Eskimo Housing As Planned Culture Change

by D.K. Thomas
and C.T. Thompson

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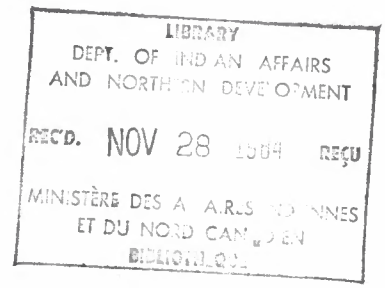

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This report was prepared when the authors were employed by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department.

Requests for copies of this report should be addressed to the Chief, Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Issued under the authority of
the Honourable Jean Chrétien,
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ABSTRACT

This report is a critique of the assumptions and implementation of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's programs for the provision of housing for Eskimos. A brief background of these programs is given. Subsequent emphasis is on those aspects of the programs which constitute planned social change. The adult education program associated with housing, the design of the housing, and the mechanisms for local control of the programs and their role in promoting self-government are discussed. In conclusion, a series of questions is posed with regard to apparent inconsistencies in government actions and objectives.

PREFACE

Fieldwork by Miss Thomas was conducted in 1970 in Broughton Island (3 months) and Frobisher Bay (4 months).

Fieldwork by Mr. Thompson was conducted between 1967 and 1969 in Pangnirtung (2 weeks), Frobisher Bay (1 month), Baker Lake (5 months) and Cape Dorset (3 months).

While this report was being prepared for publication, many responsibilities were being transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories. In view of these continuing changes, the authors have not attempted to distinguish between Federal and Territorial responsibilities in the areas under review, notably housing and adult education. Such distinctions would be confusing to the reader, and in any case they probably would have been outdated before publication. Unless otherwise specified, references to government responsibilities and actions will refer to the collective efforts of government at both the Federal and Territorial levels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, citizens of the technologically successful nations became aware of the smallness of the world and the necessity for responsibility to people who had not previously participated in the development of science. Canadian awareness of the indigenous people in the North developed rapidly during this period and government has attempted to draw these people into the overall Canadian society by embarking upon massive and ambitious programs of education, housing, and health.

The housing program initiated by the Canadian government is of particular interest since it is one of the most ambitious programs of its kind undertaken by any government. It can be looked upon as part of a massive effort to acculturate a people who have lived by entirely different values, into the mainstream of Canadian society.

Administrators saw this program as a strategic opportunity for Eskimo people to gain experience in new forms of social organization necessitated by settlement living and the influences of modernization. For these reasons, the housing program was selected as a focus of study in attempting to analyse some of the problems inherent in the administration of policies relating to human development in the Canadian north.

Health and Housing

Eskimo housing until 1959 can largely be classified as "temporary", whether located at hunting camps or trading posts. In either case, individual families had been free to choose where and when they would camp, and with whom. Traditional Eskimo housing included a variety of types, among them sod houses, skin tents, and snow houses. Although the latter is most often associated with Eskimos, it is not considered to have been the most widespread type and some groups may not have been at all familiar with it. In Alaska and Greenland, sod houses built well into the terrain were more common in winter. Skins were used for summer dwellings. Driftwood was incorporated into the houses in the western Arctic, and in the east the Thule Eskimos used whalebone to frame their dwellings. An important disadvantage of most traditional types of habitation were their small size. Cramped quarters meant that diseases introduced by the whalers, traders and explorers could spread quickly and easily, thereby infecting, and sometimes killing, entire communities. In 1902-03, for example, the entire Sadlirmiut population on Southampton Island was wiped out by disease introduced by the whalers.

After World War II when the Canadian government turned more of its attention to northern development, the high incidence of respiratory diseases, most notably tuberculosis, and the high infant mortality rate became matters of national concern. The costs of medical treatment were extremely high, particularly when many "cured" patients were returned to their families only to be re-infected. The government, by assuming a connection between quality of housing and the incidence of tuberculosis, could hope to lower medical costs only by improving the living

standards of the native population. In 1960, the Department of National Health and Welfare published "Eskimo Mortality and Housing", a report composed primarily of photographs which gave conclusive evidence of the need for improved housing in the North. In short, better health was clearly linked to better housing.

Early Efforts to Provide Better Housing

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development began its first housing program for Eskimos in 1959. Eskimo families with the financial capability were encouraged to buy houses, and those families who were indigent were provided welfare housing. Houses were bought by the Department and re-sold to the Eskimos. However, as the re-sale program progressed many problems became evident, the two most important being the cost of the houses themselves, and the high cost of heating them during the winter months. Consequently, most buyers fell behind in their payments or made none at all. The small size of the units also proved to be unsatisfactory, for this meant the perpetuation of many of the health and overcrowding problems that the houses were intended to alleviate.

By 1965 over 800 Eskimo families had indicated an interest in purchasing homes by signing agreements to do so; indeed, some families had completed payments on their homes and had re-sold the smaller units in order to buy larger houses. Small groups of Eskimo families in Frobisher Bay and Inuvik had organized co-operative groups which acted together to buy housing. However, ninety percent of those Eskimo families who had agreed to buy housing had fallen behind in their payments and fifty percent of the families had made only one small payment; in effect, the majority of the houses were not being purchased. When taking into consideration the economic circumstances of most Eskimo families, those who could purchase housing could only afford the smallest house of 280 square feet, which was all too often insufficient for their family size. In summary, government policy, no matter how well-meaning, was changing the form but not solving the problems of sub-standard housing in the North. The houses were too small, the sanitation facilities were inadequate, construction materials did not hold up well over a number of years, the houses were inadequately heated, and when health factors were taken into consideration the units were not a significant improvement over previous housing.

The Rental Program

In 1962, the Housing Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development proposed new housing based on a rental scheme scaled to real income[1]; the house types included one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units. By 1965, a program was developed which found the government in the role of landlord heading a massive rental housing program which was implemented in the summer of 1966 and which still continues on a crash-building basis. The new houses[2] are substantially larger (700 sq. ft. of living area), have three separate bedrooms and a general living and kitchen area. Welfare housing is included in the rental program.

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[1] *See* C.T. Thompson, *Patterns of Housekeeping in Two Eskimo Settlements*, NSRG-69-1 for complete administrative details.

[2] *See* Thompson (1969) for examples of house designs.

Education for Housekeeping

To introduce this new rental housing program, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development simultaneously embarked upon a massive adult education program. One objective was to teach Eskimo families the do's and don'ts of renting a house, acquainting them with some of the legal aspects of leasing, and with the responsibilities of tenants in caring for rented property. The education program also offered instruction in budgeting a seasonal income, achieving a balanced diet, homemaking (according to "outside" standards), child care, and community co-operation.

The education program concerned with the responsibilities of tenants has been planned in four stages:

(1) instruction during the period before the family moves into the new house;

(2) instruction during the period after the family has moved in;

(3) instruction prior to assuming administrative responsibility for house rental and maintenance, through formation of a local tenant's association;

(4) continuing education geared to the local situation.

It is not surprising that there have been difficulties in implementing the housing and housing education programs. We suggest that some problems of implementation are primarily due to lack of knowledge concerning Eskimo people and their reactions to government's social and welfare programs. Rapid cultural change through imposition of a "crash" program has been attempted. This approach can lead to a break-down in the program, with goals not being achieved. The changing of existing cultural patterns is drastically different from the introducing of new traits into existing cultural patterns. The former leads to alienation and anomie, while the latter can benefit both the dispensing and recipient groups.

Summary

Efforts in cultural change and adaptation, such as in housing and housing education programs, need to be analyzed periodically in order to determine whether goals are being reached. It is the purpose of this report to look at these programs and to assess the results. Questions raised include:

(1) Are Eskimos developing an ability to run the housing and education programs by themselves?

(2) Is the program actually producing a "welfare dependent" mentality, as some people fear?

(3) What is government's purpose and direction in implementing these programs?

CHAPTER TWO

TRADITION AND POLICY

The Myth of Change

It is assumed by most administrators and social scientists that traditional Eskimo life patterns are no longer adequate to meet modern day problems. Indeed, to a large extent, programs and policies concerning housing and adult education tend to assume that Eskimos have adopted southern Canadian cultural values. The authors of this paper found that Eskimos have retained many of their traditional cultural traits and that the government's programs would have a greater chance for success if these traditional ways were taken into account. Although material culture among the Eskimos has undergone drastic changes in the twentieth century (i.e. house type, clothing, tools, etc.), the means for utilizing the new material culture and the social values placed upon it have not undergone a concomitant change. This becomes evident to investigators who have lived with Eskimos in the different contexts of camp, settlement, and town. Given the broad goals of government policy, traditional practices can be utilized to reach the policy goals; however, the lack of knowledge concerning traditional values on the part of some administrators often thwarts the effectiveness of related programs.

For purposes of this paper the term "culture" is used to denote those means by which human beings learn to adapt to their environment. When two different cultural groups come into contact, their responses to the same stimuli differ. Moreover, the responses of each can be misunderstood by the other. It is the intent of this paper to look at the implementation of certain government policies, and to attempt an analysis of some of the problems which have occurred because of conflict with Eskimo culture.

New Foods – Old Tastes

Traditionally, the Eskimo woman was the focal point of the household. When setting up a summer camp, it was her responsibility to choose a location for the tent, set it up, and to arrange the interior. Her responsibilities for setting up the winter camp varied with the location and the type of dwelling used. The wife also controlled the distribution of food. She kept note of obligations to other families in the reciprocal food chain, and managed the distribution of food within the tent to family and guests.

Women were responsible for distributing food, but its acquisition was a male activity. The men were responsible not only for acquiring land food but also for buying provisions after trading posts were established. In many areas, men still retain this responsibility. Adult education classes which are directed primarily to women lose much of their potential effectiveness by not recognizing this. Women are responsible for preparing food, but new foods can more effectively be introduced by working through the men, since it is they who are responsible for most buying. This is not to say that women do not play an increasingly active role in buying for the household, but administrators and education officers should be more aware of the customary responsibilities of each member of the household.

Land foods such as caribou and seal were traditionally eaten as "one-dish meals". Cooking, if any, simply meant that meat was placed in a pot of water and boiled. Other more seasonal foods such as fish or game birds were prepared in the same way. Bannock, pilot biscuits, and tea—three foods which have been part of the Eskimo diet long enough to be considered "traditional"—rounded out most meals. Lack of variety was not a problem, but with the advent of trading posts and more recently "supermarket" type stores, new foods are being inadequately incorporated into customary patterns. Canned and packaged foods are not intended to be single "dishes" in themselves but are meant to complement one another to achieve a balanced diet. The usual practice has been to eat large quantities of one kind of food at a meal, such as meat or fish. Imported products are inadequate when used this way.

Land foods can be eaten raw or cooked, and the lack of a regular meal schedule or cooking routine poses no problems. But new foods requiring special cooking procedures are difficult to adapt to customary eating habits. Few adults can read English, and Eskimos are frequently unable to prepare store products according to package directions. Instead they have learned to use these products through trial and error. Store foods are often regarded as not being "real" foods anyway, and are used in a very casual manner.

The emphasis in "cooking classes" has been on changing eating patterns rather than upon adapting new foods to the traditional practices. Consequently, classroom techniques of baking, frying and preparing multi-dish meals are seldom carried over into the home, and attempts by Eskimo women to incorporate new foods into the family diet continue to fail. Consequently, food values important to maintaining good health are lost. It is imperative that the adult educator accept the idiosyncratic preferences of Eskimos in foods rather than try to impose outside tastes. Land foods, when prepared in the traditional manner, have high nutritional value. When possible, store foods should be used to supplement rather than to replace land food. To the Eskimo woman, cooking usually means boiling, and all her cooking equipment favours this type of preparation. The loosely organized schedule of daily activities in the family also favour this kind of cooking. Some of the recipes given to Eskimo women involve cooking procedures, utensils, seasonings, and time arrangements which are entirely outside their realm of experience and do not conform to time patterns of other family members, or allow for hospitality to be offered to visitors.

The counter argument is that if people are going to adapt to an industrial work and school routine, then it is necessary for people to adapt a regular meal schedule. Yet, trying to force outside standards upon Eskimos could result in the building up of resentment which will effectively block not only the adoption of a new cultural trait (e.g., the schedule of eating) but also the valuable and necessary knowledge of the best uses of new foods on which Eskimos are learning to depend.

Houses for Planners or Houses for People?

With the advent of new housing, and in particular the larger rental houses, almost all of the traditional responsibilities of women in their homes have been abolished. They have nothing to say about the location, construction, or interior arrangement of the houses, and we noted a failure to consult with the people who are the recipients of the program benefits.

The need for housing in the North was perceived by government employees from the South, and solutions to the problem were devised in southern Canada. House models have followed architectural precedents from the southern world, to be built with construction materials imported into the north, and they often show little recognition of Eskimo cultural patterns and values. They have been designed and field tested in Ottawa, apparently by men who have had little experience in Arctic living. Each house type has been placed in the North in large quantities, at high cost, without first determining if it is truly adequate—not only for the climate but for the people. A great many changes have been made in every house type during the last ten years, for each has proved inadequate after having been put into use. Priority has been put upon low capital cost of the units and ease of transportation. Attention has been concentrated not on the long-range costs of replacing inadequate houses which may deteriorate after a few years, but upon the immediate cost of getting shelters in place so that short-range goals are met.

We suggest in future, designers of houses for the Arctic should live for at least a limited period in their houses in an Arctic milieu, while they run tests on the basic design and construction materials for their suitability under Arctic conditions. At the same time, selected families should live in identical experimental models. The designers could then follow the suggestions made by the families before a house model is mass produced.

To be more specific, with such testing it would have been noted that, in the present three-bedroom homes there are no special areas for cutting and storing meat, or for working on machinery such as ski-doo and boat motors that most Eskimos now consider vital to their way of life. Seals are now often stored in the bathtubs, and cut up in the living area; ski-doos are repaired indoors and the dining table is used as a work bench. Specific areas for these jobs could be provided in the houses. This might mean reducing the number of rooms designated as sleeping areas. However, the belief that persons of varying ages and of different sex require separate sleeping areas is a southern Canadian belief and not an Eskimo one[1] within the privacy of the home Eskimos have yet to adopt Canadian standards of bedroom morality concerning sleeping arrangements. Traditional patterns of space utilization are still employed as much as possible and a greater understanding of them on the part of the designers would result in a much different internal separation of rooms for the houses.

Home Economy for Whom?

Persons hired to carry out the adult education program rarely have experience in teaching an adult populace which has had little or no traditions of formal education. The program concentrates most of its efforts upon the feminine population and domestic duties. The home economists deal exclusively with women and rarely gain insight into basic Eskimo family social structure; consequently, they have little opportunity to learn that men are the prime decision-makers in the home.

With the exception of those who have lived exclusively in camps or in very isolated settlements, Eskimo women have had some kind of contact with white women (either missionaries' wives or wives of government officials) who have

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[1] *See* Thompson (1969:39) for details.

attempted to give some sort of instruction in homemaking. The main problem is that there has been little or no co-ordination of these efforts, and each time a white woman has started a program in a settlement she has begun as if no one had ever preceeded her.

When it is necessary to use southern Canadian women as teachers in the home economy programs, they should receive intensive training in Eskimo culture prior to going into a settlement. They should live with an Eskimo family rather than alone, enabling instruction (if it must be called that) to be by example. Formal classes are generally regarded as social outings by Eskimo women, and may not always be taken very seriously. Therefore, it would be advantageous for the home economist to live with as many different families as possible during her stay. But it is best to have Eskimo women do the instructing, so training programs should recruit and train Eskimo women for this purpose whenever possible. An alternative to formal training programs would be for home economists to give on-the-job-training to Eskimo women. Following her training period the Eskimo instructors should be given a senior position instead of continuing as an assistant, as is the current practice. This runs counter to the feeling by many government officials that the Eskimo population really prefers white workers, which we did not find to be the opinion of most Eskimos, particularly the younger ones. Filling such positions with Eskimo women would serve the stated government policy of hiring as many Eskimo workers as possible in positions of responsibility, and probably would help to improve the morale of many young Eskimos who now perceive their career opportunities to be severely limited.

Control by Tenants or Control of Tenants?

In embarking upon a "rental" housing program, the government has placed itself in the unenviable position of landlord for almost every dwelling in the North. In order to shift some of this responsibility away from direct government supervision, the program designers have developed the idea that through an association of the tenants, the people themselves will be responsible for renting and maintaining the dwellings.

In 1965, the Housing Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development recommended that a Housing Authority (which would be elected by the tenant's association) be set up in each community. The authority is to be responsible on behalf of the department for the maintenance of all rental housing within the community. Excepts from the by-laws of the Rental Housing Association read as follows:

General Terms of Reference:

To provide an organization, representative of tenants of Departmental housing in a community, which would undertake on behalf of the Department to carry out all necessary maintenance to Departmental rental housing in that community, to act as representative of the tenants in all negotiations with the tenants, and to assume other responsibilities as negotiated.

Specific Terms of Reference:

(1) The local housing authority would be responsible for the location of rental houses, within the framework of the Departmental site plan for their community.

(2) The local housing authority would be responsible for the allocation of available housing to individual tenants.

(3) The local housing authority would be responsible for providing the Department with future housing requirements for their community.

(4) The local housing authority would be responsible for planning and carrying out all maintenance required on rental houses erected in their community, and in this regard may:

(a) enter into an annual service contract with the Department for the maintenance of rental housing in their community, and receive an accountable advance for the amount of that service contract.

(b) disburse funds for the purchase and/or shipment of material necessary to a maintenance program, payment of legitimate administration costs of a maintenance program, up to the amount provided to them in the annual service contract entered into with the Department.

By-Laws

(I) Membership

(1) Members of the local Housing Authority will be elected for a one year term at an annual meeting of tenants.

(2) Membership of the local Housing Authority will consist of one member for every group of ten rental houses in the community, with a minimum complement of three members and a maximum complement of nine.

(II) Phasing

(1) The development of the local Housing Authority will consist of three phases:

(a) Phase I: In which the Area Administrator for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, or someone nominated by him, will act as appointed chairman of the Authority.

(b) Phase II: In which the Area Administrator for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, or someone nominated by him, will act as secretary to the Authority.

(c) Phase III: In which all officers are elected from the membership of the Housing (Association), and no appointed members serve.

(2) The Phase in which each Housing Authority may be considered will be decided at the annual general meeting of tenants by a two-thirds majority of the tenants present at the meeting.

This excerpt explains the organizational basis of the Housing Authority, the responsibilities it is to assume and the method by which Eskimos are to be educated to administrate. Because the best of policies on paper can be mismanaged in practice, checks have been made periodically on the implementation of the Housing Association and Authority. In a memorandum dated April, 1967, the Branch Housing Co-ordinator of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development stated that he had spent two months perusing the reports submitted by the Phase 1 and 2 education workers in the field. The Phase 2 reports submitted at that time centred around faults in the design and construction of the houses and brought this response:

> We are well aware that any house must have faults and we are equally sure that many members of our staff could make out lists of what they considered wrong with the houses. However, one of the main purposes of the Housing Program is to teach Eskimo people to think for themselves in their new housing environment; to discover for themselves the techniques and skills of using a home to the fullest extent; to correct faults in the houses themselves when possible; to make adjustments to their pattern of living; to enjoy the house and make it comfortable; and last but not least to learn how to get things done by reporting them to the landlord through the housing authority.

The memorandum continued by urging the Phase 2 workers to try to overlook some of the petty faults with which they had filled their reports and suggested that these possibly were based on an ethnocentric point of reference. It was recommended that the workers concentrate on educating the Eskimo people in taking over the administration of duties and maintenance projects themselves. In other words, it was recommended that the Phase 2 workers try to carry out the proposed program according to the policy decided upon.

It is apparent in the excerpts from the By-Laws of the Housing Authority and from the comments made by the former Branch Housing Co-ordinator that the policy advocated by the government is fair, humane and concerned with a long range plan of stimulating the Eskimo people to become self-reliant in their new, imposed cultural environment.

Tenant control of the housing program is a good idea on paper. The local people surely are most familiar with the local conditions and can best decide upon certain basic matters. However, a government official decides when the Housing Authority will have complete control of the local program and can change or veto any decision that the local Authority reaches. It is not the Housing Authority, which represents the people themselves, that will decide when and indeed even *if* they will take over the responsibilities of renting and maintaining the houses. Instead, it is the government which decides these things. Crucial decisions regarding design, furnishings, material for construction, location of buildings, and employment of work crews, are made outside the community.

Members of local housing authorities are often not fully aware of all the regulations to which they are bound. This leads to some discrepancy between the stated policy of allowing the Housing Authority to decide on certain matters, and the actual practice, in which administrators can and do over-rule these decisions. In Frobisher Bay, for example, the Eskimo people feel that their Housing Authority has little or no power, and as a result they are despondent about the value of that

body. They feel that it is useless to make any decisions since their recommendations will be over-ruled by government administrators. Although there is a written manual for the Housing Authority, the elected officers were not aware of its existence. It is apparent that the Authority neither possessed a copy of the manual nor were aware of the significance of written regulations which are so important to the government.

The implementation of the housing program has led to another problem in Eskimo-white relationships. Low cost houses have been provided for Eskimos in an attempt to correlate their living conditions with those of other Canadians. The houses offer benefits to the Eskimos which they previously did not have in their traditional way of life. Eskimos who are old enough to have lived in the former types of dwellings (e.g., snow houses and huts) recognize the benefits. In order to administer the program, skilled workers have been brought up from the south. These persons from the south are accustomed to accommodations more luxurious than the low-cost housing provided for Eskimos; consequently, larger, better-made and better-furnished houses are provided for them. Young Eskimos are not impressed by the comparison of their present houses with former types of Eskimo dwellings, but they are extremely conscious of the differences between "white" and "Eskimo" houses. A potential for stress between the two ethnic groups is thereby established.

Most housing in the north is subsidized. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development subsidizes housing for the indigenous people, and it and other employers, both public and private, subsidize the housing of their imported personnel. Because of the expectations of people from the south, both employer and white personnel are willing to pay higher rents for better housing. This reasoning is understood from the perspective of the whites, but how do Eskimos see it? They see differences in the housing for the two groups of people, with the better houses provided for the whites. When a white person attempts to rent a low cost house (known as an Eskimo house) he is not permitted to do so. This could suggest at least two things to Eskimos: (1) The government has a great deal of control over the lives of people. (2) That outsiders can live only in the better houses. Comments by Eskimos in the settlement where one of the authors had to relinquish tenancy of a low cost house suggested the latter conclusion. The sentiment was that "everyone is the same" and that available housing should be obtainable by anyone. Officers of the Housing Authority in Frobisher Bay stated that they felt that non-Eskimos should be able to rent low-cost houses but that the Housing Authority is powerless to rent to whites.

Frobisher Bay has begun a practice of desegregated housing. Recently, a new apartment building and four blocks of row housing have been made available for both Eskimos and non-Eskimos. Some whites balked at this innovation before the apartments were actually opened for residency, but a few officials in the government and the construction company stood firm and insisted that the apartments be rented to anyone willing and able to pay the higher rent. Consequently, differences in housing have been reduced. To date, the neighborly relationships between the two cultural groups has been smooth, with only a few minor complaints being heard.

Leaders and Followers

It is useful at this point to analyse how discrepancies between policy and its implementation arise. In the traditional Eskimo culture there was little competition

concerning the gaining of knowledge and skills. Traditionally the Eskimos accepted the fact that some individuals were better at doing particular tasks than others. This is indicated in the ethnographic literature, which shows that some men were accepted as better hunters than others, and advice was sought from these men. Being considered best hunter gave prestige to an individual and his family, since he was in a better position to share his larger catches with others in the camp. The same pattern pertained to religious practitioners. Those who were considered to be great shamans wielded power in the community; deference was paid to those who exhibited shamanistic qualities and who wielded their power to advantage. The authors feel that this tendency is still prevalent among Eskimos; children quickly learn which of their peers excel at certain activities, and defer to those who are best at wrestling, jumping or other games. This is also true in the classroom situation. The group as a whole acknowledges excellence in any one individual but will quickly deride him if he attempts to boast of his own abilities. This culture pattern should be recognized whenever the government undertakes to train future leaders in any community.

In the present context of community councils and similar organs of local government, it is apparent to the Eskimo members that the white members excel in administrative expertise. Administrative and organizational phenomena are part of southern Canadian culture, and persons occupying positions of authority are assumed to have some knowledge of legal rights and obligations, and of parliamentary and administrative techniques. Since traditionally an Eskimo would defer to a more capable person, the white official gains power beyond the intention of the policy that is being implemented. Because the white members of local organizations tend to take over the positions of leadership, the Eskimo members fail to benefit from the former's presence. The result is that the southern Canadian continues to administer and the Eskimo continues to be administered. This leads to paternalism, with the Eskimo dependent and possibly even self-deprecatory.

The problems associated with the housing authorities are similar to those of community councils. The latter consists of both Eskimo and white members, and there is a tendency for the Eskimo members to depend upon the suggestions of the white members. Although only Eskimos can be members of a Housing Authority, they become similarly dependent on the white administrator who has *de facto* control over it. This is not always a disadvantage of course, since theoretically the whites can share their experience with the Eskimo members and act as guides and exemplars. On the other hand, there is also the possibility that whites may, in certain cases, manipulate matters to their own advantage.

It is an implicit purpose of the housing authority and the community council to guide Eskimos gradually into a position of being able to govern themselves and to become self-reliant. However, the contrasting aggressive behaviour of the whites and the withdrawing behaviour of the Eskimos (both of which are cultural traits) thwarts the intended policy and instead creates a continuing state of dependency on the part of the Eskimos.

Reciprocity or Welfare?

Traditionally, Eskimos had a social system in which sharing was an important factor. The Arctic is an extreme environment and it was to the advantage of everyone for the people with food and equipment to share with those who were temporarily without. Recipients of largess were socially obligated to reciprocate when they were in a position to do so. This was a cultural mechanism that insured a certain amount of security to everyone. The culture was socialistic in the sense that people were expected to return favours and to share equally within the group. Those who did not participate in the reciprocal network could be ostracized; those who continually acted in the recipient role were chastized in fables. The government is now filling the role of "giver" but does not participate in reciprocity since there is no clear-cut statement or policy concerning what is expected in return. A vague concept of exchange does exist as an extremely abstract idea of citizens returning government aid by becoming self-reliant through education and increased responsibility. Apart from being abstract, it is not clear to Eskimos that this is what they are expected to do in return for the aid that they are receiving. Since Eskimos are and traditionally have been oriented to the present, the southern Canadian ideal that self-reliancy will be assumed by Eskimos sometime in the future holds little meaning. Eskimos are given everything without a chance to return obligations—and are not allowed to assume responsibility in political bodies or in employment. Since the government has not clearly outlined what it expects of the Eskimo people, the potential for reciprocal exchange has not been realized.

The role of government is not clear to either government personnel or to the recipients of the policies and programs. The massive program to help Eskimos was stimulated by an awareness that a group of people in the Canadian north were living a life sub-standard to the conditions experienced by Canadians in the south. This awareness occurred during a period in history when the entire world was recognizing inequalities among nations and groups of people. The Canadian response was a humane one; people needed help and it was provided on a crash basis. The policies behind this aid recommended action that would develop self-reliance among the recipients; however, the philosophy behind the policy sometimes took second place in the course of implementing the programs. Perhaps now is the time for the government to decide more precisely what role it wishes to assume.

Two choices are apparent. Government can either pursue a course which would incorporate the reciprocal traditions of the Eskimos described above, or one which might be described as paternalistic. The first course of action would follow traditional patterns of behaviour in that there would be reciprocal exchange between government agencies and the Eskimo population, and in particular, that there would be some mutual understanding of the obligations incurred by each party. These things can only be effected by local participation in government decision-making. The alternative paternalistic policy fits more precisely into the "welfare-state mentality," in that both change and the responsibility for it originate only with government.

At present, Eskimos are largely denied participation in making decisions and in solving the problems of everyday life. Confidence in knowing that one can solve problems is important as an individual matures and takes his place in adult society. A policy of providing houses, food, and other material necessities tends to exclude

Eskimos from situations where the stress of problem-solving would normally be encountered. The need for problem-solving is not satisfied, and goals are neither set nor achieved. This had led to charges by the Eskimos that they are being "treated like children."

In the Eskimo tradition one is adult as soon as he is married. Marriage means that a person is able to assume the responsibilities of caring for and maintaining a household. There is obviously a conflict if he is treated as a child by the government. The underlying assumption by the government is that time and education are needed before the Eskimo is ready to assume responsibility. But if the Eskimo is treated as a dependent child for much longer, he may lose the capacity to assume the role of an adult. Time and education will not solve all problems. Where possible, real authority should be handed over to Eskimos, and it may be time to replace whites with Eskimos in many administrative positions. The tendency to assume that Eskimos are "not yet ready" results in frustration and alienation. People learn to perform jobs by doing them.

CHAPTER THREE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Prior to 1959 and even during the early 1960s, the government discouraged people from moving into settlements. However, the new housing program actively encouraged people to do the opposite. Reasons behind the new policy are clear: a scattered population is difficult to administer; there is no danger of hardship or starvation if everybody is in settlements (and less danger of criticism by the public or press); health stations can look after the needs of the people easily since nurses do not visit remote hunting camps; it is cheaper to make welfare payments in a settlement than to charter airplanes and hire people to visit such camps. Settlement living, however, is a new experience for almost all but the younger Eskimos. Relatively large populations in concentrated areas are a new phenomenon in the North.

As government policies have become increasingly concerned with health, education, and housing, the population has learned to require or need more of the materials and information being supplied. Traditional Eskimo housing was never large; however, as each new house of southern design has been introduced into the settlements, each has quickly been deemed too small–too small for family size and too small to easily accommodate all the paraphernalia which families have acquired.

Within the space of ten years the government introduced ten different house types into the Arctic. Various educational programs, mostly on an *ad hoc* basis, have accompanied the housing programs. There has been little or no research prior to the introduction of new housing, which could have helped determine the suitability of each model. All the buildings are of southern Canadian design and materials; the education programs, where they exist, are based on southern standards.

From 1959 to 1965, the government encouraged people to buy their homes and to develop a "pride of ownership". Since 1965, individuals have been discouraged from building or buying their own homes. With the introduction of the new rental program, which subsidizes not only the rent but also the expense of heat, electricity, and other services, it costs a home owner more for these basic services than it would to if he rented from the government. In other words, renters are subsidized, but home owners are not.

By helping to increase the number of material possessions and by providing housing based upon southern standards of design, the government has, in effect, helped to create a need for larger houses and a greater dependency upon the world market. If the government deems it desirable to create these needs in the North then it follows that the government should undertake programs which will support and supply the needs. This means greater subsidies in fuel, food, education, transportation and wage opportunities.

From the foregoing statements and from the text of this report it is seen that government has been somewhat inconsistent in its administration. Eskimos were encouraged not to live in settlements, then later encouraged to do the opposite. They were encouraged to buy their own homes, then encouraged to rent them. They are told that they are to govern themselves in political bodies organized for that purpose, then their decisions are overruled. They are told that they must be

educated to perform jobs which are their new and future form of subsistence, but then are largely denied jobs other than those in menial capacities. They are told that they must assume responsibility but are not given adequate opportunity to do so.

The Canadian government commenced the massive program of aiding the Eskimo people in response to a humane realization that there were people within the national borders who were without many of the opportunities considered to be a right of all Canadians. The situation was seen as urgent and crash programs were undertaken without a clear concept of the role the government wished to assume and what role the government wished Eskimos to assume. The government has created a need on the part of the Eskimo for many material items and services associated with the new housing, and contributed to the acceptance of many Euro-Canadian values and ideas. Inconsistency produces confusion on the part of both the government and the Eskimo; the solution requires clarification of the position, the role, and the goals of government.

By forming the following questions (all of which can be argued pro and con) rather than compiling a list of recommendations, the authors hope to induce an effort at clarification of the government's present position.

1. Does government really wish to implement the policies that it has set forth in dealing with Eskimo people? The policies as written are based upon the democratic values held by southern Canadians, but there are problems in implementing them. They are based upon the ideology overtly proclaimed by Canada, but implementation requires a great amount of patience and a constant check to seek out discrepancies.

2. How are administrators selected? Are administrators trained and educated to act in an advisory capacity? Is there a realization that decisions made by Eskimos, even given the best advice, might have a high rate of failure at first? Does the government take this into account when judging an administrator's performance as advisor? The administrator is expected to produce progress reports which "show results" with respect to government programs. Is there a conflict between this expectation on the one hand, and the expectations of his role as an advisor on the other?

3. Is it possible that underlying anxiety within the bureaucracy is a factor in the discrepancy between policy and its implementation? Is anxiety related to the hesitancy on the part of bureaucrats to assume responsibility and to make independent decisions? Within large bureaucratic systems, anxiety is a built-in element produced by the assessment of an employee's worth in terms of his quantifiable achievements rather than the quality of his individual performance. What is the effect of this tendency upon Eskimos? How do Eskimos interpret the apparent inconsistencies between policy and its implementation?

4. What is the policy concerning the recruitment of Eskimos for administrative positions? Most responsible administrative and clerical positions are filled by people from the south. Is this practice justified by the rationale that local people are incapable of handling these jobs? Many Eskimos are sent south to school yet those who complete their courses are often placed in positions where they remain with little hope of promotion. To what extent does concern for job security by whites perpetuate this practice?

5. How greatly do the myths of "noble savage" and "natives as children" affect the attitudes of administrators? The authors suggest that these myths, which were thematic in social thought at the time of European expansion into North America, are still prevalent. The retention of the "noble savage" myth is evident in nostalgia for the unique way of life of the traditional Eskimo. Does this romantic tendency hinder acceptance of the realities of the contemporary Eskimo? The second theme is retained in statements such as "Eskimos are not yet ready to assume responsibility". Criteria of maturity differ among cultures and the behaviour of those entering a new culture may be misinterpreted as being childish. Are administrators aware that whites can appear childlike when operating in the Eskimo cultural milieu?

6. Does the government wish to assimilate Eskimos into the general Canadian society, or does it wish to permit acculturation to proceed on Eskimo terms? In other words, are Eskimos to be moulded into middle-class Canadians or is an alternative desirable? Government is obviously indecisive about the future role of Eskimos. Education programs are geared to jobs in southern Canada while policy is directed toward Eskimo self-reliance in northern settlements. Should not the Eskimos have a voice in the matter?

7. Since the government has not clearly outlined what it expects of the Eskimo people, how can the potential for reciprocal exchange be realized?

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