of our Eskimos, to handle all the traffic along the coasts of their large island. Would it not pay us to follow the same policy in the Northwest Territories—to train our Eskimos, who are familiar from childhood with the arctic environment, to man and navigate not only the coastal motor-schooners that a few of them already operate, but the large ice-breaking ships and cargo vessels that now ply our northern waters?

The leaders of our Eskimos half a century ago left no successors. They raised up no Winston Churchill to take up a microphone and call to Canadians from coast to coast:

> "Give us the education and the training, give us the opportunity to work, and we, in partnership with you, will build up a new Arctic."

Yet perhaps it was an echo of those never-spoken words that inspired the former Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources to depict the New Arctic which he and his administration were working to create:

> "a region where race lines are unknown, and where the north will be run by its own people, standing on their own feet, and doing the job better than we from the south can do it."

Appendix to Chapter 16

It would be unrealistic to claim that the colonization scheme I have advocated in these last pages—the planting of small Eskimo colonies on the fringes of a dozen or more cities in southern Canada—can ever solve all the economic and social ills of our Arctic. At the best, such colonies can do little more than check the yearly increase of destitute Eskimos in that region, and serve as reception centres and jumping-off places for venturesome kin (few today but likely to increase in number as their education improves) who can marshall the courage and find the means to move out of their poverty stricken homeland and try their fortunes in the richer south. During the last hundred years countless young men and women born and brought up in the Maritimes, impelled by the same

desire to better their fortunes, have used their homes as springboards from which to leap into the expanding labour markets of Ontario and Quebec; they could make the leap quite easily, because it did not plunge them into a social and cultural environment with which they were not already familiar. But if today's Eskimos attempted any large-scale migration to the same provinces they would have to learn, or re-learn, almost everything; and a whole generation seems likely to pass, despite the best efforts of our arctic educationalists, before they can acquire a command of the English or French language, and a background of knowledge and experience, in any way comparable to that of their fellow-citizens in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Is there then no method whereby we can speedily give them this background, thus increasing their ability to migrate wherever they wish within the Dominion and be acceptable in the labour market? Could we find such a method, we might rescue a part at least of the present generation of Eskimos from the misery that now engulfs them.

We cannot plead that because they have always lived in a unique and very difficult environment, their economic and social condition must necessarily remain unique and depressed into an indefinite future. Their condition is not unique even now. On the contrary, it closely resembles the condition of our Indians and métis in northern Canada. More significant still, it resembles that of a considerable body of white people, both old and young, who through mental retardation, or inadequate education and training, have been unable to secure or hold even semi-skilled jobs, but seem doomed to remain for the sum of their days mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for a civilization that is becoming each year more mechanized.

Everyone will agree that labouring jobs, humble though they may be, are never dishonourable or degrading, and that a poor, unskilled workman is often more contented than a prosperous artisan, a well-to-do merchant, or a rich industrialist. But machinery is fast displacing many of the old "pick-and-shovel" occupations because it can do the same jobs more quickly, and at lower cost. In common with some other countries, therefore, North America is suffering today from a surplus of ignorant, unskilled labourers and a shortage of trained workers and technicians. It is the ill-educated, unskilled labourers who lose their jobs first whenever automation expands, or industry heads for a slump. And unemployment is not only costly, but breeds numerous social evils and great unhappiness.

Many unskilled labourers, of course, especially those between the ages of 18 and 35, can be retrained; and it is to promote the retraining of older workers, as well as the training of young ones just entering the labour field, that Canada is pushing ahead with the building of more and more technical and vocational-training schools. Unfortunately a large percentage of our unskilled workers cannot enter these schools because they lack the necessary education. They are men who drifted through the elementary schools as far as the sixth or perhaps the eighth grade because this was compulsory; but the lessons in the classrooms failed to interest them, and lacking any real comprehension of the world and its demands, they gladly shook the school dust off their feet as soon as their sixteenth birthdays released them from further attendance and allowed them to accept the first paid jobs that were offered them. Within two or three years large numbers repented and would cheerfully have resumed their

schooling, or at least trained for specialized tasks that would offer higher pay and securer employment; but by then it was too late. Opportunity seldom knocks on the same door twice, and even care-free adolescents whose days should be filled with laughter must earnestly prepare for the years that lie ahead of them.

Our Eskimos fall into the same category as these ill-educated and untrained whites; and they present virtually the same problems, aggravated in their case, however, by their fragmentary knowledge of English or French, which effectively blocks their searching for work in other parts of Canada, and by the great scarcity of jobs in the Arctic itself. Surely, then, it is our responsibility to devise a training program that will fit both races, and also the northern Indians and the métis who share the same disabilities—a program that will combine work with training and heal a dangerously cancerous spot in our national life.

Military authorities have operated programs of this character ever since the First World War: they have provided technical instruction for recruits, and set up special colleges for officers. In addition, they have organized cadet units for the military training of boys too young to enlist in the armed services. Some totalitarian countries have gone much further. Profiting by the innate idealism of youth, they have conscripted it for such non-military tasks of national importance as the building of roads and irrigation ditches, even the erection of new industrial cities, e.g. Komsomolsk in eastern Siberia. Both they and the democratic countries have purposely stationed conscripts in regions remote from their homes, and mingled in the same units recruits of varying racial origins and speech, in order to break down regional and other differences that obstruct national unity. It is by these means, and by enforcing a uniform educational system, that the Soviet Union is welding together her European Slavs and the Mongoloid and Turkish peoples of Siberia; that Israel is blending the discrete Jewish elements in her population, and the armed services of the United States are strengthening the desegregation tide that is beginning to sweep over this continent.

If we permit our military authorities, for reasons of national security, to invade the field of education so deeply, then surely in the interests of the national economy we should welcome the closest collaboration between labour and education in redeeming a large but imperfectly trained segment of our working population and equipping it to contribute more fully to the general welfare. Would it not be worth our while to study some program of this nature:

National program for training ill-educated youths

1. By agreement between the federal government and the provinces, raise the terminal age of compulsory education from 16 to 18 years.
2. Classify all pupils of age 16 who have not passed beyond grade 8 into three categories:
   A. Those who are qualified and wish to continue their academic studies, obtain their matriculation, and proceed perhaps to college or university.
   B. Those who have no desire to continue their academic studies, but wish and are qualified to proceed to technical schools that will train them for skilled trades or professions.
   C. Those who show no aptitude for, or interest in, any studies, but desire to leave school for good.

Categories A and B we may leave to professional educationalists, who are devoting considerable attention to them. Let us concentrate on Category C, the youths who are being neglected and allowed to drift without guidance.

Into this category fall many white children of retarded mentalities or from poor environments. It embraces also many children who are not interested in the usual school studies and make very poor progress in their classes, but who possess, nonetheless, special capabilities not fostered by our school system. It should include, too, nearly all our Eskimos and northern Indians, whose knowledge of English or French is today so defective that it handicaps them for any further education or for employment outside their own homelands.

For the present we might release Category C girls of age sixteen from further compulsory school-attendance, pending studies of how their problem is being handled in other countries, e.g. Norway.

Category C boys

(a) All boys in Category C should be reviewed individually. Those who come from farming families and wish to return to their farms might be released from further schooling. With them might be released certain others who could furnish satisfactory reasons.

(b) All other boys might be enrolled in "Labour Units" or "Battalions" and trained for two years in the discipline of labour, and the responsibilities of citizenship, on such public projects as road-making, forest conservation, park management, construction work of various kinds, etc. A certain number might be apprenticed for training to accredited public utility corporations such as the Bell Telephone Company and Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission. Whenever possible, the boys should live in private homes, not barracks, and should report each morning to their units or places of work; and they should receive a regular wage.

(c) Service in the "units" should combine physical labour with compulsory educational programs, some of them "on the job", others in special classes organized and supervised by the educational authorities. The programs should be as broad and flexible as possible, aiming to discover and develop each boy's special interests and aptitudes in the light of the jobs that are likely to be available when his apprenticeship ends.

(d) At the end of the first year a board should review each boy's record and recommend such changes in his work and educational program as might benefit him. On its recommendation he might be released from his second year of cadetship and helped to find a permanent job or resume his regular education.

Special program for Eskimo youths

It would require several years to work out the details of any national scheme such as I have outlined, to reach agreement with the provinces (if indeed agreement proved possible), and to set up the necessary machinery. In the Northwest Territories, however, it should be feasible to organize very quickly an Eskimo program that would seek a similar though less ambitious goal, because in that region the federal government alone carries the responsibility for the education of Eskimos and Indians, and for those two races can lay down whatever regulations it considers desirable. A purely Northwest Territories program, of course, would differ greatly from a national one. It would not include legislation raising the school age from 16 to 18, because the white residents of the Territories would strongly object to so radical a change unless it was statutory throughout the whole Dominion, and to frame such a regulation for Eskimos (or Indians) alone would discriminate against citizens on definitely

racial grounds, a dangerous step backward.[1] The same objection would apply to any regulation conscripting sixteen-year-old Eskimo youths into what I have called "Labour Units". Happily, no conscription would seem necessary, for Eskimo boys who are now leaving school at that age know that under present conditions they will find little chance of steady wage-employment, or be able to support themselves without government aid; and most of them, I believe, will accept any combination of work and training that will set them on their feet for a time and give them equal status with whites. Instead of waiting to be conscripted into "Labour Units" they will gladly volunteer, especially if we provide them with attractive uniforms and undertake that they can still keep in contact with their families in the homeland, even contribute, it may be, to their support. In this connection it is well worth noting that, in the southern United States, increasing numbers of coloured youths, handicapped in civilian life by racial prejudice, are voluntarily enlisting in the regular army, where they can receive training in mechanics, electronics, and other skilled occupations.

Given only the cooperation of three or four government departments we might initiate a program such as that outlined below:

Program for training Eskimo youths

1. Enlist in our armed forces for two years, as volunteer cadets, the majority of the 16-year-old Eskimo boys whom our schools are now casting adrift, and train them for two tasks, the defence of the far north and its development. They should receive a daily wage large enough to permit them to contribute a percentage to the support of their families.

2. The army might train one contingent of them in reconnaissance work, teach them to operate and repair radios, both sending and receiving, to install simple electrical apparatus, to repair diesel and gasoline engines, etc.

The navy might train another contingent in seamanship, giving special emphasis to ice navigation, perhaps too in machine-shop work.

The air force might use a third contingent in survival exercises, instruct them in the management of airfields and the care of aircraft and aircraft engines, etc.

3. The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources might undertake the more formal education of the cadets in such subjects as English, simple mathematics, and elementary science.

The Department of Mines and Technical Surveys might instruct a small number in mineral prospecting.

The Meteorological Service of the Department of Transport might train a certain number to read the instruments at weather stations.

4. At the end of their service boys who had made outstanding progress might be earmarked for definite jobs, preferably in the far north, and given special training. A certain number might enlist in the regular army, the navy, and the air force. The rest, if no work could be found for them, might be returned to their homes.

A program of this nature would demand no new administrative machinery; nor would it interfere with the educational system that the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources now operates in the Arctic. It would merely expand the vocational training part of that system by combining it with a program for strengthening the defence of our far north, in much the same manner as the United States strengthened the defences of northern Alaska during the Korean War (see pp. 156–7). Furthermore, it would have the

[1]Our Eskimo and Indian citizens, in Canada as in the United States, present socio-economic problems, but not racial ones; and we deliberately blind ourselves when we inject racial questions into their administration.

merit of speeding up the training of the Eskimos to take over most of the administrative posts in the Arctic, and the skilled and semi-skilled jobs, now being filled by whites from southern Canada, thus substantially reducing the unemployment that prevails in the north today and the government's mounting expenses for straight relief.

I should enter perhaps one caution. The Eskimo program I have just outlined should be considered a purely temporary one, designed to meet what is already an emergency. As a long-term scheme it contains serious defects. The main one, perhaps, is the leading role assigned to the Department of National Defence, for Canadians are not a military-minded people, or hold the opinion that a military outlook and military discipline offer the best preparation for civilian life. My scheme gives the leading role to the military only because the emergency is already pressing, and the Department of National Defence seems to be the only branch of the federal government possessing the ready-made organization and the means to implement the program without delay. I would hope, however, that within a very few years this program would be superseded by a more mature and far-reaching one, drawn up by civilian authorities and administered by a purely civilian staff.

I am indebted to Dr. H. A. Procter, Associate Director of the Medical Services Directorate in the Department of National Health and Welfare, for his criticism of another defect in the scheme as now outlined, particularly in its paragraph (4). He writes:

> "While I can readily see the merits of the 'Training Unit' proposal, there is the 'kiss of death' in the very last sentence. There simply must be something other than the repatriation of the culls. There could be nothing crueller than to teach a vision of a better way and then deny the bridge across."

The criticism is valid. Until the Arctic becomes a sanatorium for individuals who can contribute nothing more of value to the human race, it should not be made a haven for voluntary or involuntary idlers living off the public purse, as are an increasing number of our Eskimos today. Theoretically, all Eskimos not usefully employed in the north today should be brought out, or at least enabled to come out.

But is this practicable at the present moment? It would bring great unhappiness to old and middle-aged Eskimos who cannot speak English, know little or nothing of our way of life, and would be totally unemployable in our southern environment. Yet if we keep that generation in the Arctic, some younger Eskimos must stay also to take care of them. I would suggest, therefore, that *for a period* the "culls" from the younger Eskimos whom we have tried to train in the south be repatriated to their people, where they can at least help to support their elders. As soon as we have established a few Eskimo colonies in the south, however, the older and less adaptable Eskimos should be able to come south and find homes in them.

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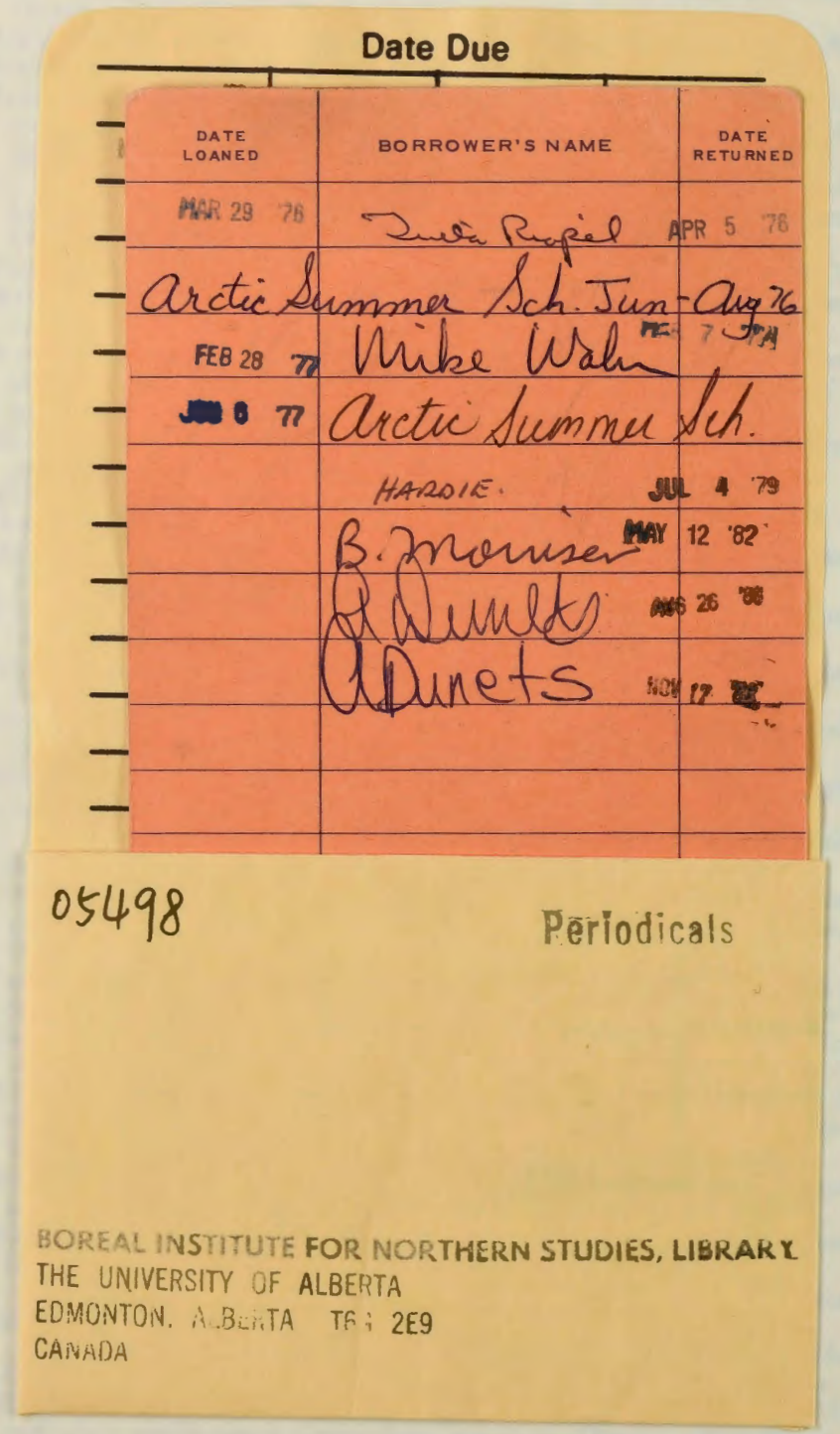

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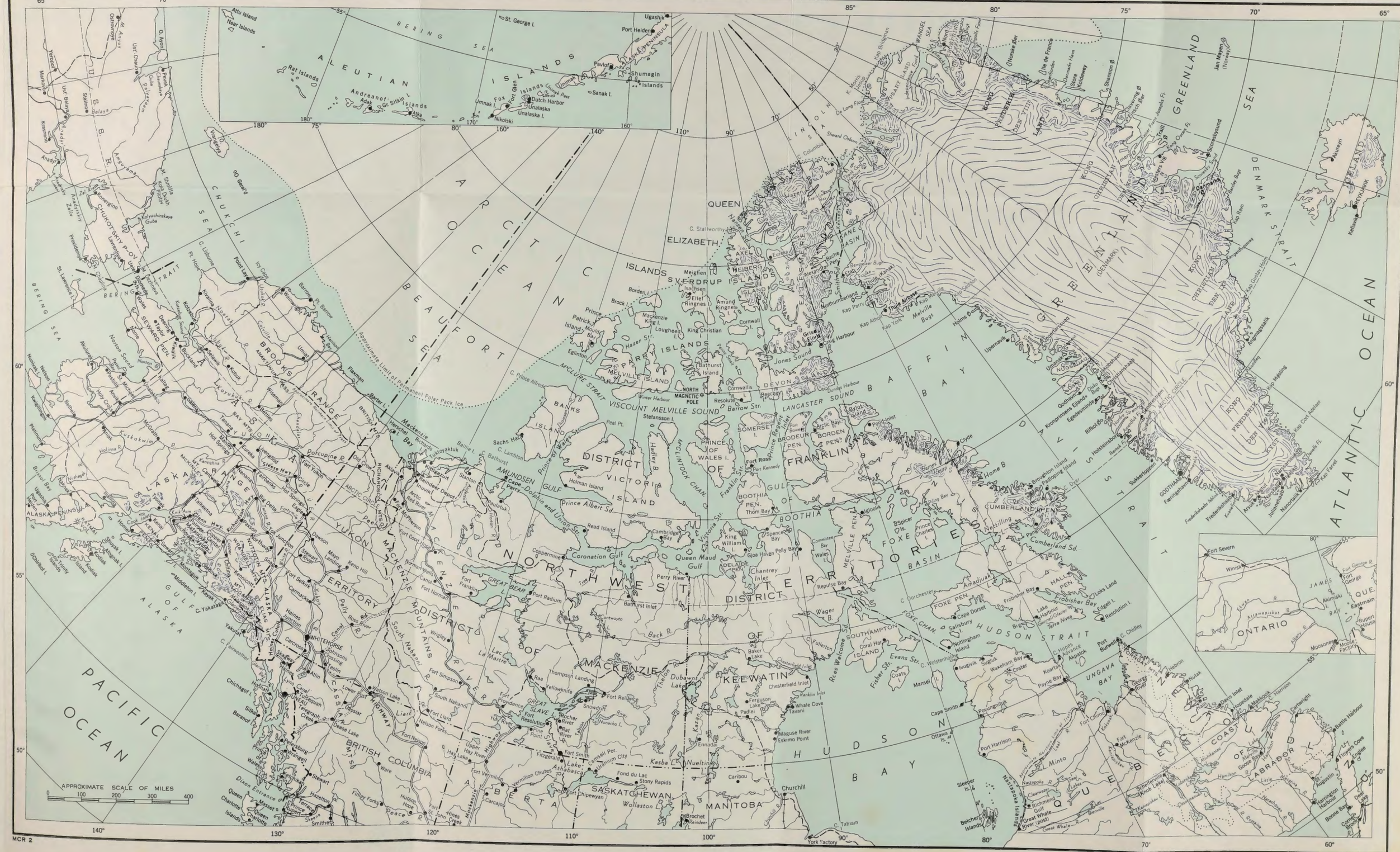

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