northern co-ordination and research centre department of northern affairs and national resources

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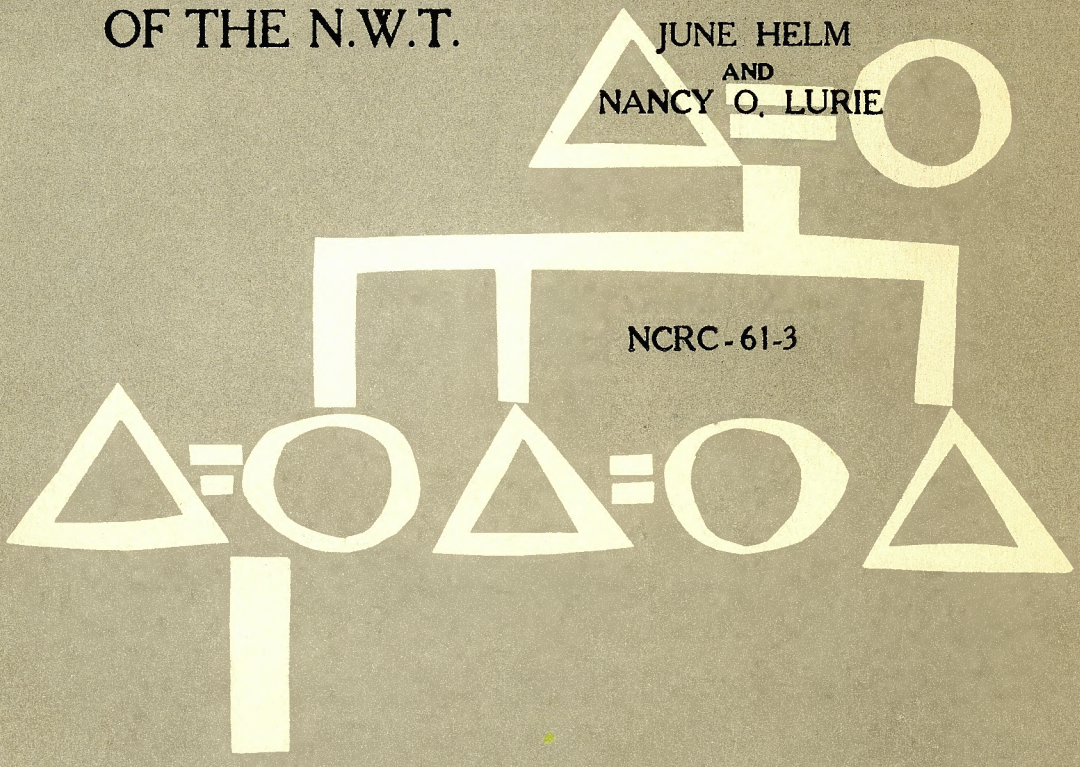

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THE SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY OF THE DOGRIB INDIANS OF LAC LA MARTRE IN THE MACKENZIE DISTRICT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

By

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and
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PREFACE

The field work comprised a four month period from August to December of 1959. We were fortunate in having available for residence at Lac la Martre the "old teacherage", of which we were able to insulate one room effectively enough to heat with a small stove and thus to serve as living quarters. Our greatest fortune, however, was in finding Lac la Martre a friendly and helpful community. It is a pleasure to do field work when your dominant reaction to your informants, many of whom struggled valiantly across the language barrier to help us, is one of friendship and affection. The reader familiar with the community of Lac la Martre will find that pseudonyms for its citizens have been used throughout. We feel that a surface anonymity is the least we can give the members of Lac la Martre in return for the tolerance and trust they showed the "molas". We in turn must trust that fellow-"molas" capable of identifying real personages in our account will handle that knowledge with circumspection, and forego using it to cause any embarrassment or upset to real persons.

We also received much friendly help from non-native northerners, in both official and private capacities. Some specific acknowledgements are given in the text. We would like to express our appreciation to Mr. John McGilp of Indian Affairs, Miss Mildred Crawley and Mr. A. Boxer of Northern Affairs, Mr. and Mrs. Rudi Benning, Mr. Fred Weihmann and Mr. John Laurenzon of Yellowknife, Dr. Joanna Pyper, medical officer at Fort Rae, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Stevens of the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Rae, Fathers Amerous and Pochat-Catilloux of St. Michael's Mission, Fort Rae, Mr. K. T. Robson, teacher at Lac la Martre, and Mrs. Robson, the several bush pilots flying into Lac la Martre who were so consistently thoughtful in bringing our mail, and the many other persons who by their hospitality and thoughtfulness contributed to the ease and enjoyment of our stay in the north.

NOTES ON ORTHOGRAPHY OF NATIVE TERMS

The orthography employed is only a crude working system, not based on linguistic analysis of the Dogrib dialect. (See also footnote on page 48.

Consonants - The symbols used have roughly the same values as in English, except for the following:

c = as in "chin." This sound appears to be a variant of ts in Dogrib.

g = as in i^ngu a voiced palatal fricative, as in Spanish "fuego".

h = breathy sound

j = as in "jack". Varient of dz (as in "adz").

ɬ = unvoiced l

ɳ = as in teici^n nasalization of preceding vowel, as in French.

q = roughly as in Scottish "och!"

r = a 'flap' r

x = an unvoiced palatal fricative, roughly as in German "ich".

' and/or ? = glottal stop

Vowels - The English equivalents given are only approximate.

ɛ = as in "pet"

e = as in "pate"

I = as in "pit"

i = as in "peat"

a = as in "pot"

ɔ = as in "law"

o = as in "low" (More nearly approximated in French "mot")

u = as in "loot" (More nearly approximated in French "lieu")

. = extra length in preceding vowel

Pitch, which is probably phonemic in Dogrib, has not been included in the transcriptions.

PART I

THE COMMUNITY OF LAC LA MARTRE

CHAPTER I

THE DOGRIB INDIANS AND THEIR CONGENERS

The Northern Athabascans

The Dogrib Indians are one branch, distinguished on the basis of territory and dialect, of the great linguistic family of Athabascan speakers. Outliers of this family include the Navaho and Apache Indians of the southwestern United States and scattered groups along the Pacific Coast of North America. The greatest land area occupied by the Athabascans, or Dene, however, is the interior northwest of the continent. The native Indian population of northern Alberta and British Columbia, interior Alaska, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are Athabascan speakers. Jenness (1932) made a cultural division of these Northern Athabascans into two major segments, tribes of the Cordillera and the tribes of the Yukon and Mackenzie Basins. Osgood (1936) later presented a revised classification, one generally followed today, of the Northern Athabascans into those of the Pacific Drainage Culture and those of the Arctic Drainage Culture. The Dogribs are included in the latter category. The Athabascans speakers that are territorially contiguous to the Dogribs also fall into this category, and are the Yellowknife, Chipewyan, Slave, Hare, and Bear Lake Indians. The basis on which Osgood made this primary cultural division between the various Northern Athabascan groups is summarized by him as follows:

> There is generally among the groups of the Pacific drainage a dependence on salmon, which is entirely lacking among those of the Arctic drainage. With salmon fishing goes an elaborate complex of traits connected with the catching and use of this fish. A consideration of the types of shelter over the whole area brings to light a marked development of stable forms among the Pacific group in contrast to the more temporary forms of the other. This in itself may suggest the more sedentary social life of the Pacific division, in which we find also the unilateral kinship system as typical, a system as generally lacking among the Arctic group. Perhaps nothing stands out as sharply as the ceremonial life, including arts and games, in comparing the Pacific west with the Arctic east. In fact, the situation may be summed up by the statement that a consideration of over five hundred traits shows a generally decreasing complexity in the culture of the Northern Athabascans from west to east with a sharply distinctive break between the relatively rich culture of the Pacific Drainage peoples and the essentially simple patterns of behaviour of the aborigines of the Arctic east. (Osgood 1936:21)

The Dogribs and their neighbours are scattered thinly over the taiga, aboriginally maintaining a precarious survival in this sub-arctic forest of spruce, willow, birch and muskeg by hunting, snaring and fishing. They seasonally exploited the faunal resources of the barren grounds either when they ventured out into the barrens after the caribou or when the caribou moved within the woods in the course of their annual migrations. All the groups cited except the Slavey might be described as "edge of the woods" peoples, occupying land, from the region of Lake Athabaska to the upper Anderson River above the Arctic Circle, contiguous to the barrens and dependent upon its caribou, but with their over-all way of life oriented toward the taiga rather than the tundra.

The Dogrib Indians

The Dogribs within historic times have occupied the country between Great Slave and Bear Lakes. Their exploitative range between these lakes runs from the Horn Mountains on the southwest past the upper Coppermine as far as Contwoyta Lake to the northeast. Both Petitot (1891:263) and Osgood (1931:11) have divided them into four regional groups, one of which is the Lac la Martre people, the subject of our study. (See also Chapter II on Lac la Martre history).

A hundred years ago (1858) the Indian population for the Rae district was recorded as 657 individuals (Russell 1893). In 1949 (Leechman, 1953) it was listed at 718. The government band lists in use in 1959 for the "Dogrib Rae Band" yields a count of somewhat over 900 Indians. Since Fort Rae, despite a shift in locale, has been the only trading center in Dogrib territory, these figures are crudely reliable as representing almost all of the Dogrib people. (This is not to deny that resident non-Dogrib Indians are included in the counts, and that a few Dogribs have moved outside the region, mainly to Yellowknife.) A resident Oblate priest states that "since the establishment of the hospital and the presence of a resident doctor" at Rae in recent years "the population has augmented regularly 30 units per year". (Pochat-Catilloux 1959:2).

Rae today still serves as trading post and contact point of the Dogribs with Euro-Canadian institutions and has by far the largest Dogrib population of any settlement. Other major, but much smaller Dogrib settlements are Ptarmigan Point and Trout Rock south of Rae on the shores of Great Slave Lake, Marion Lake village north of Rae at the north end of Marion Lake, until recently the native settlement at the now inoperative Ray Rock mine, and the village of Lac la Martre.

The village of Lac la Martre is an all Indian settlement, except, since the last two years, for a resident White school teacher and his

family. This village is about 40 air miles from Fort Rae and 100 miles from Yellowknife. The summer canoe route between the village and Rae is about 100 miles and the winter dog sled route is about 60.

Dogrib-White Contact

The course of contact between the Dogribs and representatives of Euro-Canadian society follows the pattern general to the north. The earlier White settlements were the trading posts briefly on Lac la Martre and at old Fort Providence half way between the present sites of Yellowknife and Rae. Both were established in 1790. Fur traders were the only resident Whites until 1859 when the first missionary to the Dogribs, an Oblate Father, founded St. Michael's Mission at the old Fort Rae. That fort had been established about nine years before, old Fort Providence having been abandoned, at a locale about 15 miles south of the present Fort Rae.

The site of the present Fort Rae was first occupied by a free trader. By the early years of the present century so many Indians had shifted their residence that the old Fort was abandoned. Since its first establishment Fort Rae has been the main locus of contact between White and Dogrib. In the twentieth century White personnel--previously limited to representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company and the R. C. Mission, plus an occasional free trader--has expanded to include representatives of the R.C.M.P., a now defunct Army Signals post, a hospital staffed by the Grey Nuns of Montreal and a resident physician, teachers for the government school and a game warden and visiting fire ranger.

The fur trade, the church and the government--these have been the classic institutions of culture contact in the north. Other, less enduring and influential contacts have come from the explorers of the nineteenth century (e.g., Richardson 1851: Russell 1898), and in the present century from a few white trappers, prospectors, visiting scientists, and in recent years, miners (at Ray Rock) and government construction crews. (See Robinson 1947 and Pochat-Catilloux 1959 as basic references for this section.)

CHAPTER II

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Physical Community

The village of Lac la Martre (63°08'N, 117°16'W) is situated on a narrow spit of land that extends into a large bay of Lac la Martre. Two miles across this bay to the west, a narrows joins this southeast-most extension of Lac la Martre to the main body of water. A mile to the south of the village, the waters of Lac la Martre enter the la Martre River and, following a great curve, flow into Marion Lake, thence into Great Slave Lake and down the Mackenzie River into the Arctic Ocean.

The village's point of land extends west-southeast into the bay, the top of the bank being about eight feet above the shoreline. The log cabins of the Indians are in a staggered line, facing south away from the north wind and toward the river. The buildings occupying the end of the point, facing in a west and northerly direction are non-native; they comprise, from the tip to the mainland, the game warden's cabin, only rarely occupied, the abandoned "old teacherage", the large one-room schoolhouse, and the new "teacherage" and its warehouse. A well-built log-dock for planes extends into the lake near the teacherage. Within the village area the bush has been cleared, except on the point around the game warden's cabin, where willow bush grows. The government buildings and their allotted land comprise a triangle 375 by 375 by 300 feet. Along the south shore, from the first Indian dwelling to the last is a distance of about 800 feet, with another 275 feet to the warden's cabin. The Indian houses are set back from the shore 70 feet or more. In front of the houses at a midway point stands a large grey painted wooden cross.

Behind the Indian dwellings and overlooking the north-west shore of the spit is a native cemetery. Here there is another wooden cross, surrounded by neatly kept grave plots headed by crosses, usually with rosaries attached, and enclosed by picket fences in the mission style seen throughout the north.

Former Dwelling Sites

In its present composition the village of Lac la Martre is recent. Today it is the only permanent dwelling site on the lake. But until a few years ago the "Marten Lake People" resided in several locales around the shore.

Lac la Martre in its greatest dimensions is about 50 miles long by 35 miles wide, extending from about 63°5' to 63°35' N and 117°8'

to 117°8'W. Its main axis runs northwest-southeast. It is a lake of many islands, most of them in the southern half. At about the middle of the lake is the largest island, "Big Island" (wetłitłondi) about six miles by three at its longest and widest points. The waters off its west shore are said by the Indians to be excellent fishing grounds.

The families and individuals that constitute the "Marten People" have not yet been introduced. But for the later references purposes, family names and present-day household units (designated as HI, HII, HIII, etc.) will be cited in the following survey of former residence locales.

Proceeding up the eastern shore of Lac la Martre from the present village site, a very narrow peninsula of land about eight miles long that extends almost due west into the lake is encountered. (It joins the mainland at about 63°10'N and 117°20'W). On it, about 12 miles in a direct line from the present village are the cabins of Charles Nodaye (HIV) and Chretien Squirrel (HVIII). This locale is called ni^{n}ah and the Squirrel family returns there during the winter months. Charles Nodaye has moved to the present village but still has possessions and, in season, frozen fish stored in his warehouse there. He states that the fishing, especially for whitefish, is excellent at this point. On the east end of an island directly west of the peninsula Hyacinthe Ptarmigan (HVII) had a "fishhouse" (storage house) which burned down about 1956. There is also an abandoned shack of Hyacinthe's on the west end of this island and a third on an island about four miles to the southeast next to the southern shore of the lake.

An island six miles north of the peninsula and about three miles from the mainland is the site, called dow dih, of the abandoned cabin of Achille Ptarmigan (HXIV). It is possible to see the smoke from its chimney from the present village. On another island, zehdah, six miles north-northwest and almost touching the eastern shore of the lake is Benjamin Absolom's (HX) former house. In air miles, this is a little over 14 miles from Lac la Martre village. About half-way up the east side of the lake, on an offshore island northwest of Big Island is the abandoned house site of Gotsunka, deceased father of Billy Gotsunka (HII), a present resident at Lac la Martre.

At the northern point of the lake (about 63°35'N., 118°2'W.) there is an "old time place"--in the days when there was "no candle, no lamp, just fire"--which has been abandoned apparently for several decades. There were five cabins there. The remains of a stone fireplace and chimney are still standing. Two of the former households were identified as those of relatives of present day Marten Lake people (Moses Brun's (HXVI) father's brother and Quentin Tsa's (HXI) father's father's brother.)

On the northern side of the lake, where la Riviere Grandin enters Lac la Martre, there is a former village site. The locale is called (selecting one of several variant pronunciations) egaki^{n}li^{n}. Here many of the present residents of Lac la Martre village formerly lived. The first dwellings, according to Bella Brun, a 73 year old informant, were built there by her grandfather and the grandfather of the present headman Cartier (HIX) before she was born. At one period, there were at least seven family units (those of three brothers--Brun, deceased, Chi (HI), and Absolom (HX)--and also Achille Ptarmigan (HXIV), Bruno Tsa (father of Quentin Tsa HXI), Bruno Tsawo (deceased of HVI), and Firmin Eyakfwo). For many years Brun was the headman of this settlement. The locale is described as a superior place for fishing and for hunting caribou, the latter often crossing the lake at that point. But, about 50 miles farther from Rae than the present village, it was "too far, no tea". In 1954 the several remaining households, including that of Brun the headman, moved to Lac la Martre village. The lure was the proposed establishment of the school. Some of the families brought lumber from their old houses to be used again in building at Lac la Martre.

About 30 miles up the Grandin River from egaki^{n}li^{n} a white trapper formerly had a cabin, and another white trapper had a cabin farther into the Lac Grandin region. Continuing around the lake shore (now moving southwest) about six miles from egaki^{n}li^{n}, there was formerly a 'breed's cabin, and in a bay about eight miles further on, Albert Champlain, a Cree Indian working out of Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie has a trapping cabin.

The rest of the western shore of Lac la Martre has no dwellings, except for a "fishhouse" (for storage of frozen fish) belonging to Louis Ptarmigan (HXIII) at the mouth of the creek draining Weyburn Lake.

Founding of the Present Village

The date of the building of the first cabin at the present Lac la Martre village site is uncertain. Marcel Cartier, one of the two headmen, states that his father's father first settled there. Since that time three dwellings for that family line have been built, two having fallen into disrepair and disuse. The founder was apparently the "Cartier" recorded in the Oblate's records at Fort Rae as having been baptized in 1862 at the age of forty. His grandson says he was from Resolution. This suggests Chipewyan ancestry. (Had he been a metis he probably would have been born of Catholic parents and baptized in infancy). Local tradition has it that he had at one time two wives. In any case, he had numerous children. Some of them and their descendents lived in former times at Lac la Martre but to-day only Marcel, the son of Cartier's youngest son, remains. (Several of Marcel's cousins live in Rae).

At least one other family settled at or near the village with Old Cartier. In the time when "Yezi", father of Marcel Cartier (and Old Cartier's son) was alive and the headman of the village, at least other household lines were resident at the settlement, presumably with permanent dwellings. These households were linked together by ties of kinship.

The Marten Lake Indians as a Regional Group

The preceding survey of dwelling locales around the shore of Lac la Martre has shown that there were formerly two main settlements, the present village at the southerly end of the lake and egaki^{n}li^{n} at the northern, with a few other cabins and storage huts scattered in between. A few households had more than one permanent cabin in different locales. Old Brun, who was for many years until his death headman at egaki^{n}li^{n}, at least twenty-five years ago also had a cabin at the southern settlement. Some families, especially ones established only a few years, might in all likelihood have no log dwelling, living either in tents all the year or doubling up part of the year in the cabin of relatives, making a joint household. This pattern still holds today (infra). Seasonably, movements of entire families from one spot to another on the lake and into the surrounding region was doubtless common.

The Marten Lake Indians as a regional group have long been recognized in the historical literature (Richardson 1859:76, 179; letters of Keith, 1812, on Filthy Lake Indians in Masson 1889-90 II:111-116). In fact, Marten Lake appears very early in the reports, the Northwest Company establishing a trading fort on the lake in 1790, but the purpose was to exploit the trading potential of the peoples along the Mackenzie to the west, rather than to trade with the Marten Lake group per se (Wentzel, in Masson 1889-90 I: 94-5).

Marten Lake in the Dogrib dialect is tsonti, Excrement Lake, its people being tsontigoti^{n}. Of the population of the Marten Lake Indians of several decades ago we can make some surmise, based on notes made in 1911 by an Oblate Father of the Fort Rae Mission. He records seventeen adult males, all of them family heads as established by other Mission records, having "residence habituelle" at Lac la Martre. This suggests almost the same population size as at the present period with eighteen males and two widows as family heads. All of the seventeen family heads noted as Marten Lake Indians in 1911 have one or more lines of kin relationship with the present family units at Lac la Martre. Many of them are fathers and grandfathers of present Marten Lakers. They are presented in Figure 3 (genealogical chart) by a special symbol.

From Mission records and from the statement of contemporary informants some knowledge can be gained of immigration into the Marten Lake area. Since the "tribe" is pretty much of an abstraction in regard to the Northern Athabascan peoples, the definition of the people of the Marten Lake region as a segment of any larger socio-political or cultural entity must remain somewhat vague. The dialect spoken is apparently comparable to that of other Dogrib peoples and in the historical literature they are usually included under the rubric of Dogrib. But there has been, since the earliest days of the fur trade, continual movement of Indians between Lac la Martre and the Mackenzie River. The area immediately adjacent to the Mackenzie on the east has been and is exploited by peoples designated as Slave Indians. To the north, there has been contact with the Bear Lake Indians, and the "Mountain" Indians, the latter presented by Osgood as a distinct group. One regional group, of the Hottah Lake area, is described as mixed Bearlakers and Dogribs (Osgood 1931).

In the 1911 Oblate record, five of the seventeen household heads at Lac la Martre are described either as immigrants from Slavey country or as the sons of Slaveys, four being from the Fort Simpson area and one from the Wrigley area. All of these individuals have direct or collateral descendants today residing at Lac la Martre. In later records one of the elderly women living today in the community is identified as the daughter of the "Bear Lake Chief" of Fort Franklin. Two other women, now dead, were of Slavey extraction. One of these women, from Hay River, has many descendants at Lac la Martre and the Slavey accent is still evident in her sons and even a grandson. At least six other Marten Lake people are recorded as being born, or having emigrated and/or died at Fort Simpson or Wrigley. The putative Chipewyan ancestry of Old Cartier, founder of the village, has already been noted.

The inmarrying of other Dogribs into the Lac la Martre community, and the marrying out or emigration of Marten Lake residents to other Dogrib locales, notably Fort Rae, also occurs, of course, from time to time. This kind of population exchange within a "tribal" region is so continual a part of Northern Athabascan life that it does not merit detailed chronicling here. The general picture today is that individuals tend to change residence from one bush band to another due to marriage. Emigration not directly due to a marriage is ordinarily into the trading fort and population centre, is this case Fort Rae.

As among other Northern Dene, Cuacasoid physical characteristics are evident in some of the Marten Lake people. The putative father of a recent illegitimate birth at Lac la Martre is a White man. But, except perhaps for possible earlier unremembered metis ancestry, White admixture no direct social or cultural significance.

The Composition of the Present Village

Taking December 1, 1959, as a dateline, the total permanent population of the village of Lac la Martre is 110. There are 18 married men and their wives, eight of the latter being past the child-bearing age (assumed here to be 45). There are four widows, all 50 or older, two of whom are household heads. Including one middleaged unmarried woman who had been deserted by her husband, there are 14 unmarried women 16 or more years of age, three of whom each have one illegitimate child. There are ten unmarried males of 16 years or older. Under the age of 16, there are 24 boys and 22 girls. There are 20 family units at Lac la Martre. They are designated in the text and in the Figures by Roman numerals by I through XX.

The family unit is characteristically the nuclear family--a marital pair and their children. But the effective group functioning as a family unit may include certain other relatives or lack one of the marital partners. As stated, the heads of two family units are widows. Two families include widowed grandmothers and two other families include the illegitimate children of unmarried daughters. Three families each have an adopted child in the group, and one family has two, one of these children being the adoption of the adult daughter deserted by her husband. In three families, all the children are young adults, 16 or older.

A household contains at least one family unit, but not all family units are independent households. A household is here defined as a group of individuals living together in the same dwelling who contribute and share in maintenance (e.g., house repairs, firewood supply), provision (e.g., fishing, snaring, hunting), and distribution. By this definition the 20 family units at Lac la Martre on the December 1, 1959, dateline comprised 18 households. One household, HXVIII, had come only within the month to be established separately. Formerly, its family unit was a subsidiary family in the household of the wife's parents, HIII. When that latter household moved into a newly built cabin in November, the young couple remained in the old dwelling to set up their own household. The two remaining dependent family units XIX and XX are attached to Household HXII. In Family XIX with 2 small children, the husband is a son of the parent household. Family XX has an adopted baby from HXVI and is expecting a child; the wife is a daughter of the household in which they live. (Adoptions do not involve any legal transfer; they are simply casual and mutual agreements between the two marital pairs involved.)

Some family-household units, though by our definition technically independent units, are or have been joint or closely allied with other households. HII, for example, has no permanent dwelling. It consists of a young man and his wife in their middle twenties and their two small

children. Their third, and eldest child has been "adopted" by the wife's mother. The family lives the year around in a tent and the husband says he does not intend to build a cabin. The tent is pitched within 30 feet of the new log cabin of the wife's parents. The members of the tent-dwelling family are in and out of the old people's cabin during the day. But, though the general picture is one of close and continued association between the households, strengthened, no doubt by the "adoption" of the young couple's child by the grandparents, maintenance and subsistence activities of the two units are substantially separate. Household XVII, which has just moved from a tent into their first permanent independent dwelling, was formerly a subsidiary of Household VII, the head of which is father to the husband of HXVII.

The existence of family units that are subsidiary or closely allied to an independent household reflects the fact that a couple does not commonly set up a separate residence upon marriage. Rather, they move in with one or the other spouse's parents. There may be the birth of several children before a really separate residence is established.

FIGURE 1

HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR COMPOSITION

House-hold	Family Name	Living Hu	Living Wi	Children and Others Under 16	Over 16 M	Over 16 F	Total	Comments
HI	R. Chi	x	x	1*	1	1	5	*adopted grandson from HII
HII	B. Gotsunka	x	x	2			4	no permanent dwelling: semi-joint household with HI, which see
HIII	L. Nodaye	x	x	3*	1	3	9	*2 illegitimate children by daughters of the household. HIII formerly joint with HXVIII, which see
HIV	C. Nodaye	x	x	2			4	

FIGURE 1 (Continued)

House-hold	Family Name	Living Hu	Living Wi	Children and Others Under 16	Over 16 M	Over 16 F	Total	Comments
HV	M. Nodaye	x	x	1			3	formerly joint household with HXVII, which see
HVI	Widow Tsawo	0	x		1	1*	3	*aged woman, in kin relation of Grandmother and Mother-in-Law to the other two members
HVII	H. Ptarmigan	x	x	1	1	1	5	
HVIII	C. Squirrel	x	x		2	1	5	no permanent dwelling, spend winter in cabin at another site
HIX	M. Cartier	x	x	1*			3	*adopted from the wife's sister (non-resident)
HX	B. Absolom	x*	x	2#	1	1@	6	*hospitalized with TB in Rae; #one child adopted from Rae relatives, other from HXIX; @married but deserted by husband
HXI	Q. Tsa	x	x	4			6	
HXII	Widow Tedzi	0	x	3*	1	2	7	*one illegit child by daughter of household; joint household with XIX and XX

FIGURE I (Continued)

House-hold	Family Name	Living Hu	Living Wi	Children and Others Under 16	Over 16 M	Over 16 F	Total	Comments
HXIII	L. Ptarmigan	x	x	3	1	1	7	
HXIV	A. Ptarmigan	x	x	4	1	3	10	
HXV	L. Nokwi	x	x	4	1*		7	*illegitimate, age uncertain
HXVI	M. Brun	x	x	4*		1#	7	*infant, not recorded here, adopted by HXX; #widowed mother of Husband
	New households formed during field period							
HXVII	R. Ptarmigan	x	x	6			8	formerly tent dwellers, forming semi-joint household with HVII (father of Hu) and HV (WiHuBr)
HXVIII	J. Tedzi	x	x	2			4	remain in old cabin of HIII as HIII moves to new house
	Family Units that are potentially new households							
XIX	M. Tedzi	x	x	2*			4	joint with HXII; *one child adopted into HX, which see
XX	J. Ptarmigan	x	x	1*			3	joint with HXII; *child adopted from HXVI

Primary Relative Links Between Families

The family units of Lac la Martre are woven together by a web of kin relationships. There is no family at Lac la Martre that does not have, through the husband, the wife, or both, at least one primary relative in another family unit. Primary relatives are "those who belong to the same nuclear family as a particular person--his father, mother, sisters, and brothers in his family of orientation, and his husband or wife, his sons, and his daughters in his family of procreation" (Murdock 1949:94). Figure 2 illustrates the number and kind of primary relative ties between each family unit of Lac la Martre. For the 20 family units we find 72 primary relative links, or 36 paired bonds. The number of primary ties per family unit ranges from one to six: four family units have only one primary tie to another family within the community, two families have ties with two other families, two families have ties with three other families, five family units are linked through primary relatives to four other families, four families have ties with five other families, and three families are similarly linked to six other family units. The mean number of primary relative links between family units falls at 3.6, the mode and the median being 4. (Recent adoptions from one family to another are omitted). Twelve of the paired relationships are of parent to child and vice versa, and 24 are between siblings.

In three of the four cases where a family unit has only one primary relative tie to another unit, that tie is through the wife. The head of Household VIII was not born in the Lac la Martre region, but had as his first wife the sister of the heads of Households VII, XIII, and XIV. His second wife is sister to the wife of Household X. (These women are not native to Lac la Martre). In the other two cases, the household heads are native Marten Lakers, but their parents are dead and their siblings have married outside the community and moved away. Both of these men married Lac la Martre women and stayed on in close affiliation with the wife's family of orientation. Household IX is the one family in which the single link is through the husband, the wife being from the Marion Lake settlement. The household head is L. Cartier who has for many years been headman at the Lac la Martre settlement as was his father before him. His grandfather founded the settlement. Some of the other descendents of the founder also continued to live at Lac la Martre.

The other family units of the community, with primary links to two or more other families, are linked through both the husband and the wife, with the following exceptions: in HVI and HXII there is no husband, being deceased, and former linkages through the husband during his lifetime are not counted here; the wife of HXVII is from Rae and has no relatives in the community; the wife of HXVI is also from Rae, but the

husband's widowed mother, who is a household member, is sister to the wife of HI, providing a primary link to that family unit.

Kinship

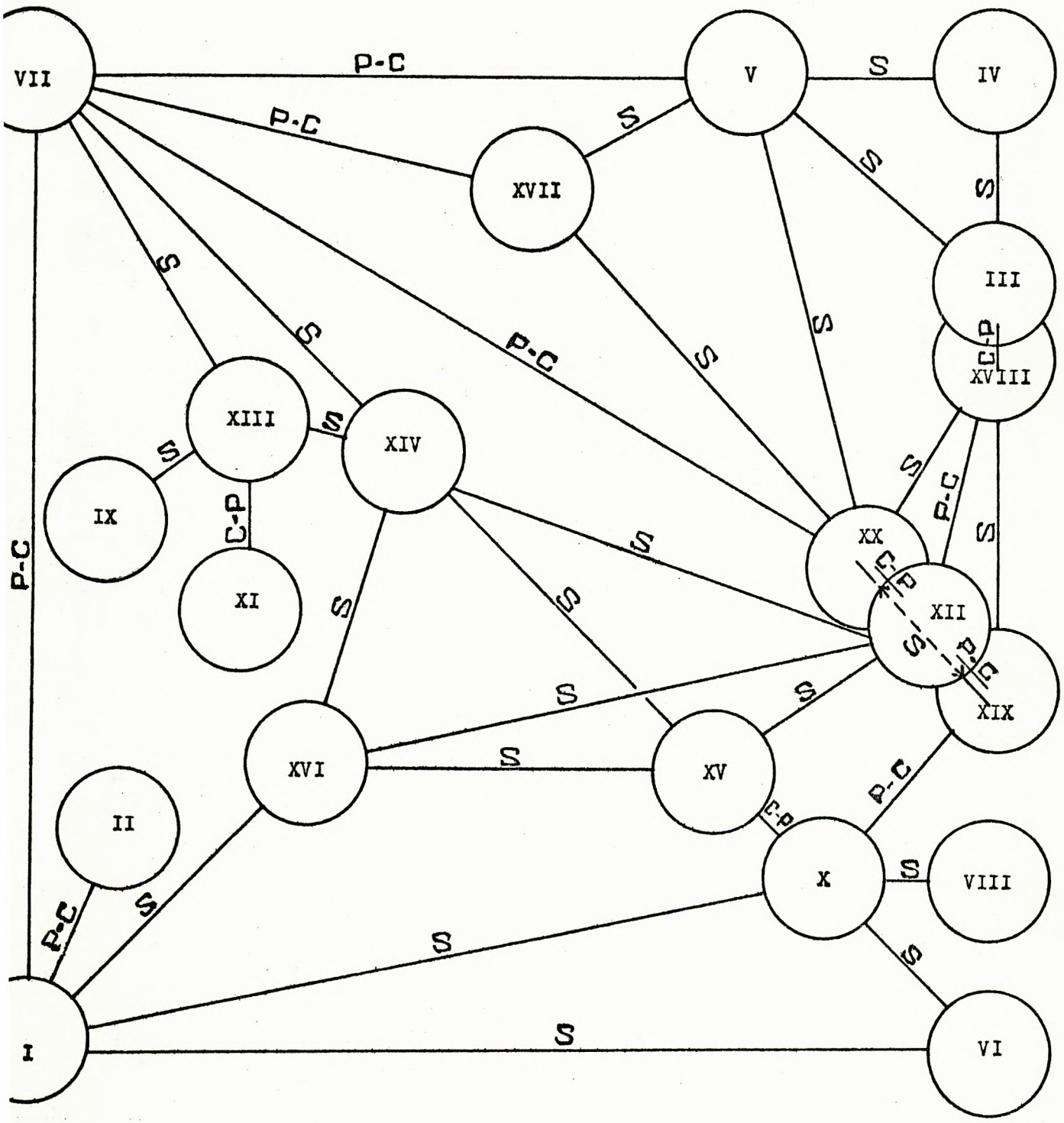
Each of the primary relatives of any individual "will have his own primary relatives, most of whom will not be included among the primary relatives of Ego (the individual under consideration). From the point of view of the latter these may be called secondary relatives. Potentially, a person can have 33 distinct kinds of secondary relatives..." (Murdock 1949:94). These include grandparents, aunts, and uncles, nieces and nephews, half-siblings, siblings-in-law, parents-in-law, children-in-law, and grandchildren. "Each secondary relative, in turn, has primary relatives who are neither primary nor secondary relatives of Ego, and who may thus be termed tertiary relatives. Among these there are 151 possibilities..." (Murdock, 1949:95). For Lac la Martre, limiting the persons reckoned only to those employed in the tabulation of primary relative ties between family units, that is, only married or widowed adults, the count of secondary and tertiary ties between family units would run into the hundreds.

When members enter the community it is characteristically through marriage, and it is marital alliance that draws off Marten Lake Indians to other areas. A marital pair does not enter a community as comparative strangers in that community. One member of the pair, at least, has close, usually primary consanguineal links in the community. The other finds himself/herself provided with a set of affinal relatives. The reticulation of kin relationships at Lac la Martre may be traced out, in its detail, in Figure 3, the genealogy chart. This chart shows specific kin relationships between individuals now resident at Lac la Martre to an extended degree. Individuals, living and dead, who moved out of the region without leaving descendants are not noted, nor is the ancestry of incomers where those ancestors have not been established as having kin ties into the Lac la Martre area.

The two Figures 2 and 3 depict graphically the major societal factor in forming the particular composition of the Lac la Martre people--kinship. They have other kindred beyond the community with whom they may visit while travelling or with whose local group they could settle. But on the whole most of the members have a multiplicity and intensity of ties within the Lac la Martre group greater than they have with any other Dogrib settlements. This statement does not yet hold for young adults who have recently married into the community from other groups, but the complexity of interrelationships diagrammed in the genealogy chart,

FIGURE 2

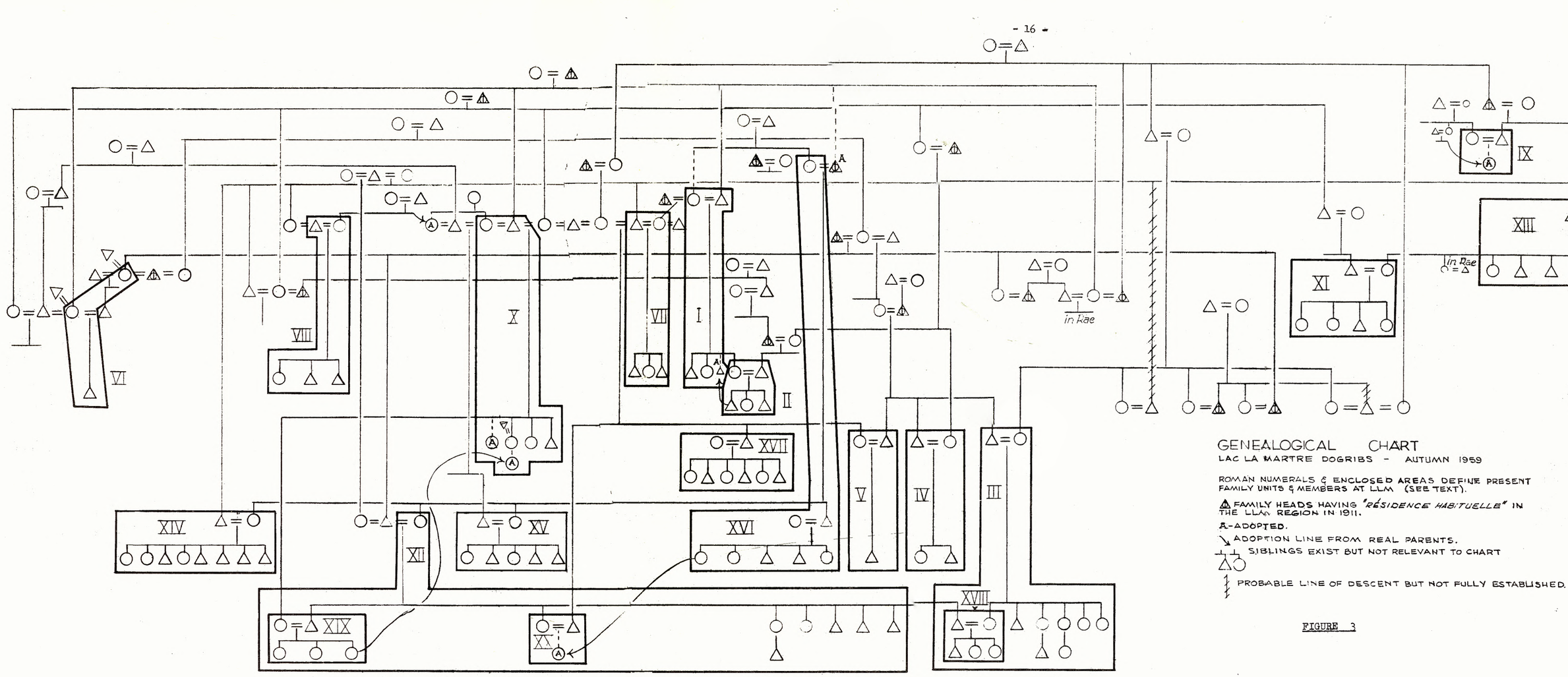
PRIMARY RELATIVE LINKS BETWEEN FAMILY UNITS



S = Sibling tie

P-C and C-P = Parent-Child ties. The order of letters indicates direction of the generational line.

Recent adoptions are omitted. Adoptive relationships in the adult generation are treated as blood relationships.



GENEALOGICAL CHART
LAC LA MARTRE DOGRIBS - AUTUMN 1959

ROMAN NUMERALS & ENCLOSED AREAS DEFINE PRESENT FAMILY UNITS & MEMBERS AT LLM (SEE TEXT).

△ FAMILY HEADS HAVING "RÉSIDENCE HABITUELLE" IN THE LLM REGION IN 1911.

A-ADOPTED.

↘ ADOPTION LINE FROM REAL PARENTS.

SIBLINGS EXIST BUT NOT RELEVANT TO CHART

PROBABLE LINE OF DESCENT BUT NOT FULLY ESTABLISHED.

FIGURE 3

Figure 3, affirms the generalization. The region group through the several generations that can be traced has tended to reinforce its "group-ness" again and again by inter-marriage, forming new strands in the web of affiliation. The tenor of the social life of the community is heavily predicated on the sense of familiarity and social ease that comes from close kinship.

The kinship organization of the Arctic Drainage Athabascans, which included the Dogrib Indians, is in general terms comparable to that of North American White society, in that it is characterized by bilateral descent. Every society has a rule of descent, which "affiliates an individual at birth with a particular group of relatives with whom he is especially intimate and from whom he can expect certain kinds of services that he cannot demand of non-relatives, or even of other kinsmen. The fundamental rules of descent are only three in number: patrilineal descent, which affiliates a person with a group of kinsmen who are related to him through males only: matrilineal descent, which assigns him to a group consisting exclusively of relatives through females; and bilateral descent, which associates him with a group of very close relatives irrespective of their particular genealogical connection to him" (Murdock 1949:15). Tribes with a rule of unilinear descent, i.e., matrilineal or patrilineal, such as the Iroquois and various tribes of coastal British Columbia often have such kin groups as lineage, sibs and phratries that seem so exotic to the Euro-Canadian observer. The Dogribs, with their reckoning of descent bilaterally, are without such division, the basic kin group being the commonest type of bilateral kin groups, the kindred--what laymen in our society call "relatives".

"The most distinctive structural fact about the kindred is that, save through accident, it can never be the same for any two individuals with the exception of own siblings. For any given person, its membership ramifies out through diverse kinship connections until it is terminated at some degree of relationship..." (Murdock 1949:60). In Dogrib society, the primary factor determining the degree of sense of kin affiliation is, of course, the actual degree of closeness of the relationship, at least as regards primary and secondary relatives. But a potent secondary factor is propinquity and frequently of face-to-face contact. The Marten Lake Indian is apt to have more personal involvement with the son of his maternal aunt who resides with him at Lac la Martre than he does with the one who lives in Rae. But the very diffuseness which is the nature of the kindred permits the individual to a greater extent than under other rules of descent to make a personal selection among available kinsmen of those with which he prefers to have the friendliest and most frequent interaction. Again, this is a situation which seems only "natural" to the Euro-Canadian reared under the same rule of descent. But is one of the factors that allows the individual acceptance or rejection of obligation

toward any specific kinsman which is characteristic of Athabascan society, compared with other Canadian Indian societies who have continued to adhere to unilateral descent. Indeed, less formal, specific and obligatory expectations between the various sorts of relatives seem to be a feature of bilateral societies, compared to unilateral ones.

The kinship terminology collected at Marten Lake (and at Rae) conforms in its simplicity to the diffuse bilateral reckoning that is the kindred.[1] Compared to the closely related "tribes" of Hare, Slavey and Chipewyan Indians (MacNeish 1960), the Dogrib terminology is the simplest. This may represent either a condition of long standing or the greatest degree of break-down yet encountered from a more complex and internally consistent aboriginal system previously held in the Northeastern Athabascan area as a whole.[2] At present, we would incline to the latter view.

The main characteristics of present-day Dogrib terminology are as follows:

There is a "grandfather" (ehtse) and a "grandmother" (ehtsi^{n}) term, as in the European system. Also, any aged person and occasionally father-in-law and mother-in-law may be addressed by these terms.

---

1. Only one interview on kinship was possible at Rae, because of the limited time there. Interviewing on kinship terminology at Lac la Martre was generally unsatisfactory due to the language problems and lack of interest on the part of informants. The latter in itself connotes the lack of an active system of specific behavioural expectations based on kinship.

2. The specialized interest that kinship terminology holds for anthropologists derives from the fact that it tends to reflect patterns of social expectations predicted on kinship relations. As social behaviour predicated on kinship changes, the terminology system is apt to change also, since the categories of terms no longer are relevant to social realities. But there is often a lag between the abandonment of social behavioural patterns and the dropping of the pertinent terminological recognition of those now lost social expectations between categories or relatives. Thus, the kinship terminology may provide clues to dead or dying social behavioural patterns. See MacNeish 1960 for an analysis, in these terms, of the kin terminologies of the Arctic Drainage Dene.

The terms for "father" (ahta) and "mother" (ana) are limited to those primary relatives, except that some individuals may also apply them to step-parents. Parent's siblings are addressed and designated as in the European system, one term for each sex: se?e and emo^{n} for "uncle" and "aunt", respectively. This is called "lineal terminology" and is at variance with the systems of other Arctic Drainage Athabascan groups; see MacNeish 1960.) However, these terms are also used for "father-in-law" and "mother-in-law".

The terms for "husband" (seda^{n}) and "wife" (setseke) are limited to those individuals only. Siblings are divided in the terminology system into "older brother" (si^{n}de), "younger brother" (setsi), "older sister" (aba), and "younger sister" (sede). For all cousins these same terms are used, age relative to speaker always being taken into account. This system is known as "Hawaiian cousin terminology". The spouses of siblings, of either sex, are called seye, which may be translated "sibling-in-law".

The terms for the primary relatives of the first descending generation are "son" (seza) and "daughter" (seti). Some confusion exists regarding the various terms for siblings' children but the more common pattern is that of a single term for all nephews and nieces (sesah), i.e., "lineal terminology". (Cf. MacNeish 1960 for variant and more differentiated treatment of these relatives by other Arctic drainage Athabascan groups). "Daughter-in-law" is called by the term also used for "grandchild" (see below), and "son-in-law" is seido^{n}. (It may be that these latter terms are used only by women. The data from male informants is inadequate on this point. The same problem holds for the "grandchild" term). Grandchildren of either sex are designated by a single term (setsa).

No evidence was obtained that today there are any preferential marriage patterns between certain classes of relatives nor is it likely that the widespread Northern Athabascan trait of bride-service, which results in at least temporary matrilocal residence, i.e., with the bride's family group, is still a regularly observed practice (Cf. MacNeish 1960). These questions were not, however, exhaustively pursued. They are primarily of historical ethnographic interest.

Patterns of Social Interaction within the Community

Much of the daily and casual sociability between individuals and households at Lac la Martre takes place within the context of close kinship and involves some form of economic activity. Correspondence in age and in sex between participants are two other basic factors. Social interaction which involves economic activities is treated in the following section.

The household chores of women absorb most of their time, but, on the other hand, there are usually intervals during the day when they may take a few minutes to visit and exchange gossip and news with women from other housholds, often a mother, sister or sister-in-law. The older women of the community, who no longer have young children to tend, get together occasionally for an afternoon of cards, "Pedro" (pronounced bidu locally) or a rummy-like game called "Seven Card". They limit their betting to cigarette papers and matches. The older unmarried girls do a lot of "palling around" with a friend, giggling and visiting various houses of relatives, often with one or more younger siblings in tow.

The younger children over the age of four or five, especially the boys, spend much of their day outside the family dwelling. The boys often play in groups of two or three or four. Their play ranges from simple running about and "rough-housing" to the making and sailing of toy boats and the hunting of small birds with homemade bow and bird-bunt arrows. Only during recess during the school day do boys and girls play together much, and that sometimes results in a bloody nose for some small child. Small boys are self-appointed messengers and announcers of the comings of planes, canoes and dog-sleds.

The major sociable activities of men are two, card-playing and brewing. The men, unlike the women, wager money and money substitutes of considerable value such as dogs. Games resulting in the exchange of considerable sums apparently are more apt to occur outside the community rather than solely between community members. For the men, visits to Rae often include drinking and gambling sessions.

Within the community three kinds of special events bring some or all of the adult members together. Brewing, predominantly a male activity, is one of these.

Most men make a pot of brew every one to three weeks. Usually of raisins, sugar and yeast in four to six gallons of water, a pot requires a minimum of 48 hours of fermentation, during which time it must be kept warm. If brew is kept a week or more under these conditions, its alcoholic content is considerably heightened, but it is seldom allowed to ferment more than three or four days before being drunk.

Often a man will do a bit of solitary sampling of his brew to see how it is developing, but most of the pot is shared, by invitation, with cronies. The issuing of invitations and the drinking party itself tend to be secretive. The party usually begins late in the evening, curtains are drawn, and an effort is made, in the earlier stages of the party at least, to keep activities and voices at a discreet level, so as not to attract the

uninvited. The custom of entry without knocking and the continual evening visiting of boys, however, make real privacy impossible. So usually word quickly goes around the community who is brewing and who the guests are.

The host may fill a jug, from which he pours, or he may dip each cup given to a guest directly into the pot. Proper behaviour is to wait for each cup of brew until it is offered. In the early stages of a brew party there is desultory chatting and exchange of news. The air is generally one of quiet relaxation. Boisterous and loquacious propensities are apt to emerge as drinking continues. Younger men usually start to play the guitar and sing. Occasionally there is attempt at drunken aggression by one of the brewers. The threatened individual may then go to the teacher or a visiting White with his grievance. Violence, however, seems seldom or never to reach dangerous proportions. Mature men are apt to be very wary of offering drink to individuals known to become bellicose when drunk.

For most men, drinking is seen as their only real recreation. The opportunity to obtain distilled liquor is usually seized upon. Rum is favoured. The usual source is from bootlegging into Rae from Yellowknife. Part of the excitement and entertainment of drinking lies in the fact that the use of intoxicants has been illegal for Indians. Men recount with amusement and relish occasions when they have obtained illicit bottles or have gotten away with drunkenness in the presence of the police or other White authority figures. In late November, 1959, it became legal for Indians to purchase liquor, although brewing remains illegal. Unfortunately, word of the change in the law did not reach Lac la Martre while the ethnologists were there, so the opportunity to hear reactions to and discussions of the news was missed. Since the only legal liquor outlet is in Yellowknife, ordinarily not directly accessible to the Lac la Martre people, there probably will not immediately be any great change in drinking patterns in the community, unless some sort of hand-to-hand chain of distribution by Indians and Whites becomes established. Bootlegging by taxicab drivers from Yellowknife to Rae over the winter road has been the main medium of bootleg liquor to Rae and outlying Indians in the past. Probably the same practice will continue and increase on a somewhat more legal basis.

Formal religious observances are a second sort of special activity that brings community members together. An Oblate priest from the mission at Fort Rae visits the community several times a year, usually remaining in the village several weeks each time. The priest may also seize the opportunity to make a brief visit in the company of a government official chartering a plane to the community. During the priest's visit mass with communion is held on Sundays. Confessions are heard on the preceding Saturday evening. The schoolhouse now is used for all services by the priest. The priest also holds nightly services of a less formal

nature, with recourse to the school blackboard to illustrate points in the sermon.

When there is no priest in attendance, the community gathers on Sunday mornings about 11:00 A.M. to say the rosary together. The service is moved from one of the larger dwellings to another each week. It usually is comprised of a short opening prayer, ordinarily delivered by the head of the household in which the service is being held. There is a hymn in Dogrib of several stanzas, each stanza sung first by a solo male singer, who may refresh his memory with a Dogrib syllabary, then reiterated by the chorus of all those attending. One of the adult males then leads the rosary, with the congregation responding. The service is concluded by another hymn and a short prayer. All the service is in Dogrib.

To portray the general atmosphere and activities before and after the formal service, we may simply quote the field notes on a rosary held at the house of Hyacinthe Ptarmigan, a man in his sixties.

From the Field Notes: November 22, 1959

> Men began arriving a little after 11:00... services began about 11:15. The men distributed themselves on the beds, benches and chairs on the far side of the room as well as on the floor. Women began filling the floor space nearer the door. Families did not arrive together, except for women bringing small children.
>
> Hyacinthe opened the service after most of the group had gathered. A few stragglers arrived during his talk, but everyone was assembled by the time he had finished and the group assumed kneeling positions (slumped down, buttocks resting on feet crossed in back--a characteristic Dogrib posture). Virtually the entire adult population of the community was present except for those men who had gone to Rae, and two other men who were out by dogsled tending their nets.
>
> .....
>
> After the service there were ten or fifteen minutes of chatting and smoking. Then women began leaving or sending children out. Jacques Tedzi's wife and another woman brought in a large kettle of rice and raisins, a number of women brought bannock, several women brought kettles of tea. Little boys as well as little girls carried in either food or the family dishes and cups and silver in sugar sacks or tied in cloths. While this was going on,

Leon Nokwi began unrolling strips of oilcloth on the floor and laying out plates, cups, spoons and an occasional knife... Leon began serving the rice and raisins, Jack Ptarmigan (another young adult) cut the bannock on the table into serving-size pieces. Jack then went around serving bits of dry fish at each plate and two pieces of bannock. Billy Gotsunka (a third young married man) went around pouring tea and the followed Jackie, putting a goodsized dollop of lard on each piece of bannock. Then Hyacinthe said grace, and everyone crossed himself and began eating. Little Jimmy Nokwi, requested by one man to refill a tea cup, ended up pouring second cups generally.

During the meal, conversation and pleasantries were general. We happened to be sitting beside Xavier Nodaye (a young man) on the floor, and behind him on a chair (his paternal uncle) George sat eating at the table... Suddenly George swooped down over Xavier's shoulder and snatched and ate up his piece of dryfish, much to the amusement of those in the immediate vicinity. Then we gave our remaining dryfish to Xavier and George snapped that up too, finally carefully replacing the cleaned skins beside Xavier's plate. Everyone amused.

Hyacinthe gave a final prayer and after he finished everyone crossed himself before and after saying "In the name of..." and shouted "Mahsi" (Thanks). The men who had served, plus little Jimmy Nokwi, collected the uneaten bannock and the dishes and oilcloth. Leon Nokwi got a damp rag and wiped off his oilcloth, then tossed it on to another family to wipe theirs. Then Leon got a basin of warm water, bar of soap, and a horribly dirty towel and started it around the room. The water was changed by Leon after every four or five hand washings, but the same towel was used by all around.

.....

After several more minutes of chatting and smoking people begin to set off for home.

The feast after the rosary is a standard occurrence. The meal consists of "whatever we have". If there has been a big kill by one of the hunters, some of the meat will be served at the Sunday feast.

Life crises - birth, serious illness, death - are the other sort of situation which brings most or all of the community physically and psychically together. During the field period two events of this nature occurred. A four-year-old child was seized with convulsions, due to incipient chicken pox combined with an excessive intake of raw cranberries, and a young woman had her first baby, with the complication of a retained placenta. Both of these events affected primarily the women of the community. Presumably a death might more directly involve the men also. The departure and return of one of the headmen, after it was feared he had a serious illness, were occasions of assemblage at the plane dock by most of the community of both sexes, to bid him formal and affecting farewell and return.

When an immediate physical crisis strikes a member of the community, as in the case of the complicated birth and of the child's illness, the household of the affected person is filled with visitors. The closer female relatives crowd around the bed. A moment of crisis or change brings excited actions and a babble of voices from them. Persons less immediately involved stand about for a while, then may go out to perform their own chores, perhaps to return later. Close male relatives often alternate standing about in the house with working outside on tasks close to hand. Any White, resident or visiting, is usually appealed to, with the implicit hope that he will be able to assume responsibility.

Excerpts from the field notes on the birth of Ellen Nodaye's baby are given to provide a specific illustration of community behaviour at a life crisis.

From the Field Notes: October 29, 1959.

> According to Francoise, Ellen began having pains last night, mainly in the back. They did not notify the teacher's wife until the sac broke and water flowed, this morning before 9:00 A.M.
>
> .....
>
> We went over to the Nodaye's house in the morning with Mrs. Robson (the teacher's wife), and Ellen was lying on her side on her bed... Mrs. Robson told them that the nurse had said (by radio from Yellowknife) to clear the house but when Betty Lou Nodaye (Ellen's uncle's wife) translated the statement only Della Nodaye (another uncle's wife) left. At that time three other women were there in addition to Ellen's mother and her two sisters.
>
> .....

(The baby was born about 3:30). Before and after the birth Ellen maintained a kneeling position by her bed, her head cradled in a woman's lap, her arms around the woman's waist. (Some minutes after the birth Ellen was in the same position. Her sister sat on the bed holding her head, her mother on one side, and another sister on the other side. Mrs. Louis Ptarmigan (a parallel cousin of Ellen's mother) was holding the baby all swaddled in her lap. Betty Lou Nodaye, Francoise Nodaye, and Mrs. Cartier were present. Two little girls under six were present and little Josey (child of another Nodaye daughter). Xavier Nodaye (Ellen's older brother) wandered in later and talked to Josey in the other room, set the clock, eventually wandered out again. The women were holding a hot water bottle on Ellens' side. Francoise explained that the afterbirth had not come.

.....

We returned about 5:00 P.M. and at that time Mrs. Tsawo (a second cousin, MoFaBrDaDa, of Ellen) sat on the bed with Ellen's arms about her waist. Meanwhile Francoise was there interpreting, Mrs. Cartier had left. Ellen's mother was trying to work out the placenta. Ellen, as before, was kneeling, wearing her dress and the women worked under it while she was modestly screened from view. Mrs. Louis Ptarmigan had a pan of warm water and a rag with which she kept moistening her hands as she worked. At one point old Bella Brun, who had been there since our first visit, carefully dipped her hand in the water, investigated, then carefully washed her hands. JH asked if there was much bleeding, Francoise said, "Lots of blood, you should look with your own eyes".

.....

Two teenage girls came in for awhile. Betty Lou Nodaye brought her little son in to see the baby. Ellen's father was working outside on his new house. While we were all there we heard a plane (bringing a workman for a brief inspection of the school power plant). Earlier Ellen had expressed a wish to go to the hospital at Rae, but that was before the baby was born. (Pilot offered to take Ellen on that flight or to come back in the morning if complications remained). We went back in the house and put the proposition up to the women and Ellen, Francoise translating. Their discussion was prefaced, in answer to us, with an entire recapitulation of events, the bursting of the sac, the birth of the baby, the fact that the placenta had not come out yet. By this time Ellen was just leaning on a roll of blanket rather than on someone's lap. Mrs. Louis Ptarmigan was still manipulating under the skirt. She

took an active part in the discussion (which went on between the older women relatives). By this time Ellen didn't want to leave and the women decided it was too cold.

.....

After dinner, Ellen takes a turn for the worse, Rae is notified by radio, the Doctor says she will come in plane. Plane arrived about 9:40 P.M. (The teacher and JH go to the Nodaye house). Once I (JH) tell the crowded assemblage that the plane is coming for Ellen, the accelerated tempo and excited behaviour really begins. The general tenor is similar to the time the child had convulsions. Everyone talks at once, speaking louder and faster than usual. All the women are babbling as they swathe Ellen. At first a couple of the women fiddle with pulling more stockings onto her legs, then a swarm of women, including her mother and aunt, start wrapping, rewrapping pinning Ellen into blankets, about five or six of them working at the same time. Her father stands by, watching, serious. (There is no acknowledged father of the baby, as the girl is unmarried). Ellen's sister's husband brings in a sled. He and Ellen's father lay a tarp in the bottom, then take it out, put in comforter, then take it out, then lay tarp, then comforter. The women have been making passes at lifting Ellen since before the sled was brought in. Finally, with a wad of padding ready to receive her, about six women grasp Ellen's swaddling, hoist her into sled. Her brother-in-law pulls it out-of-doors, with her father pushing. Outside, three young women pull the sled by a tow rope, her father pushes it, and JH precedes with flashlight. A couple of little boys run along side and ahead, enjoying themselves hugely. Most of the rest of the crowd straggles behind, eventually to attempt to join Ellen and her immediate family in the living room of the teacherage.

Visits of government officials such as representatives of the Indian Affairs and medical personnel are of course occasions when the community may be called to assemble as a group for specific purposes. Furthermore, the arrival of any airplane to the community brings most of the villagers to the dock, to observe and comment. Occasionally evening activities in the schoolhouse, under the direction of the teacher, include adult education classes, films and bingo games. Although some of the men at Lac la Martre say they enjoy traditional drumming and dancing and the stick game, it has been several years since such events have been held, and then apparently due to the stimulus of a pair of summer teachers. Throughout the North, these traditional recreations are usually limited to summer gatherings in the trading forts.

One aspect of the social tenor of community life which calls for some comment is the nature of dissident and antagonistic reactions that occur between community members. On the whole, antagonisms are not severe, but individuals would give unfavourable reports on others with relative freedom, in unexpected contrast to the constraint encountered in a Slavey bush previously studied (cf. MacNeish 1958). General behaviour at Lac la Martre in this matter more closely resembled that encountered in the past among more sophisticated fort Indians.

Our main gossip sessions were limited to those individuals who spoke sufficient English to serve as our primary informants, of which only three were adults. All three on occasion vented dislike or disapproval of others in the form of unfavourable gossip or accusations to us. One man, a misanthropic but, to us, a likeable individual, regularly reported what he considered bad behaviour by others, composed mainly of excessive drinking, drunken brawling, and misuse of money on brew ingredients (this informant was a teetotaller), petty theft by junior members of the community, and malfeasance of powers by one of the headmen. A recital of the latest "crime" of these sorts would be punctuated at the end with a resounding "No good! huh?" He on the other hand was thought to be, and was commented on, as a slightly ridiculous figure by the rest of the community. Our other informants, though without the frequency and the intensity of moral fervour, accused others of the same sort of disapproved behaviour. Francoise by elliptical comments accused certain other women of the community of talking against her because, due to her ability to speak English, she was able to become more intimate with us than they. For this reason, she said, she had to limit her visits to our cabin. The anxiety that one's socially disapproved behaviour will be gossiped about, and envoke hostility in others is a no less effective deterrent at Lac la Martre than in other small communities.

The office of headman, as the only special role in the community, seems to be a focal point upon which community members can release social anxieties and personal doubts, confusions and conflicts, many of which are occasioned by the Indian's sense of powerless and inadequacy in coping with the changing world at large and White officials and offices in particular.

Before our entry into the community we were informed by several Whites in official positions that the Indians of Lac la Martre were antagonistic to the long-time headman of that community and for that reason a second headman had been allowed their group and had been voted in by them at their Treaty meeting with the Indian Agent the previous

year. White generally expressed enthusiasm for the abilities and drive of the new headman (here called Headman B). One's interpretation was that only official pity for Headman A (the old headman) had prevented him being eliminated outright by his fellow Indians. So we arrived at the community expecting to find either the entire community enthusiastically behind Headman B, or, more likely, a factional split between adherents of the new and the old headman. Yet during our stay we repeatedly heard only praise of the old headman, and only condemnation of the new one. Non-English speakers would express their opinions through interpreters. Our misanthropic friend and gossip went so far as to give Headman B the ultimate in his derogatory "accolades", a triple "No good! No good! No good! Huh?" Among the complainants against Headman B were his two brothers. One particular accusation of malfeasance on the part of Headman B which several sources repeated to us was that he had taken more than his share of government-supplied lumber left under his jurisdiction to be used in building the new houses in the community. As his brother put it, through his wife-interpreter, "He keeps the wood from other people. That is just like stealing". There were also criticisms that he had not provided that the households were given equal opportunity at local wage labour. A frequent, more general complaint was about his social behaviour-that he never visited people, but devoted all his time to his own projects. There were mutterings that "next Treaty" the community would vote him out of office.

In contrast, the old Headman A "visit all the time. He see old woman don't have firewood. He tell a boy, 'Go get firewood for this woman'". He was praised in that he frequently made speeches to the community at rosary and other occasions. In almost any conversation in which Headman A was mentioned the narrator would assert "He is good man". There seemed to be an effort on the part of the community members to propagandize in his behalf to Whites.

In essence, Headman A is praised for his concern for the members of the community, for making himself available to fellows, for his concern with their welfare, for his lack of any self-aggrandizing traits, and probably, for his enactment of the role of official exhorter and speaker in great matters to the community. All of these characterists seem to follow the traditional expectations of chiefly behaviour among the Northern Athabascans, a people who never conceived of real political authority and power (See MacNeish 1956.) Headman B is condemned for his opportunistic and individualistic self-interest. But we can hardly assume that White officials' understandings of an earlier, opposite tenor of community sentiment can be completely without foundation, for the Indians formerly at least liked Headman B enough to elect him to that office.

Any effort to reconcile the seeming contradictions between White reports and Indian statements regarding the native evaluation of these two headmen must, on the basis of the raw data alone, be heavily conjectural. But the implications of this tempest in a teapot are sufficiently important to allow the following, admittedly conjectural, analysis.

It must be recalled that the community in its present composition is but a few years old. Formerly many of its members, close kinsmen, were of the settlement at the other end of the lake which had its own headman, Old Brun. He continued with that title until his death a few years ago. It is possible that a schism was inherent in forming the present single village out of two former ones. But it is likely that an even more potent factor lies in the Indian view of and concern with relations with Whites and their institutions. Governmental and other institutions and their representatives are viewed generally by the Indians of the north with mingled anxiety and hopeful dependency--anxiety that is occasioned by the Indians' powerlessness to control or often even to comprehend White officialdom and the hope that, could the key to manipulation of the official world only be discovered, the protective security, wealth and easeful comfort of that world (as they envision it) might be opened to them. The general desire of the Indian in the north vis-a-vis the official world is for much more monetary subsidy and security and much less interference and control in native activities such as hunting and brewing. This interest is verbalized in the desire to have a "good" chief, that is, one who can and effectively cope with the White man and promote the Indians' interests as they see them. At Lac la Martre, Headman B before his assumption to office had drawn favourable attention from the White world by his successful foremanship in the building of the schoolhouse (for which he received a coronation medal). He is, by White evaluation, an industrious go-getter. It is probably true that the individual who can best cope with the White man is the man who acts and operates like one. And it is probably true that Headman B's fellow villagers made this same estimation in promoting him to headman's status, especially in the face of their knowledge of his approval by Whites. In this respect Headman A is quite unqualified. Now, it seems, what they are discovering to their chagrin is that the Indian who operates successfully in the White mode is individualistic and entrepreneurial. And these qualities, translated into traditional Indian standards, make him self-seeking and aggressive toward his fellows, the antithesis of traditionally expected and approved behaviour.

Economic Interaction within the Community

Most economic activities are carried out within the household unit. Indeed, the average household could, if necessary, maintain itself independently. There is no interchange of service in any vital sense

between the members of the community except at the intra-household level. And within the household it is in the simple and universal sexual division of labour, man's work versus woman's work, that the only basic and necessary reciprocal exchange of services is to be found.

Woman's economic contribution to the household is primarily in the processing of materials procured by the man, either of items obtained directly from the bush, such as meat and skins, or of food, cloth, etc., purchased by the man with the money made in trapping and wage work. The procurement and processing of natural products are treated in detail in Part II. Daily household maintenance is also largely the provenience of women. This includes such familiar activities as the cooking and serving of food, washing of dishes and clothes, scrubbing floors, tidying and sweeping, tending the fire and often feeding the dogs. Children of the family, after the age of six or so, commonly share in these chores, according to their strength and ability. To girls the greater portion of the chores usually falls. Baby tending is a regular duty for older girls in a large family. Sewing, mending, knitting and embroidery are frequent activities of women, as is net mending.

Those daily subsistence and maintenance activities that do not take the woman too far and too long from home are often shared by women and older girls with the males of the household. Women frequently tend the rabbit snares, and set small traps for squirrel and weasel nearby. Faggots of firewood are gathered by the women, and they frequently saw and split logs from the woodpile. Cordwood on the other hand is cut and hauled to the village by the men, unless a family's cut cordwood is nearby, in which case teenage girls make regular trips with the dogs to bring it home, a sled-load at a time. The preparation of fur peltries for market is more often done by women, but not exclusively. Men's major economic activities are those which call for more arduous and sustained labour, often at some time and distance from the home, and may require mechanical skills. House repair, cordwood cutting, tending fish-nets at a distance, trapping, wage labour, are the major categories. Carpentry and some mechanical repair, as of outboard motors, are practiced by most. Men also learn the simple cooking techniques of the Dogribs, practiced primarily when without their wives while travelling or on the trapline.

Economic activities involving members of different households are usually of the same sort that may be shared by members of the same sex of the same household. Women of different households are more likely than men to combine their activities, and for reasons of sociability. Berrying is usually done by several women as a group, one household providing the canoe, "kicker", and adolescent male to run the outboard.

A picnic in the bush is usually a feature of the expedition. The tending of fishnets, gathering of moss for diapers, gathering sticks for firewood is often an opportunity for two or three women, perhaps with some of their children, from different households to combine an economic activity with a sociable occasion. When men of different households, often close kinsmen, work together, it seems usually to be because the job can more effectively be carried out with manpower in excess of that one household can supply. But occasions of aid without remuneration are few. Assisting one another in building new cabins was the major activity during the field period in which men might assist another without remuneration, but here a reciprocal obligation was usually implied. Unlike some other Northern Athabascan communities (cf. MacNeish 1958) no enduring and recognized trapping partnerships between two or three could be established in our interviews. Men often described themselves as going on long trapping trips alone. At the advent of the trapping season in November, however, we found more often than not men were going on the line in groups of two or three, especially if the trip was of several days duration. It is not the usual practice, but it is not unheard of for the wife, especially if there are few or no young children, to accompany her husband on an extended trapping expedition. It is usual for men to make the trip to the fort in the company of others.

There are only a few situations in which a household may find a need for services that its members cannot provide, and an appeal for aid is made to another household. Borrowing of consumables and special tools is common. There is no direct and equivalent repayment for fish or rabbit that may be borrowed on days when one's snares or nets have given an inadequate yield for the family. Store goods, such as candles, gasoline, tobacco, matches, tea, lard, baking powder, etc., are continually in short supply in one household or another. Repayment is casual, at best, especially when the borrowing is of small quantities. When definable portions are borrowed, such as a pound tin of baking powder or an entire packet of tobacco, the borrower is more apt to offer to replace the item after his next trip to the fort. All households are not adequately equipped with such items as carpentry tools, and these will be borrowed for particular repairs. The borrowing of one or two dogs to augment a small team for a trip to the fort or the trapline is not infrequent.

The government schoolteacher and, during their residence, the ethnologists, were continually appealed to for items from their relatively large stock of personal supplies. A pattern of exchange of fresh fish and rabbit for staples quickly became established with the ethnologists, a form of mutual aid which unfortunately the Indians cannot pursue among themselves.

One service which is in short supply in the community is that of interpreter for dealing with Whites. Only one member, an eighteen-year

old handicapped youth, has a fluent command of English, but he is resident at Lac la Martre only in the summer months. Francoise Ptarmigan (HVII), who learned her broken English as a child when she spent five years in mission school at Resolution, is frequently called upon by the women of other households to interpret to the teacher and to the visiting doctor and nurse. (The headmen, neither of whom speak any English, dislike appealing to her because she is a woman.) The drain upon Francoise's time and energy would, if she responded to all appeals, be considerable. She complained several times to the ethnologists that she felt other Indians should recompense her when they used her as interpreter. But, despite her requests in this matter, no one had done so.

A situation in which one household may provide a special service to another, often sustained, is when one of the marital pair is long absent (usually due to hospitalization) and there is no child old enough to assume the responsibilities of the missing partner. Thus, when headman Cartier was hospitalized for a couple of months his wife's nephew (as it happened from outside the community) stayed at Lac la Martre and was of considerable aid to her in hauling cordwood and tending fishnets. When Moses Brun (HXVI), with his wife already hospitalized for some months, lost the services of his eldest (14-year-old) daughter while she visited in Rae, his sister's daughter washed and ironed for him.

Finally, inter-household services of a minor nature are often provided by travellers to Rae, who carry small orders for others from the Hudson's Bay store.

Within the community it is sometimes difficult to make a distinction between borrowing, with some implication of obligation on the part of the receiver, and gift-giving. If the donor spontaneously initiates the action the distinction is clear. An example is Francoise's teenage daughter, making a pair of moccasins to be given to her "auntie", "for Christmas". Francoise's household also gave a pup to the "auntie", and item that is usually purchased. But Francoise, who has close affectional relations with the other woman, explained that it was given without recompense because it was still so tiny it might not survive. On the other hand when Francoise borrows the "auntie's" hand-cranked sewing machine, she pays one dollar, thus actually renting it. Indians may sell certain valuable commercial items, such as used sleds and "kickers", to one another, especially if short of cash. But certain other items are exclusive in intra-Indian trade.

Trade within Indian society is not significant in the overall economy, but it does provide occasional "pin-money", and a few Indians

regularly make small change by this means. One example is a middle aged Indian, a relative of household head HIX, who has a cabin on the sled route to Rae. He snares rabbits and sells them to Rae Indians, "Five for $2.50". For women, the sale of moccasins, mukluks, and prepared hides brings in a little cash. Most of these are traded through the Hudson's Bay Company in Rae, which acts as a sort of clearing-house, buying these items and selling them at little or no mark-up. Moccasins bring about $5.00, mukluks $10.00 to $15.00, and half a moosehide $15.00. Wolverine hides are always in demand by Indians for edging parkas, but are so scarce and valuable that the lucky trapper who takes one almost always uses it himself. Most Indians buy wolverine from the Bay from $1.00 per strip to about $30.00 for a whole skin. These skins come from Eskimo territory. Sled dogs are another regular item of local trade. A good sled dog usually costs $40.00 to $50.00. A small puppy, which must be fed for about a year before it is of an age to join the team, may be purchased for $5.00.

The only comestible which may ordinarily be sold is fish. The Lac la Martre people not infrequently receive appeals from visitors from Rae, or even by letter from Rae, for dryfish. Often a Marten Lake family will spontaneously give a bundle of dryfish to Rae visitors upon their departure. "We often give them (Rae people) five, ten, fifteen, dryfish when they come here and we don't charge them. But when we are there and need (fish) for dogs, they charge us a dollar for just one (fresh) fish", Francoise complains, indicating a small fish about a foot long. The usual rate of exchange for bought dryfish at Lac la Martre is five for one dollar, a very modest price when the labour of preparation plus the nutritive value is taken into account.

CHAPTER III

THE STANDARD OF LIVING AND THE MONEY ECONOMY

Today, even the most isolated of the Indians of the Northwest Territories are significantly committed to a money economy. Much of their way of life is predicated on material goods that must be purchased. The emphasis of this report is on the still substantial adherence to a subsistence economy by the Lac la Martre Dogribs. But to place the subsistence economy, treated in Part II, in proper perspective in the total economic life, a survey of the standard of living and of money-making activities is called for.

Standard of Living

An inventory of the major durable goods possessed by the people of Lac la Martre indicates the extent to which the standard of living is today based on the products of Western technology. Housing in the form of the log cabin is modelled on the White man's frontier dwelling, and in its other form is a commercially manufactured canvas tent. The squared logs that form the outer walls and the mud and moss for chinking are the only local products that go into the building of a cabin. All the finishing milled lumber for floors, roof framing and ceilings, window glass, doors, hardware such as latches, and roofing materials--requires commercial products.

The basic house type consists of one or perhaps two rooms, is rectangular, with a gable roof and often with a storage loft. Usually any additional room is simply built onto the basic room in the form of a lean-to enclosed porch, lean-to kitchen, or another room built against the first room and the wall between removed. Cardwood or tarpaper is often tacked to the interior walls for protection against the cold. Several new houses under the auspices of Indian Affairs were in process of being built during the field period. The policy at Lac la Martre was an experimental one in an effort to encourage independence of effort. The Indians were building their own houses without supervision by White carpenters. Materials such as milled lumber, plywood for interior walls, hardware etc., were provided by Indian Affairs, with logs and the labour supplied by the Indians. The home builders were adding shelter porches of their own design.

Household furnishings are sparse by White standards, but considering the difficulty of bringing items to Lac la Martre, remarkably comparable to furnishings of Indian houses observed in Rae. Bunk beds of boards, no springs, are built into one or more corners. Many of them are only about 5 feet in length. Most households have one metal bed in addition to bunks, and at night bedding may also be laid on the floor to provide sleeping space for the entire family. Infants up to a year to 18 months are in hammocks

made of ropes stretched across a corner of the room with a blanket folded between the ropes to form the hammock. A stick holds the ropes apart at one end. In summer, mosquito bars of cheesecloth or light cottons are tacked above the head of beds and bunks and rolled up out of the way during the day. Bedding consists of blankets and home-made patchwork quilts. In most households there are one or two straight chairs, a table, tin plates and cups and some chinaware, and some silverware though much eating is done with the fingers. There are usually a few religious pictures and perhaps a calendar adorning the walls. Rectangular trunks hold extra clothing, sewing equipment, mementoes, etc. Coleman lanterns and racks holding rifles and shotguns are in every house. Generally, living spaces are kept as bare as possible with items not in immediate use tucked away in trunks or stored in lofts. The standard heating unit is the lower third of a 45 gallon oil-drum with the top replaced and used as the cooking surface. There may also be a "drum oven" for baking attached to the stove pipe. There are three functioning battery-powered radios in the community, and two gramophones.

Most of the families who had a separate permanent dwelling remained living in it through the summer instead of moving into a tent. This is in contrast to the practice at the previously studied bush Slavey community. Those with uncompleted new cabins continued to live in tents during the entire field period. One tent, of a family of 10, had been adapted to permanent living in the fashion common throughout the north. A board floor was laid, the canvas wall tent was framed by two by fours and erected above a base of board floor and low wall of boards. From the field notes comes this description of another tent and its furnishings, though less complete, which was winterized and served for year-round living:

> Big new tent, about 15' x 18', with a small mousehole chewed in one wall. Part of the floor is covered with boards. There are squared logs around the walls, holding the canvas tight against the ground. In front of the doorflap, which is held taut by log weights, there is a stove made of a 45 gallon oil drum. Peeled fish-drying poles are suspended above the stove area. Bedding is rolled up near the walls. A small trunk and small green-painted box contain various tools and some food and utensils. For eating, an old oilcloth is spread on the floor, on which cups, plates and containers of tea and salt are placed. A father, mother, and two children occupy this tent.

Most houses have one or more outlying buildings or structures. About half the households have warehouses (called locally in English "fish houses") of logs, from about 6' x 6' to 12' x 12' in size. About half the households also have latrines made of boards. One type of structure erected

at Lac la Martre but not seen at Rae is the "fish corral" (the designation is the ethnologists'). This is an enclosure usually about six or eight feet square made of tightly spaced peeled poles about six feet high, with a frame of horizontal poles erected inside. It is used in the summer for drying fish outdoors, usually with a smoldering fire to drive away flies, the enclosure preventing the theft of fish by dogs. Tepee frames of poles with horizontal poles lashed high, out of the dogs' reach, are another, less permanent, type of outdoor drying frame. The fish house may be used in part as a warehouse but its main purpose, as the name suggests, is for the storage of fish, especially in the frozen form in the winter. An alternative type of storage of frozen fish is by means of a stage made of heavy upright logs, with smaller, horizontal logs spaced far enough apart for the ends of peeled poles, each passing through the gills of 6 frozen fish, to rest upon them. Some households provide doghouses of logs or boards for their teams. For bitches due to whelp or bitches with litters many households provide a small tepee of poles covered with brush, pieces of canvas or other material that protect the animals from the weather.

For construction and the daily needs of the household, many tools are in general use or, at least, available from one member of the group. These include axes, files, cross-cut saws, carpentry saws, levels and T-squares, pliers and planes. To name ice-chisels, hand-cranked sewing machines and other sewing equipment, butcher knives and other cooking and eating utensils, brooms, scrubbing-brushes, and gas lanterns does not begin to exhaust the inventory of purchased household implements. For travel and the pursuit of livelihood all the major items with the exception of the snowshoe--canoes, outboard motors, dog-tobaggans, dog harness, rifles and shotguns, traps, gill nets (in recent years supplied by Indian Affairs)--are purchased ready-made or made of manufactured materials. The same is true of clothing except for moccasins and mitts. Further discussion of technology past and present is presented in Part II. Ammunition for shot-guns and rifles and gas for lanterns and "kickers" are continually needed, and especially in the case of gas, heavy and bulky, are often in short supply.

Sled dogs are the one other major present day necessity in the pursuit of livelihood. The Lac la Martre people are in the uncommon situation compared to the majority of Indians in the Northwest Territories in having no expenditure for dog food (cf. MacNeish 1958), their take of fish being sufficient to feed their dogs year around. Most households raise puppies to serve as future members of the team; nevertheless, the buying of dogs is not unusual. Sometimes the advent of winter catches a trapper with only two or three dogs, having lost one to three to disease or as a gambling debt. The usual team is of four to six, most commonly five, dogs.

FIGURE 4

HOUSING AND MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT

Dwellings

Old houses, occupied	6
by December 1959: New houses, occupied	6
Unfinished houses, unoccupied	4
Tent households in August	9
Tent households in December	5
(One tent household returns to its cabin at another locale)	

Outbuildings and Structures

Fish house (warehouses)	7
Latrines	7
"Fish corrals"	6
Frozen fish stages	4

Transportation

Canoes, all kinds	18
Outboard motors	10
Dogs in use	100

The staple item of Dogrib diet at Lac la Martre is fish, augumented by such other wild foods as small and large game, birds and berries. A relatively small proportion of the diet consists of purchased foods: tea, occasionally coffee; sugar; bannock bread made of lard, flour, baking powder, salt, and, when available, powdered milk and powdered eggs. Unlike some northern native communities, no baking of bread was observed. Canned and powdered milk are bought to flavour tea and for supplementary infant feeding. Less frequently purchased items include pilot biscuits, raisins, rice, oatmeal, barley, jam, butter, peanut butter, cheese, canned fruits and candy. However, the group could be adequately fed solely from the native environment, albeit they would consider themselves deprived without bannock, tea and sugar. They also depend on the Hudson's Bay store for chewing and smoking tobacco and patent medicines. The fish supply of the Lac la Martre people saves them from the considerable and almost continual expenditure for commercial dog food with which many northern Indians are burdened.

The basic meal day after day is fish, usually boiled or toasted, bannock and tea. It may be supplemented by items enumerated above when they are available. Fish are often already boiled, or slowly toasting or baking through much of the day, and bannock is usually either already made or in process so there is no definable period of meal preparation culminating in the "dinner is ready" familiar to Canadian White society. Eating patterns are correspondingly simple and casual. Often the members of the family eat at different times, food being served to the father or older son of the family alone as he comes in from his labours out-of-doors, or a child being given a bit of bannock or dryfish on request. If the family is living in a tent, without a table, a piece of oilcloth is usually laid on the floor near the stove to receive the plates. Evening suppers seem more apt to include the whole family.

Cash Income

Cash income for the northern Indian derives from three main sources: trapping, wage work, and government allowances of several kinds. In the past trapping has been the traditional and only source of cash for the Indian. (In earlier times, it took the form of direct exchange with the trader of furs for Western goods, values being expressed in terms of "Made Beaver"). With no other market for his labour, and in the face of the caprices of the fur market, and in many areas of the North, little or no competition between trading firms to encourage higher prices for furs, the Indian has been almost powerless to affect his financial condition. In recent years the practice of advancing "debt" or "credit" (a grub-stake for the trapper to tide them over the non-trapping months and to start him out supplied in the trapping season) has been abandoned. The amount of the advance was predicated on the man's past performance as a trapper in conjunction with the estimated state of the fur market in the forthcoming season. It was then the trapper's obligation to bring his furs for sale to the trader who had given him credit. In the Lac la Martre and Rae areas the only local trading firm is the Hudson's Bay Company at Rae. Declining fur values have been a major reason for the discontinuance of credit in the North. An auxiliary factor at the Rae post (and many others) has been the propensity, brought about by increased mobility, of some trappers after being advanced credit to send or take their furs to a bigger trading centre (in the Rae case, to Yellowknife) in the hope of greater returns.

Both world wars brought boom prices for furs. Although there have, as usual, been fluctuations in the market since World War II, prices have on the whole, taking inflation into account, been in a trough since the war. A comparison of fur prices over the past 15 years, presented in Figure 5, illustrates the situation. Furs are listed roughly in order of importance in the Lac la Martre economy.

FIGURE 5

FUR PRICES COMPARED OVER A FIFTEEN-YEAR PERIOD

Peltry	Fort Rae* 1958-59			Fort Simpson** 1951-52	1950-51	Lower Post, B.C.*** Spring 1944
	Top	Average	Low	T = Top Price A = Average		
Mink	$25	$16.75	.25	$35T $24A	$50	not given
Marten	$15	$5.50	.50	Fall: $35T Spr: $10T	$48T	$86-100T
Beaver	$30	$10	$1	$18T	$30-35T	$47-51T
Muskrat	$1	.65	.15	$2T	$2T	not given
Otter	$25	$18	.50	not given		not given
Lynx	$10	$5	$2	Fall: $6T Spr: $10T	$20T	$62-74T $56-62A
Fox, cross and red	$4	none purchased	.50	$2-4	$2-4	$10-16A
Squirrel	.35	.25	.05	.75	.60	not given
Weasel	$1	.50	.05	$3T	not given	not given

* We are indebted to Mr. Douglas Stevens, Hudson's Bay Company manager at Rae, for providing these figures.

** MacNeish 1958.

*** Honigmann 1949.

A poll of seven trappers at Lac la Martre on their fur take for the 1958-59 season suggested that fur production at Lac la Martre compares poorly with the take recorded in the Slave Indian bush community of Lynx Point in 1951-52. Of the seven Lac la Martre trappers the head of Household XIV took the most furs. His take was comprised of nine mink, thirteen marten, five beaver (the quota limit), 230 muskrats, nine weasels, two lynx, one squirrel and one fox. Assuming an over-all average price for these furs, his income from furs for the 1958-59 season may be estimated at about $450.00. A more average take consisted of one mink, three marten, four beaver, 100 "rats", ten weasels, fifteen squirrels and two fox. In comparison, a Lynx Point Slavey trapper (not the best) in 1951-52 took twenty-one mink, sixteen marten, nineteen beaver (the quota limit), seven weasels, seventeen lynx and six fox. (Muskrat is not plentiful in the Lynx Point region, and most trappers do not bother with it, as this one did not). In both cases, the count may err a bit on the conservative side (due to forgetfulness of informants). Certainly one factor in differential production is the relative richness of the two areas, especially in fine furs (marten, mink, and beaver) which account for the greatest money income from trapping (except where there is rich muskrat country, where quantity of take may make muskrat important economically). The Fort Simpson area, to which the Lynx Point Slavey are attached, was ranked first in the production of the fine furs and fourth out of eight districts in average annual value of fur production for the years 1938-43, at the time the Robinsons (1947) made their study of fur production in the Northwest Territories. The Rae trading area, which includes Lac la Martre, ranked low in fine furs, but ranked high (in second place) in muskrat production, bringing that area to the fifth position, out of eight, in average annual value of production. However, an additional factor in fur take at Lac la Martre may well be increasing increment from other sources of income, both in terms of providing less arduous income activities and of cutting down on time-energy remaining for trapping.

The trapping season begins in November and lasts until May. This coincides with the period of dog-sled travel. At this time canoes may be used as break-up is occurring in the smaller streams. The taking of beaver and muskrat is limited to the spring months. There are four sizes of traps, but the Number 1 trap, the smallest, is the most frequently used as it serves for all the smaller animals--mink, marten muskrat, etc. A box of 12 Number 1 traps costs $7.50. Traps are set at spots where the "sign" of a fur bearer is seen. The trapper then returns along the line in a few days. If it has snowed, the trap, originally covered with a light brushing of snow, must be cleared of most of the new fall. Ordinarily, most of the traps are not picked up each time, but are left in place to be revisited several times. (See Part II for baiting of traps). A trapline may be set at only an overnight distance from the village or a trapper may, usually in the company of others, make a trapping tour that lasts a couple of weeks.

Sometimes men may be gone for four weeks, but in that case they usually intend to combine the trapping with a caribou hunt. Most of the winter kills of moose take place during trapping trips. For a longer trip nets for ice fishing for dog food may be taken. In their longer trips, trappers may go far beyond the other end of the lake (50 miles away) toward Hottah Lake or into La Tache and Grandin country. Beaver hunting is usually carried out in the Horn Mountain region to the southwest of Lac la Martre. Here the Dogrib trapping territory joins that of some of the Slavey.

By all available evidence, wage work available to Marten Lake people has undergone an unprecedented increase within the last five years, beginning with the building of the schoolhouse and first "teacherage". The construction of the plane dock, the new teacherage and its warehouse have provided further money-making opportunities within the village. Finishing work on the new teacherage was going on upon our arrival in the field. Under the direction of Northern Affairs employees from Yellowknife, the work lasted three weeks and brought a total of $1143.84 in wages to members of the community. With five of its members working, one household received $516.92 in this period. Ten households had no members employed in this construction work. The arrival of the schoolteacher in September coincided with the completion of construction, but payments for cordwood and for janitor services to the school began almost immediately. A total order of 80 cords of wood for the woodburning heaters of school and teacherage at $20.00 per cord resulted in the payment of $1600.00 to Indians in the month of September. Of this, $495.00 went to three non-resident Indian from Rae, relatives of local people. For janitorial services $1.60 per hour was the rate of pay for three or more hours per day. The teacher decided to rotate this job, a different man being assigned the post about every two weeks. The job was much sought after, but agreement was general that the teacher had chosen the most equitable method of distributing the work. By the first of December, $253.20 had been distributed between three men. Between mid-August and December, all but five households had received income from local wage work. Of these five, one household had only an elderly man, beyond the age of hard physical labour (though he probably will receive janitor's work later in the season), and three households had their physically able men on the fall caribou hunt, missing the opportunity for construction work. The final household had one physically able man, in late middle age. All together in about three and one half months, about $2300.00 in wages came into the community.

The previous winter season, several of the men of the community had made up a road construction gang, under the foremanship of Headman B, to work on the road being built between Providence and Yellowknife. The gang was under contract and paid by the mile of roadway cleared. Those that worked for the full period, about two and a half months, made about $300.00 each plus food and lodging. During November of the field

Rising consumer standards coupled with low income mean that the Lac la Martre household is continually in short supply of commercial items. Except for the occasional opportunities for sustained wage labour, income comes in a few dollars at a time--$10.00 to $50.00--and is spent in the same way. The arrival of allowance cheques at Rae or the return with furs from a trapping trip are the common occasions when money is potentially available, with the result that a trip to the trading fort is soon made. The men usually go in groups of two or more. In the winter, each drives his own team; several share a canoe in summer. When a plane scheduled for Lac la Martre stops at Rae, the Hudson's Bay manager makes every effort to send on the plane any goods, especially heavy items such as flour and gas, that have been ordered by Marten Lake people. (Orders are frequently placed by the teacher on the nightly radio contact with Rae). But the occasional air service is too infrequent to supply the community. Every week, therefore, some of the men of the community are absent on a trip to Rae for provisions. In summer, the return trip from Rae, upstream, is about 100 miles and takes at least two days and nights. There are three short portages, but the fourth portage is five to six miles, uphill past the impressive la Martre falls, over which all goods must be carried on the back. Sometimes the men make two trips across the portage, shuttling the goods, but even then probably not more than 250 pounds per man is transported. In winter, the trip to Rae is about 60 miles by dog sled. Usually the round trip requires at least 5 days: overnight on the trail, a day in Rae for shopping and rest, and an overnight trip with loaded sled--200 to 300 pounds--on the return. Frequently several days are spent in Rae. It can be seen that a substantial proportion of working time and energy that might be otherwise directed to trapping or subsistence pursuits is spent in the transporting of supplies.

Summation

For several generations the Northern Indian has required certain commodities of Western technology. Firearms and steel knives were the first durable goods to become a necessity in the Indian view, but today tents, canoes, outboard motors, gill nets, steel traps, axes and many other tools have become part of the inventory necessary to pursue a livelihood and maintain a minimum standard of living as conceived today. Also, some money income (or its equivalent) was diverted even in earliest times for certain products that, in strict terms of survival, were luxury items--tea, sugar, tobacco, cloth, beads, etc. On the whole, the fur trade has never allowed the Northern Indian an adequate level of living by Euro-Canadian standards or by the developing desires and standards of the Indians themselves. Their consumer desires have always outstripped their financial resources. The advent of various government allowances and in recent years the unprecedented opportunities, unpredictable though they be, for wage work have opened new consumer horizons and have permitted a certain degree of economic security, and, especially, have fostered the outlook that a certain consumption level and degree of security is a right.

PART II

THE SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY

CHAPTER IV

EXPLOITATION OF FLORA

The "Bush"

The bush refers to the forest of spruce, willow, birch, and various bushes and plant cover including moss. Formerly it was more intensively exploited but even today it yields building materials, fuel, edible berries, medicines, and the source of many household objects. Although many substitutions in manufactured goods have been made for items once made of native materials, a great many former practices, techniques, and objects were clearly recalled and described by older informants. The following discussion will describe objects used and/or made currently and formerly in terms of four major flora: spruce, willow, birch, and moss. This will be followed by a discussion of edible berries, medicinal plants and miscellaneous items.

Spruce

Various modern uses of spruce for building peeled log cabins, fish stages, etc. have been discussed earlier. Spruce was once used for making toboggans, steamed and bent to shape, and for canoe frames. While both of these items are now purchased, the large runner sleds for hauling logs are still made of native materials, at least in part. Spruce is still shaped and bent to make snow shoe frames, drum frames, ice scoop frames, and beaver pelt drying frames. Wooden shuttles for nets and boards for drying peltry are still carved of spruce or birch, but thin milled board is preferred if available.

The traditional Dogrib house was made of closely placed spruce poles covered over completely with snow in the winter time, forming a tepee. Only snow was used to fill the interstices between the poles. According to calculations of an informant in his sixties and based on information he received from his father, the Dogrib have been making rectangular log cabins for 110 to 115 years. However, this same informant said that snow covered tepees were still in use in his boyhood, as well as skin covered tepees where the poles are placed a foot or so apart at the base. Such dwellings were about twelve feet in diameter and about ten to twelve feet at the apex with a fire place in the center. He described them as dark and smokey and in answer to questions said they were built directly on the ground and not over a pit floor. Such tepee frames are still used, now covered with canvas or occasionally brush for use in tanning and smoking hides and in the latter case of the brush covered type for curing fish in the early winter.

Spruce boughs are used as flooring in modern wall tents if these do not have a board floor. Small boughs, needles pointing down, butt ends pointing to the back of tent are laid thickly on the ground. This work is done by women who begin carpeting the floor from the back of the tent. Fresh boughs are laid over the needles of the old ones every few weeks and eventually a springy, aromatic flooring is built up. Less carefully laid boughs are placed on the ground for overnight camp bedding.

It was observed when people go to the barren grounds they must sleep only on blankets or caribou hides as there is no spruce for bedding. In the old days, spruce had to be carried to the barren grounds for fuel.

The gathering of spruce for fuel is an activity which is probably as time-consuming as the food quest. Men cut large stands of poles and trim them and stack them in the bush during the spring and early summer where they are allowed to dry and season for an entire year. Burned over spruce stands are preferred as they are already dead, partly seasoned and largely cleared of branches. In the fall these long spruce logs are hauled on sleds to the village and stacked tepee fashion for winter fuel. Each family maintains its own woodpile. Wood was also observed rafted in before freeze up either in rafts which were dismantled at the village or placed across three canoes. However, this was fuel contracted for by the teacher. The long logs are sawed into stove lengths and split as needed.

During the summer firewood is gathered mainly by women who scour the underbrush almost daily for fallen boughs which they bring home in canvas back packs. This is often done in connection with checking rabbit snare lines. Although stoves are used in all dwellings, and so short sticks are gathered, campfires are made of long logs. Dead, standing spruce are wrested from the earth by hand or with a few strokes of an axe and laid in a long pile on the ground producing a large, hot fire very quickly.

Structures formerly employed in burial practices may have been made of spruce but possibly were made of birch. It is claimed that dug-out boxes with covers were made for coffins and placed on a "shelf" (probably a stage meant). Or, such boxes were simply placed on the ground and the bones kept if the individual had not been baptised. After baptism the bones would be buried. It is probable that only infant burials are meant in this description since mention was made of winter burials in the earth under the fireplace as the ground would not be frozen there.

Spruce roots were used for sewing canoes and are still used to sew birch bark containers.

Hunting implements presumably made of spruce formerly included bows, spears, and dead-falls.

Spruce gum was formerly used to seal canoe seams. It is still chewed raw as chewing gum but formerly was chewed to a soft consistency and applied to seal canoe seams where it was heated with a birch bark torch and smoothed. It was sometimes boiled to viscous state and applied to seams either in its clear form or with powdered charcoal added to give it a decorative black colour.

Chunks of rotten spruce are gathered by the women for smoking hides. They may also be used for making a smudge fire for the drying of meat and fish outdoors.

Willow

As noted in the discussion of fish nets (infra), the inner bark of willow was formerly twisted into twine for net string and fish line. Peeled willow sticks are used today by boys to make arrows. Peeled willow smoothed into sticks about 18" long and one half to almost three-fourths of an inch in diameter are used to string fish through the gills and suspend them on stages for freezing. A special type of home made knife was observed in use in the community for smoothing willow sticks, forming shuttles, etc. The handle is from a hand saw, cut to a pistol butt shape and the blade of a sharpened file, curved slightly and honed sharp on the inner curve, is set like the pistol barrel.

Willow withes are bound to form a circular shape and used as a supporting frame and edging of birch bark containers.

Birch

Formerly canoes were made of birch bark and while they are now entirely replaced by commercially made canvas canoes, people in their late forties and older participated in the making of birch bark canoes. The technique of canoe building was described. Large birch are found about three days' journey away from the village and it was necessary to make a special trip for this birch in the spring when it is in proper condition for canoe building and other uses. At least four birch trees are required to build a canoe and sometimes as many as ten were used. The bark is slit and peeled from the trunk as far as the sides of the trunk are virtually parallel. The tree should be large enough that a single sheet, the circumference of the trunk, will reach from gunwale. Four or more such sheets sewed end to end with a two inch overlap are needed for the canoe cover. Gunwales, "four fingers wide", made of spruce are cut and shaped. The birch is soaked in water to soften it, the strips sewn together and then

sewn to the gunwales after being placed on a flat surface of earth and drawn up into a canoe shape. As many as six women might sew on a single canoe. The ribs two fingers wide and a foot apart are then put in. The canoe is filled part way up with stones and allowed to stand for ten days to hold and set the shape. It is then turned over and the seams painted with spruce gum. Women made a special trip into the bush to gather gum in the spring. Sewing is done with spruce roots. The details of sealing the seams were made explicit. After the gum is painted on, "you take this left thumb," and smooth the gum which is heated by a birch bark torch placed in a cleft stick held in the right hand. The ribs are tied to the gunwales with spruce and up to three struts may be attached at the time the ribs are installed. It requires twenty days to make a canoe.

One man could carry two such canoes. The inside of the canoe faces the side of the body, one gunwhale resting on the shoulder, the other against the outside of the leg. When men made long portages, scabs would develop on their legs where the gunwales rubbed. The modern canoes with a heavy wooden keel board are hauled over short portages on log rollers or carried by two or more men holding the gunwales on either side. Modern canoe paddles appear to conform to a traditional style and differ markedly from the broad bladed commercially made paddle. The Dogrib paddles are heavy with narrow blades and seem to be adapted for poling as much paddling. They are about 4 1/2' long, with a thick round handle some two inches in diameter and simply rounded off with a rough knob at the top. The blade is eighteen to twenty inches long, close to an inch thick at the tip and forms a slightly rounded, elongated isosceles triangle, no more than eight inches wide at the tip. They appear to be made of spruce.

Birch bark is still used for a variety of containers, particularly for carrying and storing berries. A few old flat containers were observed and were described as used for carrying fish. Bark containers unlike canoes, are made with the smooth, dark inner bark on the outside. They are sewn with spruce roots. Formerly they were sealed with spruce gum to make them water tight to be used for stone boiling. A woman in her mid-eighties said that she had never seen the process but it was described to her by her mother. Caribou bones were split and broken and put in a large bark container with water. Stones two or three inches in diameter were heated and put in the water causing it to boil and melt the "grease" (marrow) which would float to the top of the water where it could be skimmed off. Details of manufacture of bark containers and sewing techniques are shown in the accompanying illustration, Figure 6.

Bowls and spoons were carved of birch wood, and while long since replaced by commercially manufactured utensils, examples were produced by an informant in his sixties who has used like objects in his youth. He made the items illustrated, see Figure 6, with modern tools: saw, the curved knife described in regard to making willow sticks for fish storage, and a chisel. If such objects were made before the acquisition of steel tools, presumably they were whittled with a beaver tooth adze described in the discussion of small game. (It has been speculated that maple bowls and spoons made by more southerly tribes, e.g. Winnebago, were made by a combined technique of charring and then scraping out hollowed parts as is known was the method in making dug-out canoes).

A bracket fungus, Fomes ignarius or F. everhartii, called k̲ɬɛ̲t'ah[1] is found on birch. The geographic locale and birch host suggest it is more probably the former species. This was used for a variety of purposes. A chunk dropped in boiling water produces tea. It can be ground and smoked in lieu of tobacco. The priests in the region have employed it for incense. However, its primary aboriginal use was in making fire by friction. A "white stone" or piece of metal was rubbed vigorously against a piece of k̲ɬɛ̲t'ah held close to the mouth and by a combination of heat generated by friction and constant blowing on it, a glowing ember would eventually develop. One elderly woman said if you place a piece out of doors it will make rain stop. Identification of a speciment of k̲ɬɛ̲t'ah was supplied by Dr. Alexander H. Smith, Mycologist at the University Museum, University of Michigan.

Moss

Sphagnum moss grows in abundance and is a multi-purpose item. It is gathered in quantities and dried in wads on any handy post or pole outside, primarily for use as a disposable baby diaper. At Fort Rae one

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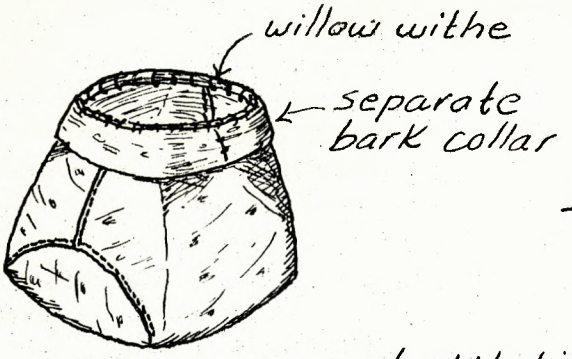
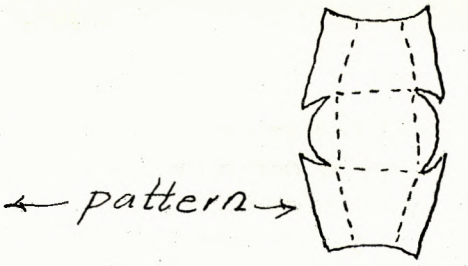
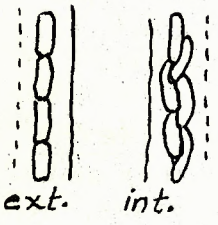
1. Here, in the transcription k̲ɬ̲ t'ah, and elsewhere throughout the text, we have transcribed certain sounds as the consonant cluster k̲ɬ̲. David Aberle, Athabascan specialist of the University of Michigan states (personal communication) that this cluster is generally lacking in the Athabascan dialects and suggests that in reality it is t̲ɬ̲. We ourselves often wavered between k̲ɬ̲ versus t̲ɬ̲ in our field transcriptions of certain words. We have decided however, to let the k̲ɬ̲ transcriptions stand at present. Interested liguists will no doubt be able to discern many other errors in our crude working orthography.

FIGURE 6

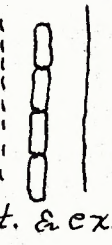




spruce root stitching (babiche may be used)



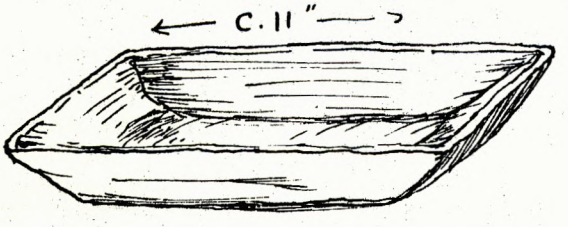
single element stitching on container - 1" overlap



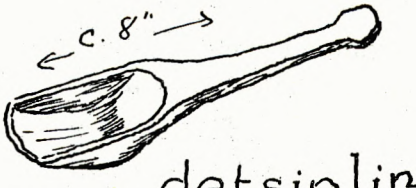
two element canoe stitching - 2" overlap

cross-section diagram of canoe stitch

a modern awl for bark work made of Coleman lantern knob.



detsinkwa



detsinlin

(dimensions of 1959 specimens. Informant said very large bowls made in above style for melting snow - placed near fire.

Birch Utilization

NOL

informant denied that it was used any more in baby diapers because the women found it too "dirty". But the amounts of moss being dried would seem to bring this statement into doubt. At Lac la Martre where infants are carried in moss bags as well as simply diapered, moss was observed in use in both instances.

When a canoe developed a leak on the trip between Rae and la Martre, fresh moss was used as a sponge to soak up the water where it entered the canoe.

Fresh moss is also used as chinking between the logs of even the new cabins being constructed under government supervision. It is forced into the cracks from the inside with fingers and a stick and plastered over with mud on the outside.

Fresh moss is put in the bottom of tin cans used as cuspidors by tobacco chewers.

Moss may have been used formerly as a type of sanitary napkin by menstruating women, but answers to questions on the matter were inconclusive, the younger girls, at least, claiming to use only commercially made napkins.

Edible Berries

Accurate botanical identification cannot be made of the total of seventeen types of edible berries recorded because of the difficulty of preserving specimens and because the period of study precluded observation of berries which came into season at other times of the year. The following descriptions will thus stress utilization and significance in Dogrib diet. The occurrence of Slavey cognate terms for berries named by the Dogrib is indicated by asterisks. The Lac la Martre people seem to place greater importance on berries than do the Slavey previously studied (MacNeish 1958) and spend more time in gathering greater quantities of berries. Berry picking often involves an all day outing, usually of parties of only women and children, and food such as fish, tea and bannock is carried along to be prepared at a campfire.

1. jiowa. This pronunciation is generally used but appears to be derived from dziuwa, dzi being the generic term for berry. Jiowa is the typical blue berry with frosty bloom and characteristic "crown". It may be gathered from mid-August until mid-September in areas that are hummocky but no longer definitely marshy. Jiowa are highly prized, gathered in large quantities, and eaten raw or raw with sugar. Berries are usually gathered in large kettles, although birch bark containers are also used for this purpose.

2. ink'lo^{n}.* This term is universally translated as cranberry and probably is a small variety of dry land cranberry, growing close to the ground from about the end of August or beginning of September and still available in early October before the snow covers the plants completely. It is about the size of a garden pea, bright red with a crown resembling that of a blueberry. It has a bitter-sour taste and is pithy in texture. The inside colour is pink to beige. The leaves are dark, glossy green and rather stiff, oval in shape with depressed center stem, an inch to an inch and a half in length. It is eaten raw or raw with sugar. Other uses are discussed with indu^{n} below.

3. indu^{n}. This berry is about the same size, a taste and texture and interior colour as ink'lo^{n} but is often a deeper red and lacks a crown. The foliage is similar but the plants are somewhat higher. Mr. Volney Jones, ethnobotanist at the University Museum, University of Michigan, who was consulted concerning the berries described believes that indu^{n} are also probably a form of cranberry related to the so-called "high bush" varieties. Both indu^{n} and ink'lo^{n} can be made into a kind of jam. They are boiled in water and sugar in a can which is then tightly covered and stored in the family fish house where it freezes. During the winter the jam is thawed and heated on a stove. Indu^{n} can also be frozen raw and after thawing are said to be more palatable. They are often cooked with fish roe which are also preserved by freezing during the winter.

4. intsi^{n}.* This is actually the rose hip. Hips do not appear to be gathered very purposefully, but are picked and eaten mainly by children who gather them in the course of play. The Dogrib classify rose hips as berries.

5. da.k^{h}a.* Raspberry. Ripens during the spring, utilization not observed.

6. da.k'li^{n}.* Sour red berries, grow on vines during summer. Not observed.

7. tsont'e. May be black berry or black raspberry on basis of description although also described as growing close to ground. Not observed.

8. ink'adzi. A small red berry supposedly favoured by birds. Not observed.

9. dagu. Gooseberry, genus Ribes. This berry resembles the more southerly beardless gooseberry, but is deep reddish purple in colour rather than green although it is striated like the green varieties. It ripens toward the end of the blueberry season and continues a week or two beyond blueberries. Large quantities are picked and it is eaten raw or raw with sugar.

10. gotsu^{n}k^{h}a. Strawberry. Ripens in May. Not observed.

11. jidegwa. Listed by only one informant who called it a strawberry. Possibly thimble berry. Not observed.

12. k'lindzi. "Dog berry." A black berry said to be eaten by dogs. Not observed.

13. kwenli.* A large red berry. Not observed.

14. nitsuani or nitsu^{n}.* A black berry growing on vines close to the ground. Not observed.

15. gia. dji (gia. dzi probably intended). A blue berry growing on a bush, 2 1/2' to 3' tall. Not observed.

16. hwadzi. "Marten berry." Tiny red berries about the size of a match head placed close together in clusters on twigs of bush. Not observed.

17. te. dzi. A red berry. Not observed.

On the basis of frequency of mention, as well as details of processing in some cases, it appears that only a few of the above mentioned berries are nutritionally significant. These are jiowa, ink'lo^{n}, indu^{n} and dagu as observed. The raspberry, strawberry and tsont'e which ripened earlier in the summer than the period of observation also appear to be highly prized. Consistent mention was made of rose hips and ink'adzi, but while the former grew in abundance, no special effort seemed to be made to gather them and no special data were obtained on the latter except highly variant pronunciations.

Apparently berries are important as adding variety to Lac la Martre Dogrib diet throughout the year since indu^{n} are preserved for winter use and many different berries are available throughout the growing season. Dogrib diet is very bland, the only seasoning being commercially made salt and sugar, and berries doubtless supply flavour

variation. It is impossible to estimate the per capita consumption of berries and with the inadequate botanical identifications, their nutritional content cannot be established. However, it is known that rose hips are high in ascorbic acid and fruits generally are sources of vitamins C and D. A scientific ethnobotanical study of this subject would be most valuable since the present meagre data suggest that berries contribute significantly to the nutritional adequacy and balance of Lac la Martre Dogrib diet.

A possible indication of the importance of berries to the Dogrib is the fact that in the course of travel by canoe from Ft. Rae to Lac la Martre, the two women in the party pointed out spots along the way known to be rich in berries which might be several hours' to a day's journey from either of the villages. When it was necessary to stop to repair the motor on the canoe, the women and small boys in the group spent the time picking blue berries.

Medicines

Circumstances did not permit any purposeful pursuit of herbal data and so the medicines described cannot be identified. It is obvious that at one time a variety of medicinal plants were used, but the tendency is to turn to western medicine. The use of plant medicines apparently was separate from curing performed in singing ceremonies by shamans. The current picture of healing is indicative of a number of acculturative factors. The one known shaman in the village now not only sings but will recommend the use of holy pictures and medals to effect a cure as well as native medicines. On one occasion some brown objects were observed hanging in his home. They resembled dried mushrooms strung on a string but were described as having grown in the water. The medicine is called ewuk ^{n} and is a laxative. Some days later the shaman's wife was observed at the teacherage where she requested a laxative from the teacher's medical supplies.

Other native medicines described and in some cases observed included: Spruce "nut" (cone?) boiled as a tea for a heart that is "no good;" fresh spruce boughs with leaves (specimen appeared to be blue spruce) boiled in a tea to stop coughing--a little boy who spat blood was allegedly cured by this tea; e. rah^{x}o or e. qah^{x}o for sore throat--a plant two to three feet high growing in or near the water having a pink (down?) on top. The twigs are dried and chewed. Also, the soft chewed twigs can be placed over scabs to promote healing. Another sore throat remedy called tsaroh^{x}o or tsaqoh^{x}o was described as having a large flat leaf growing close to the ground in moss. It is chewed.

It was impossible to determine whether the frequent reference to the heart being "no good" in describing conditions ranging from chicken pox to indigestion reflects a fundamental etiological concept of disease or simply the idiosyncratic interpretation of the informant providing the data.

There is concern and anxiety about illness and a willingness to admit to pain (often rather dramatically expressed by women in moaning and grimacing). There is also avidity for western medicine. The varied attitudes about medicine are well illustrated in the experiences of one informant who spent several years at Camsell Hospital in Edmonton as a tuberculosis patient. Shortly before he was scheduled for surgery a Cree Indian visited him and offered to cure him for $10.00. He agreed and the Cree brought a concoction of his own making and the man took it, reporting that in his next x-ray his lungs showed sufficient improvement to permit surgery. This same informant reported the successful cure of a member of the community by the local shaman who performed a singing ritual and administered a medicine he had made to heal a sore leg. On another occasion when the informant returned from a trip to Rae, he displayed his purchases of two bottles of aspirin, a jar of Vicks-Vaporub, and a bottle of patent medicine "pain killer".

No data were collected concerning medicines in connection with childbirth. Midwifery is a concern of middle aged and elderly women, and according to the doctor at Fort Rae as well as observation, childbirth is accomplished in stoical silence in comparison to the behaviour of patients, both male and female, suffering various other bodily pains.

CHAPTER V

EXPLOITATION OF FAUNA

As noted in Part I, it is in regard to foodstuffs--specifically, due to their fish catch--that the Marten Lake people have remained most self-sufficient vis-a-vis Euro-Canadian society, although, as this section will demonstrate, there is today a strong indirect dependence even in that realm, due to reliance on items of Western technology for the procurement of native foods. The following discussion will consider each of the wild foods in terms of technology and methods of obtaining and processing them for consumption. By-products of food items will be discussed in a separate section immediately after each food. Generally, the text has been limited, due to the exigencies of the writing schedule, only to data gathered in the course of field work. Regarding practices of the past, occasionally but not consistently observations of the naturalist Frank Russell, who was with the Dogrib in 1893-94, are cited (Russell: 1897). His entire book is strongly recommended for the reader seeking fuller time perspective.

Fish

Varieties and Seasons: - Discussion of the scientific taxonomy and identification of fish caught in Lac la Martre is based on personal correspondence from Dr. James J. Keleher, Fisheries Research Board, Biological Station, 539 Richmond St., London, Ontario. Five types of fish are distinguished by the Lac la Martre Dogrib as caught near their village. They know of additional species caught elsewhere.

1. whitefish, xɬi - Coregonus clupeaformis. It is possible other species are caught at Lac la Martre such as Prosopium cylindraceum and "ciscoes", formerly classified as genus Leucichthys.

2. trout, xɬiɛzɔ^{n} and xɬiɛzɔ - The former a larger variety and the latter a smaller variety. Dr. Keleher gives the identification Salvelinus namaycush for both but notes that the commercial fishermen of Great Slave Lake distinguish two kinds of trout which may be sub-species of S. namaycush.

3. jackfish, enda - Esox lucius

4. loche, nokwi - Lota lota

5. sucker, dɛdu - Catostomus catostomus. C. commersoni may also be present; it occurs sporadically in Great Slave Lake.

Whitefish and trout are the primary food fish with the others caught in fewer numbers and less prized. The fishing season begins roughly from the beginning of break-up, variously described by informants as March, April, May, and lasts until just after Christmas. It is generally agreed that hardly any fishing is done during January, February and March because the ice is too thick and "the fish leave the lake". Lac la Martre village is not ideally situated for year-round fishing as it is on a shallow bay of the lake proper and even where the ice may not freeze to the bottom, the fish seek deeper water for more oxygen. According to one informant, whitefish leave first, and even at the entrance of the river where nets can be placed late in the season only trout are caught. Then, for periods in December and in June only suckers are caught in abundance.

From the time of our arrival in late August, Indians discussed plans to go to fish camps some distance from the village before freeze-up, and later, after freeze-up various families intended to leave for periods of several days to two weeks in order to stockpile fish for the winter, particularly for dog food. Some dryfish would be made and the rest frozen as the dogs can eat frozen fish or even partially rotten fish if it does not happen to freeze at the time. Fish caught for dogs is not slit and gutted as it is for human consumption. People complained that the area near the village gets fished out and so they must go some distance away such as a small island near the entrance of the river. As a matter of fact, no one went to a special fish camp but continued fishing near the village. Whether this was due to the fact that fishing continued to be profitable near the village during the early winter of 1959 or whether the custom is actually being discontinued as there are substitute foods that can be purchased could not be determined. Possibly people set up fish camps in December after the period of observation. However, it was obvious that there was great activity in stock piling frozen fish from local fishing during the period (before and after freeze-up) that people had intended to do this at special fish camps. A report was received that some of the Rae families had left Rae for a special fish camp during this period.

By way of comparative data it may be noted that while the Lac la Martre people complained that their present village is not ideally situated for winter fishing because of the shallowness of the waters nearby, they admit they are infinitely better off than the Rae people. At Rae a far larger population exploits the local waters and the people set up camps some distance from Rae. One such camp was observed in August on the river on the way to Lac la Martre and was made up mainly of the wives and children of men away on the fall caribou hunt. Rae people sometimes come to Lac la Martre to fish and, as noted in Part I, a certain amount of trade in fish occurs between the two villages.

Technology and Methods of Fishing: - Fish are caught primarily by means of gill nets. Formerly these nets were made of cord (twisted on the thigh) of the inner bark of the willow. Willow is best collected for this purpose in the summer, but if cord must be made during the winter, willow withes are heated over a fire and then peeled. The exact dimensions of these nets could not be determined, one elderly woman saying they were about the size of commercial nets but a reliable male informant indicating that they were as deep (eight feet) but shorter than commercial nets. In time, manufactured string and cord replaced the native product. Indian Affairs now issues nets to the Indians. However, net making is not a lost art and one informant at Rae estimated that it would take her mother-in-law, an elderly woman, a week to make a net fifty-two arm-lengths long and twenty-one meshes deep and would require six balls of string. Whether willow or commercial twine are used, the technique involves measuring mesh size on a block of wood and knotting by means of a needle or shuttle, galaga, which is also used in net mending.

Although commercial nets now relieve the Indians of the task of actual net manufacture, several additional operations are required to prepare the net for use. First, cords are attached to the top and bottom edges of the net to make a sturdy border for attaching floats and weights. The nets come in bundles of two and are currently worth $23.00 per bundle (according to an R.C.M.P. constable). Apparently the initial operation to be described is more commonly women's work. The net is 150' long and 8' deep with four-inch meshes. A person starts at one end of the net and draws it up in folds or pleats across her lap, spreading the net and checking it for imperfections until the entire net forms a neat bundle across her lap, the top and bottom edges hanging over each side of her lap. The net is then thrown over a pole suspended from the ceiling with the edges hanging down on each side, or one end is tied in a bunch and suspended while work is done on the other edge. The person then starts at one end of the net, looping each mesh of one edge of the mesh over her hand until the entire edge is so gathered. It is tied through with a string to hold the loops in a bunch, and the operation is repeated for the other edge.

The next step seems to be more commonly carried out by men. A double cord is strung at about shoulder height between two buildings or posts at least as far apart as the length of the net. One cord is run through the top loops already prepared for this purpose as noted above, and then other cord is put through the bottom loops. The net is then pulled out along the cords, giving the appearance of a long hammock. A shuttle with net string is then used to thrust through the edge mesh and knot it to the cord. Often two men will work together, one knotting the top cord and the other knotting the bottom cord in place simultaneously. The string is looped through every fourth mesh and knotted back through the third one.

Before nets can be used, weights or mi^{n}kwi and floats or da. li must be attached to the bottom and top edges respectively. Strings about 10" long are attached to the edges of the net at regular intervals, 24 to an edge. Floats, either commercially made or whittled billets about 8" long are tied to the strings along the top edge, allowing about three or four inches of play to the strings. Stones about the size of a regulation baseball are similarly attached to the bottom edge. No effort is made to shape the net weights but the string is wrapped about securely twice, taking advantage to any natural indentations and irregularities in the stones to hold them in place.

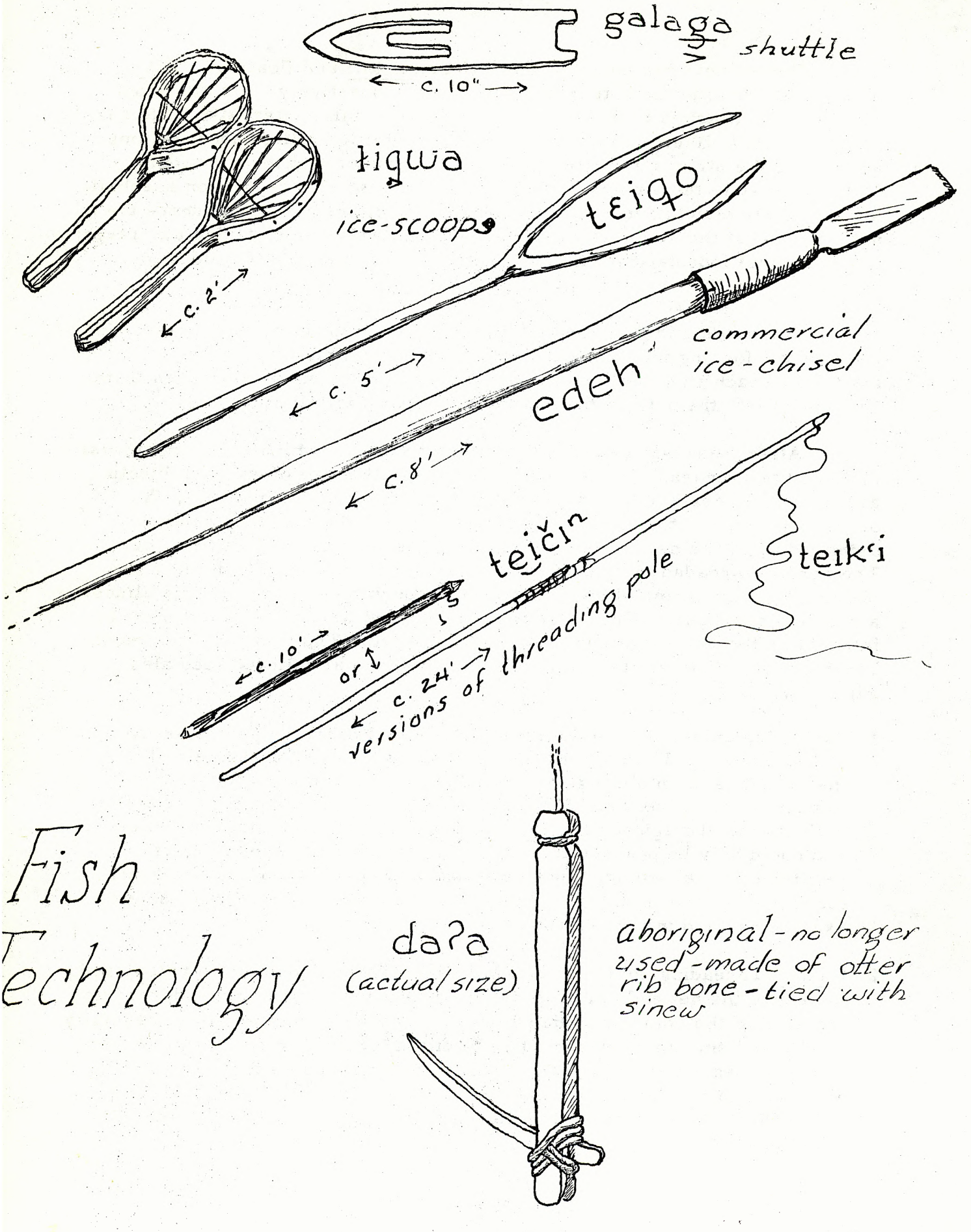
Setting nets in the summer time consists merely of going out in a canoe and forcing into the lake bed long poles to which the nets are attached at each end, the floats forming a line on the surface between them. Fish swim into the net and the net catches into their gills.

After freeze-up nets are placed under the ice which requires special tools and techniques. The tools may be carefully made or simply objects at hand, while certain ones can be dispensed with. Fundamentally, the operation requires threading a cord under the ice the length of a net and using it to pull the net, complete with weights and floats, under the ice. The cord is threaded by attaching it to a long pole and guiding it and shoving it on by means of holes chopped through the ice at intervals almost a pole's length apart. The holes may be chopped first or made interval by interval as the pole is guided along under the ice. The items of equipment, ranging from elaborate to simple in each case are as follows: (See also Figure 7).

1. edeh. Ice chisel. A commercially made tool consisting of a narrow chisel blade (c. 3" wide x 8" long) formed with a metal sleeve haft that attaches to an 8' long pole. Ordinary axes are sometimes used to chop holes in the ice. The name of this tool, meaning horn or antler, reflects the aboriginal version of this tool when it was made of antler and could only be pounded into the ice for about four strokes before requiring resharpening. Such tools were allegedly also made of bear, moose, and caribou bone, and mention was also made of stone headed axes being used in former times.

2. teici^{n}. Threading pole. This may be no more than one of the poles used to secure the net ends or a special pole kept for use as a threader. One member of the community had a pair of very long slender poles, carefully peeled and smoothed, which could be fitted together to double the length of the threader and reduce the number of guiding holes to be chopped by about one half. The cord is merely looped on the end of the threading pole with a slip knot, the pole itself having no special "eye" or hook to hold the cord.

FIGURE 7



Fish Technology

daʔa
(actual size)

aboriginal - no longer used - made of otter rib bone - tied with sinew

3. t€igo. Forked pole. This instrument consists of a long narrow two prong pole, the prongs about 2' in length and less than a foot apart, the handle about 3' long. The t€igo is used to guide and push the teici^{n} from one hole to the next. Some people simply use an axe as a peavey to work the threading pole along and one man was observed to plunge his bare hands into the icy water to guide the threading pole.

4. teik'i. Threading cord. Although it may be made of the same material it is distinguished by function from the mi^{n}mu^{n}tseti or heavy cord along the edges of the net, with mi^{n} meaning net. Likewise, the strings used to attach weights (and floats) is distinguished as kwitɬi, kwi standing for stone. The basic term for thread, string and cord is tɬi.

5. ɬigwa. Ice scoop. The ɬigwa is used to clear pieces of ice that fill the ice hole as a result of chopping. It is about the shape and size of a squash racket but less delicately made with taut strings running fan fashion from the handle end to the top and sides and two horizontal elements to hold the fanned elements in place.

Both setting and tending of nets is considered men's work, but women frequently perform both tasks. Tending of winter nets strung under the ice employs the teik'i on the principle of a continuous belt. It is attached to the far end of the net so that as the net is pulled out to free it of fish the threading cord is pulled under the ice. The net is returned to its position under the ice by simply drawing it under by means of the threading cord.

During the late summer when this study was begun, the general custom appeared to be daily tending of nets except for Sunday which is considered a day of rest. The nets were all placed fairly close to the shore about the village. The general range of catch per net was between twelve and twenty fish with a minimum of four and a maximum of forty reported during this period. Whitefish seemed to predominate. The distance travelled to nets depends to some extent on the availability of gas for outboard motors used on the canoes. Nets were noted several miles from the village on August 21, 1959, the day of arrival at Lac la Martre.

During the first week of September, reports were received that many people would be leaving for the fall fishing camps, but as noted, no one actually set up such a camp. A brief hiatus in fishing operations occurred during freeze-up which set in October 3, but by October 7 nets were being set under the ice at approximately the same places as the

summer nets had been set near the village. One man lost a net under the ice as it froze in before he could retrieve it and another man was observed out in his canoe in slush hacking with an axe to rescue his net from the fast encroaching ice. There was an obvious effort to begin stockpiling fish. Nets were being put in order and mended at various homes visited with the intention of setting more than a single net per household. The maximum number of nets set for a single household was six.

As the ice thickened, the nets were set further out from shore and were tended only every other day with sometimes longer lapses between visits to nets. Maximum catches for visits made every other day to three or four nets ran to about a total of ninety fish. During this cold period it appeared that more and larger trout were caught, but this may simply be an error in observation earlier in the season. Most whitefish and trout observed earlier were from 18" to two feet in length and weighed up to three and a half pounds, but after freeze-up a number of very large trout were observed in the catches of various households and were well over two feet long and weighed twenty pounds or more.

Nets may be left in the water about a month and simply emptied of their catch at regular intervals before they must be taken out to be mended. It was generally agreed that a net would last about a year with proper handling, after which time the string becomes weakened from rot and can no longer be repaired. The white string soon acquires a pale salmon colour after short usage, but is unknown if this is due to the chemistry of the water or the nature of the string used.

Fish hooks were observed in the village, but not in use. These were commercially made metal hooks and it was reported that they are used sometimes during the winter to catch trout through the ice. Hooks were made aboriginally of the rib bone of otter, being constructed of two pieces of bone, a sharp, slender bone curved up to form the barb and jammed and secured by tying with string in a split in the lower end of another piece of bone forming the shank. It is possible that jigging for fish through the ice was once more widely practiced as it would require chopping but one hole with antler tools as compared for the series of holes necessary to set nets under the ice.

Fish Consumption: - The Dogrib people at Lac la Martre make as close to 100% utilization of fish caught as possible. Consumption estimates include consumption by both human beings and dogs. Although other game is utilized, only rarely and for very short periods are fish excluded from the daily diet.

Dogs consume more fish than do people during the year. An average household has a team of five dogs. During the winter season when the dogs are working, each dog is fed one fish per day. Thus, a five dog team requires some 1, 050 fish during the period of about 210 winter days, that is from October through April. They are fed far less during the remaining 155 non-working days of summer, the entire team being fed only two or three fish or a total of 310 fish for the team. Over the course of a year a five dog team consumes about 1, 360 fish. The dogs actually eat more fish than this since they are given all entrails, heads and tails and even bones not consumed by human beings.

A minimum estimate of human consumption would seem to be two fish daily for a family of two adults and four children, or a total of 730 fish a year.

Observations during the period of study indicated that the mode of fish in high frequency is eighteen inches and weighing 2 1/2 pounds. The average weight runs somewhat higher since occasionally huge trout weighing upwards of twenty pounds are caught. Thus, considering the 730 fish consumed by human beings and the 1, 360 fish consumed by dogs as weighing 2 1/2 pounds each, the grand total for a household as described comes to at least 5, 225 pounds of fish consumed per year, or over two and one half tons. The eighteen households at Lac la Martre therefore consume over forty-seven tons of fish per year. This estimate probably errs on the conservative side since some households possess more than a single team of dogs. However, this under-estimate is given because for brief periods of a week to a month some families are occasionally able to live exclusively on caribou or moose, which reduces fish consumption. Despite this fact, the estimate may still be somewhat too low.

Fish Processing: - The many and varied recipes for processing and cooking fish are doubtless indicative of their importance in Lac la Martre diet. Processing falls into three general categories; preparation of dried fish, fresh fish, and frozen fish.

Dried Fish

All of the fish listed may be dried. Two techniques of cutting fish were noted; the double slash or ekwa method and the single slash or tsɛʔt'a method. The former seems to be more often employed. After the fish is scaled, a slash is made along each side of the back-bone, about an inch down from the dorsal edge. The knife is then guided down under the flesh from head to tail on each side, clearing the flesh from the ribs, and brought down around the belly portion without cutting through the belly. Only the

ventral fin is cut out, leaving a small hole in an otherwise continuous slab of fish flesh about an inch thick, depending on the size of the fish. It is cut free at the head around the gills at the outset but is still attached to body at the narrowest part of the tail on both sides. Filets remaining along the lower halves of the ribs are then sliced free as two strips in the same fashion that the rest of the fish had been cut away, guiding the knife under the flesh from head to tail. The large outer slab is flipped back and the ribs are severed from the spine in one stroke on each side without cutting into the entrails. The head, still attached to the spine and viscera, is then grasped in the left hand and held vertically so the fish is clear of the working surface. The right hand is then brought down from the head in one stroke, freeing the viscera from their attachments along the spine so that the viscera come away in a neat, unbroken package. The viscera are prodded for roe sacs and if they are present are removed without breaking them. Entrails, scales and bones are set aside for dog food, as well as the head which is cut off in the last operation. The finished fish then consists of the large body slab, attached at the tail and folded back from the strip of dorsal flesh. The overall appearance is of a rectangular paddle of body flesh with the dorsal strip forming the handle. The dorsal strip is usually cut away and eaten fresh but it may be dried with the rest of the fish. Drying consists of hanging the fish over a pole, head end on one side, tail end on the other. Drying requires two days, the flesh side up the first day and turned over to rest against the pole the second day. Drying may be done in the family dwelling where poles are suspended for this purpose or it may be done out of doors. Usually fish drying poles are set up in corral-like enclosures (described earlier) to protect them from dogs, and smokey fires are sometimes lighted in the enclosure to discourage flies from laying eggs on the fish. In early winter when people go to fish camps, brush covered tepees are built to dry fish. Since rotten spruce wood is used and the tepees are tightly sealed, the fish are heavily smoked. This flavour is relished but it is incidental to the objective of keeping the fish sufficiently warm so they will dry without freezing. The dried fish are eaten without cooking. However, fish that have been dried for only one day are toasted over an open fire on each side. This may be accomplished by laying the fish on a wire grill over a stove lid opening, propping the grill before an open fire when away from home, or simply propping the fish up on a green stick at an open fire. Whitefish are usually dried in this fashion but all except loche may be also prepared in this way.

The double slash method of drying fish is employed for "skinny" fish such as small whitefish or trout but primarily the more slender shaped jackfish, sucker, and loche. After scaling, a slash is made along one side of the backbone and down through the belly. Bones and viscera are removed in an operation similar to those described previously, but the head is not cut off. The fish is then dried on a pole with the head pointing up and

resting on the pole and the two sides depending from either side of the pole. Suckers are so filled with bones in the front portions that they are fed to the dogs and only the rear sections are used for human consumption. Dried fish may be stored in flour sacks or cardboard or wooden boxes allowing for some circulation of air.

A further processing of dry fish is the making of a meal or flour from the dried fillets and dorsal sections obtained from the double slash method. This is known as etsI or pounded fish. The fish is laid among many small stones between two layers of canvas and pounded with the blunt end of an axe. The pounding and grinding produce fine powdery shreds which may be stored in bags for long periods. The etsI is cooked with fat, caribou tallow being particularly prized for this purpose although lard can be used, and is allowed to cool and harden before being eaten. This is, in effect, a fish pemmican, since cranberries or the similar indu^{n} berries as well as roe may be included in the mixture. This pemmican may also be stored.

Fresh Fish

After scaling, a fresh fish may be simply slit down the belly, the head and viscera removed, and toasted in a wire grill over a stove opening or at a campfire. The interior portion is not exposed to the fire but only the skin on each side is toasted producing a steamed effect to the flesh inside. If a fish is too large to fit in a grill, chunks of appropriate length are cut across the backbone but keeping the two sides intact as with the smaller fish.

Fish are also cut in pieces and fried on both sides in lard in a frying pan, or pieces of fish may be baked in an open pan but not all households have stoves with ovens in which this technique may be employed.

An entire fish may be slit and gutted as described above and cut into pieces three or four inches long and boiled, or only the dorsal portions left from making dry fish may be boiled. The water in which fish are boiled may be drunk.

Frozen Fish

When the weather is cold enough, fish are preserved by freezing, either piled on stages, stacked in fish houses, or strung through the gills on a green willow stick in groups of six. The sticks may be stored in a fish house or suspended by the ends of the sticks between high stages out of reach of the dogs. These frozen fish are used for dog food and human consumption. Estimates vary as to the number of fish a household must

freeze to see its members and its dog team through the winter. The numbers given ranged from 250 sticks or 1, 500 fish to 2, 000 fish. The frozen fish are simply thrown to the dogs with no further processing, except in the case of small puppies which are fed boned, cooked fish. No fish are scaled before freezing.

Fish frozen for human consumption are prepared in a number of ways. Frozen fish may be sufficiently thawed to permit skinning, deheading, slitting and gutting. The still partially frozen fish is cut into chunks with an axe and boiled. It may be eaten in this form or it may be drained on a clean plate and the bones then removed. Flour and water are stirred with the boiled fish which crumbles into bits as the ingredients are mixed together. The mixture is then fried in a frying pan like bannock bread. Whole frozen fish are also toasted, the entrails being removed after cooking.

Special Fish Preparation

Fish roe or kliek'i^{n} is prized and prepared in a number of ways. Its use in fish pemmican has been noted. It is also mixed fresh in bannock dough and baked in the bread. Fresh roe is sometimes fried in fat in a frying pan. Roe is sometimes dried, the sacs threaded on sinew and allowed to air dry. This same technique of threading on sinew is sometimes used to dry the rib filets from dry fish preparation. Roe is also preserved by freezing.

Fish By-Products: - As noted, the primary by-product of fish used for human consumption are the entrails, heads and even bones and scales which are fed to the dogs. Fish may be prepared out-of-doors or in the home, but in any case the work is done on an old piece of painted canoe canvas which is carefully scraped clean of blood, scales, etc. into the pan where the entrails have already been set aside for dog food. Fish heads are sometimes saved, strung on a stick through the eyes, to be used for trap bait. The only instance reported of a by-product which did not serve as food, even for animals, is in regard to an organ of which we were unable to obtain a specimen. It was described as being bright red and called kɬiuwo. It is used in the tanning of beaver hides.

General Observations Regarding Fish: - The processing of fish for consumption is generally women's work, but it is obvious that if necessary a man could perform all of the described operations satisfactorily. A seven year old boy was pleased to demonstrate his own competence in fileting fish for our benefit. However, since it is hard work and the fish are often heavy to lift, most girls do not take a regular role in fish preparation until they are about fourteen years old. The tools used may be a heavy butcher knife but more frequently an ordinary table knife with

the rounded end honed to a sharp edge. Timing of the operations involved in making double-slash dry fish revealed that they were completed in well under ten minutes per fish. However, in this and in other work performed particularly by women, there is an effect of unhurried deliberateness involving an initial thoughtful contemplation and random prodding with a knife of a pile of fish to be cleaned. There is also a curious, gingerly handling of the fish with stiffly curled fingers as if a woman were not in the habit of touching such messy objects.

People relish meat and one informant observed that you can't live on fish alone, or even trout alone, when complaining that in December only trout are sometimes caught in the nets. Nevertheless, the Marten Lake people eat large quantities of fish with a sense of enjoyment. On one occasion when the anthropologists spent two days with an Indian family and provided a variety of luxury purchased foods, the woman of the family finished the meal provided and said, "Now I am going to eat fish." She then helped herself to a portion of boiled fish from her kettle on the stove. The months of deep winter, when little or no fish can be taken, can be a period of privation. As Francoise puts it, in her expressive fashion, "At that time, those mothers' children are growing so very thin".

Granting that casual conversation was limited to rather concrete subjects due to the language barrier and that early in their work the anthropologists began asking men about numbers of fish caught in their nets, this information was often volunteered, particularly with pleased pride when a large number of fish had been caught.

The Lac la Martre people regret that they must travel so far to Fort Rae to buy supplies, but are agreed that Lac la Martre is a far superior location in terms of fishing as well as for other natural resources. The larger population at Rae means that the environment is more intensively exploited. Pity has been expressed for Rae people who sometimes have nothing to eat but pilot biscuits and tea.

Despite the emphasis on fish, the Lac la Martre people seem to be singularly free of supernatural beliefs and practices concerning fish. It was observed that women carefully scraped away all blood from the canvas on which they cleaned fish and washed the floor free of blood around the working area, but even direct questions elicited no definite opinions on the matter about the danger of blood in the house such as the Slavey express regarding mammal blood (MacNeish 1954). Skins of dry fish and other uneaten remains of fish prepared for human consumption are carefully scraped into the container for dog food or into a slop pail. Again, it was in answer to a direct question that the view was expressed that fish skins and bones should not be burned because the fish do not like this and might

go away. However, the anthropologists were not cautioned against the practice as strangers who might not know the proper behaviour regarding these matters.

It may be added that remains of food while camping away from home are carefully gathered up and deposited in a heap in the bush rather than simply cast away while eating. However, it was impossible to determine whether this custom was dictated by supernatural beliefs or simply a sense of neatness.

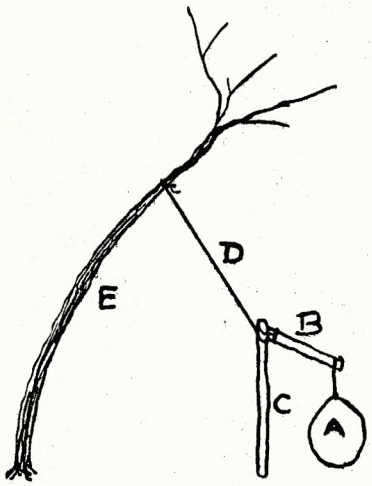
Rabbits

The term rabbit is used since this is the English name which the Lac la Martre people use for the varying hare which they call ga. Rabbits are obtainable throughout the year and provide a minor semistaple in the diet of the more bush oriented members of the community. The usual method of hunting rabbits is with snares, but after the snow falls unbaited small animal traps such as are used for peltry animals may also be set in the rabbit runs under the snow. One man in the village reportedly set ten such traps besides his twenty snares. Men also hunt rabbit and ptarmigan and grouse with .22 rifles, while women often take a rifle with them when going out to gather wood in the hope of encountering rabbits en route. Northern Indians comment that the time of the first snowfall is good for hunting rabbits as the pelage of the still partly brown rabbits stands out against the white background.

The principle involved in snares, gaho, is best explained by the accompanying illustration in Figure 8. Of the households, four were reported as never setting snares, five regularly set snares, while in yet another household rabbit skins were observed in use in baby wrappings. Both men and women set snares but it appears to be primarily a task for elderly and middle aged women. The snares are usually set in the bush close to the village but one elderly man was observed in August to paddle to land across the bay from the village to set out his snare line. The snares are set along the regular runs or trails which the rabbits make through the bush and which can be observed even during the summer. The same area may be exploited indefinitely as the rabbits do not seem to change the course of their runs despite losses in their numbers to snares along the way. The Lac la Martre people reported rabbits as plentiful during the period of study, and said they recall no complete failure of this game as has been reported for several years at Good Hope and elsewhere.

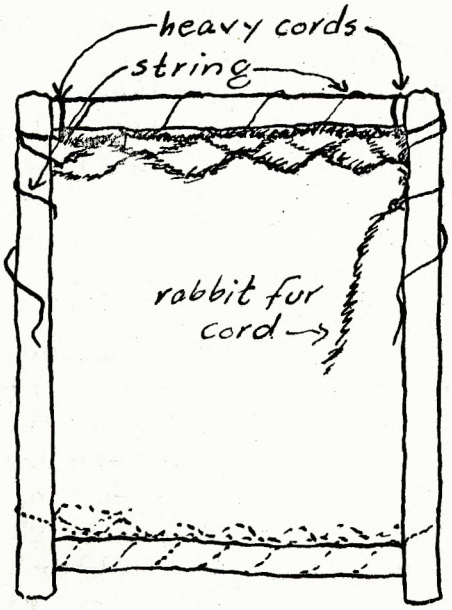
The reports of snares set by a given person ranged from twelve to thirty and the daily take ranged from two to five rabbits. The snares

FIGURE 8



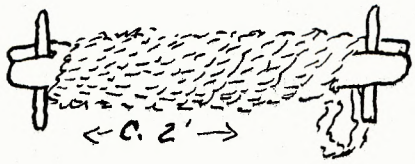
Rabbit enters loop A, jarring loose counter-weight of sticks B and C. This releases tension of string D, allowing sapling E to snap up, pulling up B, D, and A, strangling rabbit in A.

gaho, rabbit snare



gawo } rabbit skin-blanket
tso }

billet "spool" for winding and storing rabbit fur "yarn"



Rabbit Fur Netting Technique

are visited every day unless the weather is bad or it is Sunday. Snares are checked and reset if a rabbit is caught. One informant complained on one occasion that ravens had raided his snares. Among the Slavey the black bear has been mentioned as a culprit in this regard.

Processing: - Rabbits are skinned by cutting around the pelt at the head and peeling the pelt off like a sweater. Incisions are made at the feet so that the paws with claws are pulled off with the pelt. Sometimes the heads are severed from the bodies and left attached to the pelt along the back of the neck, but usually the head is left on the animal. The ears are trimmed down when the head pelt is removed. The animal is slit and gutted of viscera except for the heart, lungs, liver and kidney which are eaten. Heads complete with eyes and brains are also eaten.

As far as could be determined the usual method of cooking rabbits is to boil them complete with the edible organs noted. Little of the animal is wasted as the entrails are fed to dogs.

Consumption: - It is impossible to estimate the quantities of rabbits consumed on the basis of available data. As noted, those families which regularly set snares may obtain from two to five rabbits daily, but no count could be kept on the occasional rabbits shot in the course of other activities and added to the larder. Apparently no effort is made to preserve rabbits and they are eaten fresh. A cleaned rabbit, including the weight of bones, does not usually weigh over a pound. It is obvious that these animals are considered a supplementary food adding variety to the diet but inadequate to maintain a family. (Rabbits are ordinarily so lacking in fat that they probably are not a nutritionally adequate flesh food.) Even those households most active in the almost daily snaring of rabbits also set fish nets with the same regularity as those households which did not set rabbit snares.

By-Products: - As noted, rabbit entrails are used for dog food. As far as could be observed the brown summer pelts are simply discarded, but the white winter pelts can yield a number of by-products although their use is rapidly diminishing. The skins are left inside out as they are peeled off the rabbits and hung up to dry. They may then be simply pulled over the feet, fur side inside, as a moccasin pac, or may be made into rough socks. For the most part home knit socks or purchased socks and stockings as well as pacs of duffle cloth have just about completely replaced the rabbit fur pacs.

One infant in the community small enough still to be carried in a moss bag was observed wrapped about the lower limbs with white rabbit fur which had been placed between the moss packing and the fabric cover of the bag.

Formerly, blankets and underclothing were netted of rabbit fur yarn or cord. Allegedly this craft is no longer practised and two small blankets were produced simply to oblige the anthropologists who wished to study the technique of their production. However, in a third household which, as far as is known, did not intend to produce a blanket for this purpose, rabbit fur cord was being produced and carefully wound on a special holder for some future use. The technique of netting, known to a number of women in the village, is described as follows. (See also Figure 8).

Rabbit fur yarn. The rabbit pelt, turned fur side in, is held in the teeth at the head end and a sharp knife is used to cut a continuous strip, spiraling the length of the pelt. Leg and paw portions are simply allowed to remain attached to the strip as the spiral is cut around. The strip is twisted as this work is done and continues to twist as a result of the drying of the pelt which is worked on when fresh or dampened to be cut. The strip thus forms a completely furred, twisted cord. If the strip is cut about an inch wide, a single rabbit pelt will yield about four feet of completed rabbit fur yarn. The twisting of the strip to form a cord was reported as accomplished by either of two methods; twisting it around a piece of commercial cord and pulling the cord out later, or simply twisting it tightly by hand. One strip is spliced to the next by cutting a slit in the end of one strip, drawing the end of the next strip through it, folding it back and twisting iton sticks or billets of wood about two feet long. The splits at right angles to the billet to prevent the wound yarn from slipping off either end. The billet observed in use was wound with two thicknesses of year simultaneously.

Netting. A rectangular pole frame is made to the desired size and the poles are butted at the corners rather than crossed. It could not be determined if the corners were nailed or pegged together, but they were not tied in place. Heavy cords are tied to the upper corners of the frame which is set up in a vertical position against any handy support. A string is attached to one of these corner cords and wound around the top pole of the frame with spaces of about two inches between each successive spiral of the string and about a half inch of clearance between the bottom of each successive twist of the string and the bottom side of the pole. The string is them secured to the heavy cord at the other upper corner. Strings are attached to the heavy corner cords and allowed to hang free for use as work progresses. Ordinary commercial string and cord were used in the specimens observed.

The rabbit fur yarn, dampened for work if not still wet, is tied to the heavy cord at one corner and passed through the spiral of the cord around the top pole described above. Working from left to right, when

the yarn has been drawn to the far right, the dependent string is looped around to hold it to the side of the frame in the manner that it is secured by loops along the top. The yarn is then carried to the left and at about two inch intervals, alternating between the intervals produced by looping into the cord above, the yarn is brought around the above line of yarn and secured at each interval by a double looping pulled as tight as possible. When this second row is completed it is secured to the left side by being looped through with the dependent string which is then wrapped about the left pole of the frame by one turn. The process continues back and forth producing a diamond shaped mesh. However, the shape of the mesh is obscured by the thick fur. The object is finished off at the bottom by looping string through the final row of yarn at intervals as it is wound about the poles. The bottom corners are automatically secured to the bottom of the frames by looping of string along the sides of the bottom. It is allowed to dry on the frame for a day or so until its shape is set and the strips of twisted rabbit skin have shrunk taut and hard.

The specimens obtained were each made of fifteen rabbit pelts and were about 2' x 4' in size. It was explained that blankets were formerly made of sixty or seventy pelts and were the size of a double bed blanket.

The netting technique was used to make underwear, jackets and pants or leggings. Presumably these garments were fashioned of a number of separately made rectangular sections of netting which were sern together rather than netted to the shape of the garments in one piece. The jackets were open down the front and held together with ties. Although such garments have been long replaced by commercially made underclothing, informants in their late forties and early fifties recalled wearing them when young, and since at least one relatively young woman was able to make a blanket with no difficulty it is possible that both the blankets and underclothing were in sporadic use until quite recently.

A final note on rabbits was obtained while visiting the Lac la Martre children at the boarding school at Fort Smith at the close of the study. Two of the boys had set rabbit snares in the woods near the school a few days before and caught a rabbit which the kitchen staff obligingly cleaned and cooked for them.

Small Game Other than Rabbit

A variety of peltry animals are trapped for trade, as discussed elsewhere, but inferior pelts, especially of beaver and muskrat, are used locally to trim parkas and slipper moccasins and mukluks. Wolverine is usually kept rather than traded as it is particularly prized for parka trim since the fur does not frost readily. It is prepared by stretching on a hoop frame and scraping, as is beaver. The short supply

of local wolverine results in the Lac la Martre people buying wolverine pelts at the Hudson's Bay Store which gets them from Eskimo sources. Women set traps for squirrels near the village (and sometimes catch more valuable animals as well). The skinned bodies of squirrels are saved for dog food, often kept frozen in the fish house to be used when other sources of dog food run low. The Lac la Martre people expressed astonishment when told that Indians and Whites further south eat squirrel, although they eat other peltry animals such as beaver and muskrat. Mink is neither eaten by human beings or fed to dogs.

The former use of otter rib bones for fish hooks has been noted. The incisor teeth of beaver were used to make cutting tools. A tooth was set at about 45° angle in a handle, forming a small adze for use in smoothing and whittling wood. The beaver tooth adze was known to informants by description but not personal observation.

Porcupines were once hunted for their quills which were used for decorative embroidery, and of course they are also edible. It appears, however, that they are very rarely taken today. Only one example of moccasins with porcupine quill work was observed in the village. The women who made them dyed the quills with red ink, claiming to know no native dyes for this purpose.

Birds

The methods of taking and processing game birds were recorded, but it was impossible to obtain a precise identification of the birds described or even observed. Further work in establishing identifications in process. A total list of sixteen edible birds with seasons of prevalence was obtained from various informants.

1.	gaba	ptarmigan	
2.	di	a grouse	October
3.	ehto	a grouse, gray and larger than di-ruffed grouse	October
4.	kweka	small, quail size, mottled brown and white, possible a horned lark or variety of long spur.	October
5.	gagu	"crane" like bird	
6.	da^{h}ga^{h}	"crane" like bird	

7.	de	?
8.	ci	this may be a special type of duck but it is more likely the generic term for duck. Ducks are available from May to October.
9.	dat'e	black duck
10.	bek'o (some say mbek'o)	sea gull
11.	xa	goose
12.	tit'so	type of duck
13.	$k^{h}wo$	large brown and white duck
14.	$kwimbe^{h}$	a duck, probably mallard
15.	$na^{h}txa$	?
16.	$ae^{h}uwa$	" a little bird"
17.	$det'u^{n}co$ ($det'u^{n}tso$?)	presumably edible, a large duck that migrates north in the spring, described in connection with use of feathers.

In addition to the edible birds, listed, informants also identified two inedible species; $tatso^{n}$ or raven and $i^{n}ka$ or whiskey jack.

Consumption: - Birds form an important part of the native diet only in the sense of providing variety in the usual staple diet of fish and the semi-staple of rabbits.

Hunting Methods: - Hunting birds with guns is usually incidental to other activities. A family will often carry a shotgun or a .22 rifle while travelling through an area known to be rich in birds or during a particular bird season. This may be done in the course of travel as between La la Martre and Rae, or women may carry guns while out gathering fire wood, tending rabbit snares, etc. Occasionally, a man will go out for the express purpose of hunting birds currently in season as has been observed in regard to gaba, ehto and di (Nos. 1, 2 and 3 shown on page 4). Small boys hunt kweka (#4) with bows and arrows, using a crude three-foot long bow and roughly smoothed, usually unfletched, arrows tipped with a discarded .22-long rifle shell cartridge. One boy was observed shooting

kweka with a sling shot. Kweka are said to be taken on occasion with a box trap. A cardboard box is propped on a trigger stick, oatmeal or tiny pebbles are scattered beneath it on the ground, and when kweka wander in the trigger stick is pulled out by means of a long string. Di (#2) are sometimes caught with nets. An old fish net is propped up on a stretch of beach where the birds are apt to settle in a flock. The flock is then rushed and the startled birds fly into the net becoming entangled in it.

Processing: - Birds are plucked, most of the wing sections removed and discarded, and gutted. This is usually followed by a cursory singeing of pin feathers over an open fire. Large birds are cut into pieces, including heads, and boiled. Smaller birds are sectioned and toasted (again including heads) over a fire on a wire grill.

By-Products: - Presumably viscera are fed to dogs. Feathers, primarily the down and smaller feathers of larger birds as ducks and geese are used as filling for quilts.

Awls for sewing moccasins and other skin garments as well as birch bark containers were formerly made of duck leg bones. Steel needles are now used, and awls for puncturing bark are made of a nail driven through a wooden handle and sharpened.

Arrows were fletched with three feathers tied on with sinew. "Crow" (raven) feathers and those of the det'u^{n}tso were used for this purpsoe.

Bird and rabbit bones were once made into beads.

Large Game, General Comments

Formerly, large game included caribou, muskox, moose and bear. The muskox is now virtually extinct and no longer hunted but a relatively detailed account of former activities regarding the hunting and utilization of muskox was obtained. Both caribou and muskox are herding animals and were often hunted by parties of men co-operating in the endeavor to take as many animals as possible at such times as the herds would be large and the meat and hides in good condition. Caribou are still hunted in this fashion. Moose and bear are more solitary animals. Only a few moose, at most, are ever taken at any one time. Moose are usually shot in the course of other activities such as trapping although men may go out for the express purpose of hunting moose. Likewise bear are shot if a person happens upon them while out berry picking, etc. and sometimes both a mother and cubs will be killed at one time. In the winter, trappers are alert for evidence of bears in hibernation, their location revealed by the condensation of air around breathing holes at their dens.

In addition to having given up the hunting of muskox, a number of changes are in process in regard to the hunting of caribou and moose. These animals are prized at least as much for their hides as for their meat and at present provide variation of the fish and rabbit diet but could be dispensed with as nutritional necessities. Only four men of the Lac la Martre village joined the Rae hunters on the annual caribou hunt to the barren grounds in August of 1959. It was reported that the men of the village had delayed large game hunting because of the availability of wage work for so many of them right in the village. This wage work was in connection with the building of the new teacherage which has been in progress for two years. Likewise, trapping was delayed or the trapping trips of short duration because of a rumor that the government was going to send in a plane to pick up men to work as a crew on road construction as was done the previous year. This meant less opportunity for hunting moose which is usually an adjunct to trapping. A final factor militating against efforst to obtain large game has been the government subsidized construction of dwellings during the summer and fall of 1959.

Caribou and moose hides are still vital for the making of moccasins, mittens and snowshoes but in almost all their other uses these hides have been replaced by commercial textiles and cordage. Metal, ceramic and even plastic substitutions have been made for objects formerly constructed of bones, antlers and muskox horns.

The meat of large game was doubtlessly much more a necessity years ago especially in deep winter when fish could no longer be taken through the thick ice and supplies of fish might run low. Also, before the advent of commercial nets fish could probably not be taken and stockpiled in their present quantities. Although people are still haunted by the spectre of winter famine, it is no longer likely to become a reality despite sincere verbalization of this old traditional source of anxiety. In addition to the cash received for furs, an economic cushion is provided by various government benefits such as family allowances, old age pensions and the like. Food is available and there is money to purchase it. Furthermore, emergency rations can be flown in now that Lac la Martre is in regular radio contact with Fort Rae to send distress calls. The stark necessity of the assiduous pursuit of large game for food no longer exists.

However, the changed conditions promoted by the airplane, radio, a cash economy with wage work, and regular government assistance as well as the availability of emergence rations appear to date to promulage an underlying sense of resassurance permitting greater latitude in the choice of productive economic pursuits. Utter dependency and expectation of support do not characterize the Lac la Martre people. For one thing, eve

if entrenched habits of self-sufficiency are discounted, they prefer their native foods, if we may take as a gauge their pitying attitude toward the Rae people who, because of their more limited natural resources, must purchase greater quantities of commercially prepared foods. Furthermore, there is no prospect in sight of the total abandonment of the pursuit of large game. Meat hunger is still a cultural compulsive, albeit tempered by the great availability of fish, and the hides of large game are a real necessity for existence.

Moose-soled moccasins with caribou ankle wrappings and moose-soled mukluks remain the most practical footgear in the region, as attested to by the fact that Whites who spend extended periods in the bush wear them regularly. Commercially made rubbers have become necessities to be worn over moccasins and mukluks on damp ground because of the comfort afforded and because of the protection provided the moosehide soles which wear out quickly when wet. Hard soled leather shoes and even tennis shoes are usually worn by those few people who possess them only on Sundays when it is understood nobody works. A few men own rubber boots, either short or hip-length, which they wear for such work as rafting logs when water may splash higher than the protection offered by low rubbers. The sheer practicality of moccasins for most purposes rests in the fact that the foot remains flexible and thus warm through unimpeded blood circulation; layers of socks and pacs may be added or left out as weather dictates. Moccasins and mukluks are also more economical since they are home made of largely native materials and can be kept in repair by patching holes with moosehide. Commercially made shoes would pose a tremendous expense, particularly in large families of growing children, and no facilities for repair are available. Even rubbers cost almost four dollars a pair. They were in short supply in the community, and were worn to a state of tatters after efforts to mend splits in them could no longer be made.

Commercially made gloves and mittens tend to be substituted more frequently for the native produce than is the case with footwear, but again it is doubtful that sled mitts with moosehide backs and caribou-hide palms can be dispensed with easily. The durability and relative stiffness of the material means that they can be clipped on and off easily and quickly. Since they hang from a cord about the neck they can be readily flipped behind the back to hook together without tangling.

Commercial cord has replaced babiche for many purposes, but in some instances babiche is preferred if it can be obtained, as in the lacings for snowshoes. Likewise, preference has been expressed for food storage bags of caribou hide rather than the much more frequently used cloth on the basis of food so stored having a better flavour.

A practice observed in regard to animal hides may be retention of old concepts of frugality, but it may well indicate that the present supply is barely adequate for present needs. Fragments of worn out moccasins and mittens are carefully washed with soap and water and sewn together to form a bag as is done with a total hide and resmoked for future use. It may be noted that while the village is quite neat, tin cans which are put to a variety of uses and fragments of cloth were seen lying discarded outside, but only one worn out moccasin was observed as village rubble, and it was the very small moccasin of a child.

Caribou

The discussion of caribou hunting will be given in two sections, a general commentary and the results on an interview on September 25, 1959, by Dr. Helm with Father Amerous of the O.M.I. Mission, Fort Rae. Father Amerous accompanied the hunting party that set out from Rae in August, 1959. Father Amerous' observations and kind co-operation in making them available for use in this study supply data which the ethnologists were unable to obtain at first hand because their field equipment did not arrive in time for them to reach Rae early enough to make arrangements for accompanying the hunters and financial restrictions precluded joining them by plane in the barren grounds.

Hunting, General Commentary: - Caribou, called kown, are categorized by four terms; cia, calf; detse, female; yagua, male; and wodjie, old, very large male.

As far as could be determined, the most purposeful hunting of caribou is of the smaller, barren ground variety. Descriptions of certain caribou and of their pelts indicate that woodland caribou are also hunted, possibly mainly in the course of trapping and other travel in the bush west of Lac la Martre and Rae. All direct data obtained concerning the hunting of caribou refer to the barren ground animals.

During the field the Lac la Martre men were largely employed in wage work and only four men from the village joined a party of hunters from Rae in August, 1959. Thus general information on recent hunting practices refers mainly to events in earlier seasons. Data from various informants suggest that most caribou are obtained between the end of January and March as well as in the early fall. The accounts varied from the case of a single hunter making a six day journey to the east to hunt caribou after Christmas to parties of up to six men travelling to areas north and east of Yellowknife, being gone upwards of two month (February-March).

Caribou are usually shot with .30-.30 rifles, although the Indian Agent is encouraging the use of heavier rifles for less wasteful hunting.

While no informants have ever shot caribou with bows or killed them with spears, older members of the community have heard of these practices from their elders. Some caribou hunting occured before freeze-up, as is the case today with fall hunts, it being reported that a particularly profitable method was to find herds crossing water and to approach them in canoes while they were swimming and to spear them. Large numbers could be killed in this fashion since even wounded animals could be brought down easily.

In more recent years a marked change has occured in Lac la Martre hunting activities. Caribou migrate from the barren grounds in the late fall to enter the woods and until about ten years ago a large herd usually passed across the lake directly in front of the village. The caribou have ceased to use this course, and this change was allegedly prophesied by a wise old man in the village who died the year the caribou changed their course away from the village.

Reports in the late fall of 1959 of a caribou herd moving northwest from above Yellowknife encouraged the hope that the old route past the village might be taken. Marten Lake hunters explained that caribou move into the wind, and that if the wind held fairly steady from the northwest and the caribou followed their habit of alternately grazing and travelling the herd would be in the Lac la Martre vicinity about Christmas time.

Adapted from Field Notes:

Account of the Fall Hunt from Rae, 1959

Hunters planned to depart from Rae early on August 13, but heavy wind and white caps on lake caused delay. Discussions with Father Amerous and some hunters at the mission revealed the plan of hunters to take the Snare River Route to Winter Lake and if no caribou were sighted there, they would push on to Point Lake. The possibility of joining the hunters by plane was discussed.

Discussion during the day with the local game warden brought forth some data on local caribou hunting. Last year the group brought back only 7-15 caribou. They are not interested in an "organized hunt" with the game warden making arrangements and accompanying them, nor will the hunters accept advice of the warden on reports of the presence or absence of game in given locales. The people are more in need of skins than meat, and since the warble fly is gone by mid-August the skins will be in good condition. The warden surmised regretfully that if the men got any caribou at all going by the proposed route they would take mostly cows and calves. (Father Amerous subsequently reported no cows were taken by his group).

About 7:00 P. M. Father Amerous notified us that the hunters were about to leave. Most of the community was gathered at the "sny" and canoes were being loaded. The group was quite quiet but there was a cheerful, festive mood. Suddenly, hand shaking was initiated by the hunters with the people gathered to see them off. They shook hands mainly with the women, sometimes smiling but usually with an air of ceremonial solemnity. One large canoe with five men set off, then the rest lined up, eight in all. Two in the lead with motors pulled three others, a third with motor joined the end of the line. The others paddled along each side of the line, but Father Amerous' statement that six canoes were going to the barrens indicates that the two outriders were simply seeing the group off. The crowd dispersed as the canoes disappeared into the distance and falling darkness.

The following discussion is based on the Amerous interview of September 25, 1959).

Of the Indians trading into Rae, two main groups went to hunt caribou. The detsi^{n}lagoti^{n}e or "edge of the woods people" who now make their home in one section of Rae accounted for most of the members of the party Father Amerous accompanied and whose departure is described above. The other group consisted of Marion Lake village men. The detsi^{n}lagoti^{n}e group took the Snare River-Lake route to the barren ground, a route of about 28 portages, while the Marion Lake men went by way of the Emile River.

Twenty-eight men and a boy set out from Rae. The group did not stop to hunt on the way to Point Lake. They carried only one large tent so the father could say mass every morning. The group carried only enough food and gas to see them to the barrens.

The entire group remained together as far as Point Lake, in the barrens at the headwaters of the Coppermine River. A man in the party was sick and spitting up blood. After discussions with the sick man's relatives, the hunt chief agreed to have the group split up, some to start back, hunting the while, with the sick man, while the hunt chief with another party pushed further northwest. Thus, two canoes with seven men went on with the main hunt chief, separating from the others, 19 men and a boy in four canoes. Father Amerous accompanied the latter group.

Several events described by Father Amerous point up the role of the hunt leader and the relationship between him and the body of hunters. The group starting out from Rae was led by a hunt chief chosen before the departure. Another man, whom the Father describes as the "right hand man" of the head chief at Rae started out late but joined the party. He comported

himself as just one of the hunters, not attempting to make decisions or impose his opinions over those of the hunt leader. When it was decided that the group would split up, however, the main hunt chief told this individual to take charge of the other large group which he did.

It was the hunt leader's role to make decisions as to when the group should stop in its journey because of bad weather, when to make camp for the night, who was to go out and look for "sign", etc. When a question arose, everybody said what he thought, then the leader made a decision, taking the discussion into account. Once the leader had stated his decision, no one argued, even if not in agreement initially.

A number of incidents were recounted by Father Amerous. When meat was distributed for individual drying, one young lad did not work well. He had a piece of tallow and asked Father Amerous for a bag to keep it in. During the trip water splashed in the canoe and the bag of tallow got wet. In trying to dry it out he put it too close to the fire and the tallow burned. The hunt chief gave him a tongue lashing: "If you can't do right, stay home. We don't have to divide fat to let you burn it."

On another occasion a man not of the detsi^{n}lagoti^{n}e said one morning, after several cold and miserable days, that he thought he would go home. The leader made a speech, as reported by Father Amerous: "You're not used to travelling with us, but you'll have to learn that one fellow never goes away from the rest. I've been working in this country for twelve years, I have never let one go behind or ahead. If anything happens, everyone will criticize the man in charge." Another time the leader said to this man, who was again contemplating leaving. "Up to you, do what you want. But consider the group. If anything happens everyone will be sorry for you, mad at me."

Father Amerous describes the hunt group as establishing an "equilibrium economically." That is, the men knew "how far to go communally, how far to be individualistic." They shared meat but each man took good care of his own share. When they had a lot of everything in the way of food, everyone asked each other for tea, sugar, etc. When some of the men began to run short, then discussions would ensue: "Well, I have some, I can spare a little but not too much." Father Amerous stressed the sense of "balance" in these matters and in regard to the decision of the chief. He was impressed by the sense of "judgment" of the hunters.

It was close to the end of the hunt on the return trip that they came to a trappers cabin and the leader said that since they had not eaten much that day it was all right to take ingredients to make bannock, with the understanding they would repay the owner. However, after that everybody

went out to find food. They hunted and set nets and got moose, trout, graylings and suckers. They boiled all the best parts of the moose; head, backbone, fat and loins, and all ate together, holding a "feats" in the tent, the only time when they all ate together in that fashion.

When a kill was made that was sufficient only to sustain the hunters, for example, only a single moose or caribou, the animal would be divided in terms of number of canoes, one man from each canoe being given a big piece for his whole canoe group. When there was a kill of several animals the meat was apportioned evenly by the hunt chief to each of the hunters. The actual killer of an animal always received a good piece; the ribs were favoured apparently because they are easy to dry. (Richardson, 1851: II 17, records the same practice over 100 years ago.) Each hunter was then responsible for drying his own portion of meat, an activity that, given good weather, took one day. On the occasion when a plane came, bringing gas, the 19 hunters (of the larger party) had their dry meat from a kill of four caribou and one moose made into nineteen packets. These packets, totalling about 100 pounds of dry meat, were sent back on the plane to the families of the men. The plane had also carried to the men little parcels of tabacco, sugar, etc. which the women had sent out to their husbands on the hunt.

When the caribou were killed the hides each went to the killer of the animal. But no special arrangements were made for moosehides as they were usually abandoned, being too heavy. (Russell states that a green moosehide weights about 50 pounds - 1897:185). The many portages and the limited capacity of a canoe always make weight and bulk paramount problems. At one point Father Amerous encouraged his group to cache seven moose hides on poles rather than abandon them.

A particular kill cited by Father Amerous illustrates the mode of labour and distribution. The four canoes of the larger party were making their slow return to Rae. They were on Snare Lake and had fresh meat, so the hunt leader said they would spend a day making dry meat and look around for more game. When they pulled in to the shore they found fresh moose tracks, and very soon had killed two. The skinning had not even commenced when there were two shots from deeper in the bush, and two more moose had been killed.

The hunt leader called all the men into camp, and then directed that the two moose killed deeper in the woods be butchered. From these two moose there were not enought good pieces for all the men. So the leader stated that the following day they would butcher the first two moose and those men who had not yet received good pieces would be given them from those animals. This was done. Then the less good parts that remained

from the second butchering were cut up into very small pieces and given out equally.

The larger group of four canoes, which Father Amerous accompanied, killed a total of six caribou and 12 moose after separating them from the others. The fact that this group turned back, thus spending much of its time within the tree-line accounts for the porportionally larger moose kill, even though this animal, given its unportable hide, was less desired.

The smaller group, under the main hunt leader, that went farther on got a few caribou and then started home. After they had passed the place where the total party had split, they encountered a lot of caribou. The seven men killed as many as they could bring back, about 30. It was too late in the season and cold to dry meat adequately and had become too cold to stay on the barrens without a stove. This group had killed enough caribou to fill the two canoes. When they saw more caribou some of the young men wanted to kill them, but their hunt leader forbade them. Once en route home they saw nine moose in the water, but killed just one to supply meat for the day.

Father Amerous supplied a number of other general observations. At one point when the party reached an area strange to the group, one man who had hunted there thirty years before remembered and found his old route and campfire ashes. When the men really wanted to find food, etc., they showed great strength, working hard in the wind and cold without stove or fire, sleeping little, and wrapping themselves in a "wee little blanket". When they stopped for a day to make camp and hang up dry meat, they would play cards or sometimes stock game until midnight and then be up again at 5:00 A.M. the next morning. In the evening they often told old stories, such as the story of the mountain where the Dogribs had their last fight with the Chipewyans.

Father Amerous was impressed by the uneasiness and anxiety manifested by the men in the barrens. They expressed fear of "enemies," and speculated that there might be Eskimo about. One evening while they were having a stick game, drumming and making a great deal of noise, one man thought he heard something out on the lake. He went out, listened, came back, and said he thought they had all better be quiet as there might be "enemy" out there. Another time a ray of sunshine came through the clouds, making a patch of light in the distance. One of the men thought it was smoke and discussion ensued; "How can that be?" etc. They decided it could not be Eskimo come from the north so it must be "enemies." When the ray shone again Father Amerous pointed out to the men what it was. (See MacNeish 1954, <u>in re</u> beliefs about "enemies".)

Father Amerous was also able to report on the activities of the Marion Lake group which eventually split into three parties. The first

group killed one caribou and started back, killing two moose on the way. The other group went as far as Point Lake where they ran short of gas. They separated into two parties, one going on to the northeast where they killed a lot of caribou. The other party remained at Point Lake and fished, obtaining enough food for themselves. When the party that had headed northeast did not return they knew they must have gotten caribou so they started out after them but turned back. They got 15 caribou on the way back and returned after the group which had gone northeast returned. It was apparently in regard to this incident that Father Amerous recounted that when a group of Marion Lake people set out after another group which had found caribou, they found cigarettes hanging cached in a tree but did not take any. The cigarettes had probably been left by the group that preceded them and Father Amerous mentioned the incident to illustrate the regard for the property, caches, etc. of one another.

It is difficult to determine the amounts of meat brought back by each of the hunters. In terms of the share obtained on the hunt by the four men going from Lac la Martre, data are unsatisfactory. Father Pochat of the Rae mission said that hunters usually give an under-enumeration of their catch. Father Pochat saw a large bundle of dry meat in the tent of one of the men at Lac la Martre and estimated he had gotten 27 caribou. Taking Father Amerous' account into consideration, this would appear to be an over estimation. If he did kill that many, he certainly brought back the meat of considerably less. An eighteen year old boy brought back two hides for his mother and two strips of sinew, apparently of the animals he had killed, but only a small amount of dry meat and tallow. No data were obtained concerning the other two hunters.

From Russell comes an account of caribou hunting in the Rae district in the last decade of the last century.

Vague rumors had reached Fort Rae concerning the whereabouts of the 'deer' during the last week of October, but it was not until the first of November that a party left the post to hunt them.

A few years ago the Barren Ground caribou appeared about the fort regularly upon All Saints day. They were often killed from the buildings, and throughout the winter might be found near the post. In 1877 an unbroken line of caribou crossed the frozen lake near the fort; they were fourteen days in passing, and in such a mass that, in the words of an eyewitness 'daylight coult not be seen' through the columns. They are now seldom seen within several miles of Rae.

The 'Fort Hunter', Tenony, with seven of his followers, was just starting upon a seventy-five mile jouney toward the north... (Russell

and two Indians followed them a day later and overtook them in two days at a)... large lake, called by the Dogribs, Kwen-ta Tu', the Lake of the White Rock...

After drinking tea, we followed the lake shore toward hills to the northwest. When close to the hills, we discovered a small band of caribou, toward which the dogs started at their best pace, barking and straining at their collars, and urged to greater exertion by the men. The alarmed caribou were dashing about in all directions, yet managing to keep out of range, though several shots were fired before they entered the timber.

Placing a row of pine boughs at intervals of fifteen or twenty yards quite across an arm of the lake, we concealed ourselves on shore, and waited the appearance of the caribou. One band approached our barrier, which they followed some distance, but did not venture to cross; they turned away before coming within range. The following day we were more successful in employing this, a common device of the Dogribs.

That evening we feasted until a late hour upon the first caribou meat of the season. Several heads were skinned and hung from poles before the fire by the mitten cords of the owners and willow hooks. As soon as the outside was roasted the jaw was turned back and the tongue, one of the choicest bits of all, slightly cooked. The dogs were well fed for the first time in months; we gave them the quarters only. The Indians relished the marrow, cooked or raw, and made a bouillon made of blood carried to camp in a caribou's stomach. Even the tendons were eaten, and the feet also, after roasting them until the hoof could be knocked off. Although I lived some time with the Dogribs, and spent over a year in their territory, I never knew of their eating the contents of the caribou's stomach as do the Eskimos. The unborn calf, the udder of milk giving cow, the tongue, the marrow and the back fat are the parts held in the highest esteem. (Russell 1879: 88-91).

Consumption and Distribution: - As noted, caribou are at least as important to the Lac la Martre people for their hides as for their meat. It was impossible to obtain accurate statistics as to the number of caribou taken per year by Marten Lake Indians. We did not have the impression that people consciously evaded answering our questions on the subject or provided deceptively low enumerations as Father Pochat believes to be the case. As discussed in the account of hunting, the amount of meat actually brought back to benefit the hunter's family varies in terms of the conditions of the hunt. If transported supplies run low, quite a bit of game must be consumed by the hunters themselves.

However, minimum estimates can be made. Several informants in mutual discussion concluded that at least 40 caribou were taken by the

Lac la Martre village hunters though-out the whole year of 1958-1959, that is, from fall to fall. A reliable count of caribou taken by six family heads (roughly a third of the households) revealed that a total of at least 61 caribou had been killed by them. However, it was again impossible to determine how much of the meat was consumed on the trail, how much brought home.

A partial gauge of consumption of caribou may be found in the account of one informant's hunting last year and his report concerning his brother's hunting. The informant went alone to the barren grounds and shot five caribou. He had six strong dogs and so brought all the meat and hides home. He, his wife, and two small children (both under ten years of age) consumed the five caribou in four weeks. As he put it, "every day, eat, eat." His brother brought back six caribou, and his household, which included eight adults and two infants, consumed all the caribou in two weeks.

In answer to questions, a cross-section of the community stated that there was no communal distribution of either caribou or moose meat. However, moose was observed being distributed communally although this was not true in the case of caribou brought back from the barren grounds hunt described. Further questioning on the matter brought forth qualifications of the flat denial of distribution to the effect that some caribou meat may be given to households related to the hunter but the hunter's family keep the largest share and that one of the two headmen often gave feasts for the whole community when he brought back game. When meat from a bear shot during the fall of 1959 (the first large game killed that fall) was distributed to various households, one of the recipients of bear meat volunteered that "First time get caribou and moose too, give away," but added that the hunters keep a large proportion of the meat.

Aboriginally, the sharing of large game was a cardinal rule within the small Northern Athabascan band (MacNeish 1956). The Slavey community of Lynx Point adheres to communal distribution today (MacNeish 1958). Factors probably operative in the relative lack of communality in this matter at Lac la Martre are the sheer size of the community--Lynx Point has 10 family units as against 20 at Lac la Martre--coupled with its recent formation and less firm kin ties between all members compared to Lynx Point. The Lac la Martre mode of distribution seems more to approximate that found in the large settlements of the forts.

It is probably a safe surmise that during the course of the year every family at Lac la Martre consumes some caribou meat through the efforts of a family hunter and possibly to a lesser extent as a result of gifts made to the family. The distribution and consumption of caribou hides is a difficult to determine through questioning and observation as is the distribution

and consumption of meat. However, hides are an absolute necessity of every household if its members are to be kept in moccasins. The Lac la Martre people have a firm sense of reciprocity even to the extent that a woman who borrows another women's sewing machine expects to pay for the use of it. Thus, while references were made indicating that hides are distributed as "gifts" the fact is that a factor of trade is involved. As an example of such arrangements, prior to the return of the hunters in September the mother of Francoise, Mrs. Chi (HI), asked the ~~some~~ son of Francoise's "auntie" friend (HVI) for a caribou hide he had on hand. He gave her ~~a~~ half a hide. He promised to give Francoise (HVII) a quarter of a moose hide he had and planned to sell half of it to the Hudson's Bay store at Rae. When Francoise's son returned from the fall hunt with two caribou hides, she gave one to her "grandmother" (classificatory) who is the mother-in-law of her "auntie" (therefore the grandmother of the "auntie's" son) and lives in the same household with the "auntie" and her son. Later, when Francoise's husband needed babiche to make snowshoes, she bought half a caribou hide made into babiche from her "auntie" for five dollars. It is likely that other objects and possibly cash were involved in the hide "giving" outlined above. In addition to the gift giving or informal trade which occurs within the village and apparently results in every household having sufficient hides for their needs, recourse is had to the Hudson's Bay store at Rae which acts as a clearing house for caribou and moose hides bought and sold among the Indians. A dressed caribou hide is worth about ten dollars, a moose hide about thirty dollars. Direct observation of negotiations revealed that these values were fairly standardized in intra-village trade in hides, other goods and cash. A single caribou hide would seem to provide ten to twelve pairs of moccasin ankle wrappings and thongs. A half a hide will provide sufficient babiche for a middle sized pair of snowshoes. Moccasins and snowshoes are necessities and while canvas wraps are sometimes substituted for caribou in heavy-duty work moccasins and commercial twine may be used instead of babiche in snowshoes, caribou is preferred for ordinary moccasins and babiche is considered far superior to twine. Furthermore, while moccasins can be made without caribou if moosehide and canvas are available, babiche can only be made of caribou hide. The la Martre people claim that moose hide is too thick for this purpose.

Formerly, a great many other objects were made of caribou hide but are found in only sporadic use or no longer used at all. If our informants' calculations of time are to be trusted, at least some of the Dogrib retained the use of caribou clothing, both furred and suede finished, into the twentieth century. The consistent accounts from a man in his early sixties (possibly older, his birth date listed is his baptismal date), a woman listed as seventy three years old, and another in her late sixties, provide a convincing picture of the use of caribou skin garments, albeit

lacking in precise details of patterns. (Russell 1897:169 - says a "few gowns of dressed leather" were still worn during the 1890's). However, stroud and beads were regularly incorporated into the costume according to these informants. A special section detailing clothing is given later since various materials besides caribou hide are involved.

Tepee shaped tents were once regularly used as dwellings and each tent required 35 to 40 caribou hides. (Corroborated by Russell, 1897:168) Raw hide was used. (Russell says "dressed skins", 1897:168). One informant claimed that up to 70 hides might be used in a single tent. The tents were pegged into the earth. (The tent collected by Russell has "two wings at the margin of the smoke hole", 1897:168, i.e. like the Plains tepee). Today canvas wall tents are used by those families who do not dwell in log cabins, but a man in his early sixties (same informant noted above) said that when he was a boy and a family put up a brand new caribou hide tent for the first time, the people would dance and have a feast to celebrate the occasion. Details of frameworks are discussed in connection with the use of spruce. Dog harnesses were formerly made of caribou hide and babiche.

One rawhide pack sack was observed in the community but the hide was so riddled with warble fly holes as to be virtually useless to make into babiche or tan for moccasin wrappings. The straps of the ubiquitous canvas pack sacks are sometimes replaced with hide when the original commercially tanned leather or webbing straps wear out. A number of smaller hide bags with drawstrings were observed in the community and used to store cranberries, etc. These were made of suede finished caribou or furred strips taken from the caribou legs and sewn together to make a bag. However, most small storage bags used in the community were cloth flour or sugar sacks.

Babies were formerly carried on the back in the tanned caribou skin, but blankets are now used exclusively. Until recently baby straps were also used. These straps were in recent years made of stroud and ornamented with beads but were formerly of hide. The strip is about four inches wide, brought down under the infant's buttock and over the mother's shoulders. Moss bags for infants were also made of caribou hide.

Furred caribou pelts are still observed as bedding but generally commercially made blankets or home made quilts are used. The fur cut from caribou in the process of tanning is used as a filler for quilts.

Sinew is used to sew moccasins and while commercial thread may be used in sewing stroud on mukluks, sinew is recognized as much stronger

and is used in puckering the toe of footgear and sewing the heel, i.e. wherever the footgear will get hard wear. Formerly sinew as well as babiche were used for bow strings. Sinew was used for rabbit snares and a variety of purposes now served by commercial twine.

Bone and antler were once used for a variety of cutting and scraping tools and hafts but are almost completely replaced by metal equivalents. Caribou and moose leg bones are still sharpened along the edge to form a tool used in processing hides and employed in the manner of a draw knife, and snowshoe needles are made of bone. The needle is a very flat ellipse about 5/8" x 2 3/4" with a hole in the center, called a.goga (See Figure 9).

Processing Meat:- Fresh caribou meat is usually boiled. Greater culinary variety is seen in the use of dry meat or bogo^{n}. A stage about three feet by four feet across and out of reach of dogs is built "like a table" with spaced sticks across to support the dry meat and allowing for circulation of air. This framework is called dat'o.. A fire, preferably of rotten spruce wood, is built under it. Thin portions of meat such as sections of ribs are simply laid on the frame work but thick flesh is first cut in order to expose the maximum surface to the air while still keeping 6" to 8" wide strips of meat intact. Parallel slices are made into the meat at about two inch intervals but are stopped just short of cutting all the way through it. The strip is then turned over and similar slices are made on the other side in the solid meat between the initial cuts. The strip may then be opened out accordian fashion and placed on the rack. Drying takes a day or two and the meat is turned so that both sides are equally exposed to the air and the fire below. This is usually done out of doors but meat can be dried over a stove indoors. The meat may thus be kept indefinitely if air is allowed to circulate around it and it does not get damp. It can be eaten raw or boiled.

Dry meat is sometimes powdered by placing it between layers of canvas or caribou hide amidst stones and is pounded with the blunt end of an axe as described in the process of pounding fish. The resulting shredded meat can then be cooked with tallow and sometimes a little sugar, and eaten immediately or allowed to harden into cakes for future use. Berries may be added to the mixture producing a true pemmican. Roe may also be added.

Tallow is eaten raw or in a rendered form. Raw tallow may simply be allowed to harden in strips as it is cut off the meat or chunks of soft, fresh tallow are impaled on a stick and allowed to harden for a day. Chunks of tallow can also be pounded like meat, the fragments being placed in a pail on the stove with a little water and boiled. The hot grease

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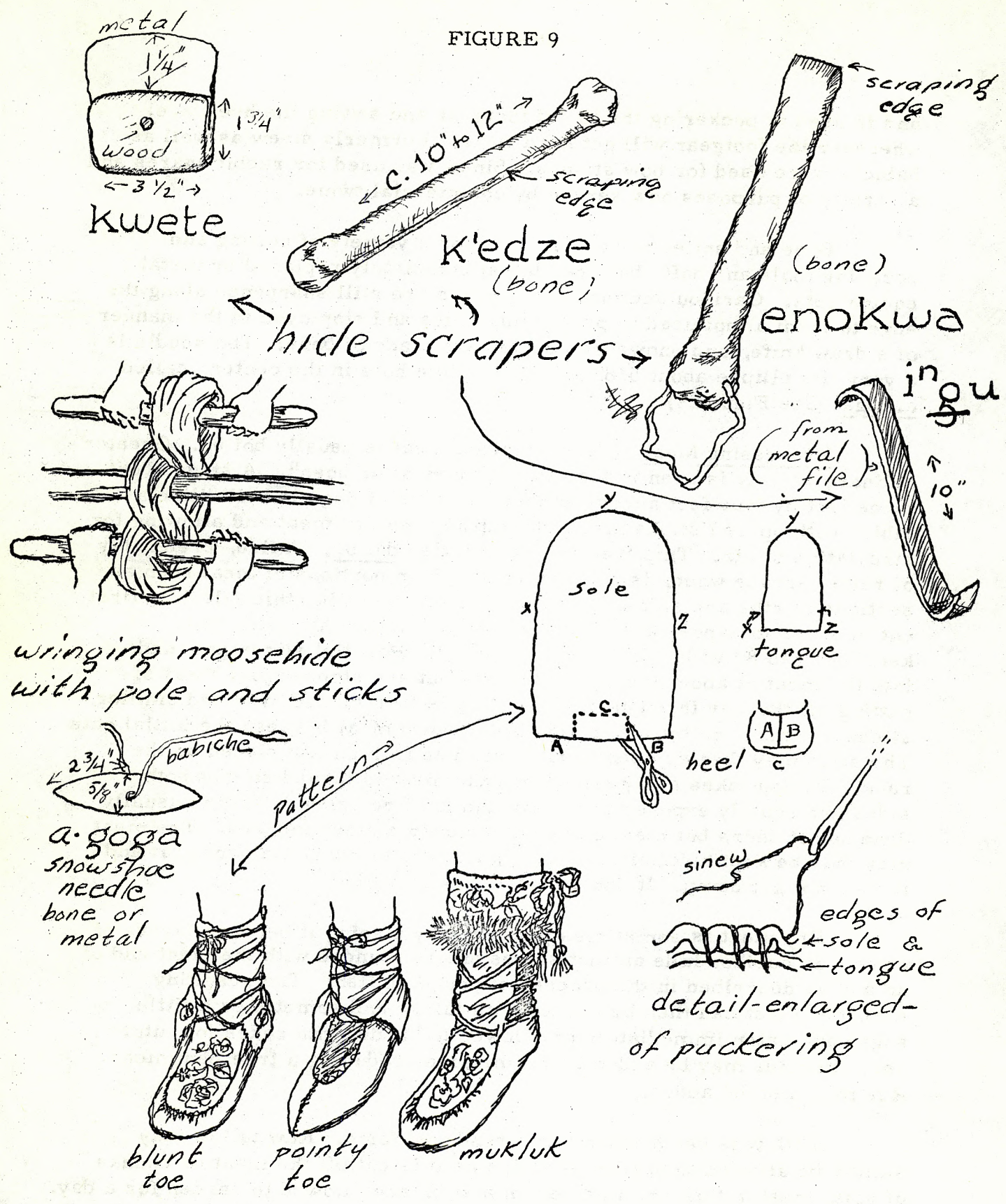
FIGURE 9



Re: Caribou & Moose Hide

may then be poured off to be saved and the resulting bits which resemble cracklings are also eaten.

Marrow is rendered by splitting bones and cutting them in small pieces about an inch long. About a half a cup of water is added to the volume amount of a lard pail of bone. It is boiled for a long time until the marrow is rendered out completely and is allowed to harden like lard. Formerly, marrow was not only eaten but was used for tanning hides. Soap is now used instead of marrow. Brains were also used with marrow to tan hides.

Some observations regarding the eating and handling of caribou and moose were recorded. According to a female informant only men eat moose head, a woman could but no one gives moose head to a women. Boys and girls should not eat moose head or they will suffer headaches when they grow up. If a girl eats caribou head, her hair will turn white while she is still a young woman. Children must not eat the fetus or udders of moose or caribou. Father Amerous reports the belief that no one should eat moose brains because if he does he will never be able to kill any more moose. It is all right to eat caribou brains because the caribou is a "crazy" animal, that is, not smart like the moose. He states that the Dogrib still adhere to the belief that caribou should not be clubbed to death. On the barren land hunt when a young man attempted only to push the body of a caribou in the water with a paddle, an old man remonstrated with him. (See also MacNeish 1954).

Processing, Hides and Sinew: - Caribou are skinned by making incisions around the neck, down the mid-section on the under side, down the inside of the legs from hoof to mid-section and around the hoof. The skin is eased off with the fingers without employing a knife except for the initial incisions. The hide may then be processed in terms of four different final products. The appearance of hides being processed indicated that the narrow parts of the lower leg sections are removed and may be especially treated. The hide may be prepared as rawhide, including babiche if desired, as suede finish, as raw furred pelt (a technique often applied just to leg sections) and softened fur pelt.

1. Rawhide, k̨inakwo. As much as possible is cut off with a sharp knife. The hide is then soaked in clear water until soft. Finally, both sides are scraped with a k'edze, a draw-knife type of tool about a foot long made of caribou or moose lower hind leg bone split longitudinally and sharpened along one edge, (see Figure 9), and the hide is washed thoroughly in clean water. Details of use are given below. The rawhide may then be rolled and stored indefinitely.

   Babiche, k̨i. To make babiche, a rawhide is cut in half while still wet or after being remoistened thoroughly for cutting. A small

incision is made in the center of the piece of hide to be prepared with a small sharp knife and the babiche strip about an inch wide is cut spiral fashion from the center out. Usually two women work together, holding the hide taut between them parallel to the ground while one of the women cuts the spiral strip with one hand, grasping the hide with the other. If the babiche is not to be used immediately, it is wound around two stakes set in the ground about three feet apart, stretched taut as it is wound and allowed to dry. It is then wound from palm to elbow in a figure-eight bundle and stored in some safe place such as the family fish house. When the babiche is to be used, e. g. for lacing snowshoes, it is soaked in clear water to soften it and pulled taut as it is manipulated. In drying, the inch wide strip narrows down to a stiff, hard cord. Rawhide must usually be dampened for any use such as stretching it as a drum head over the round drum frame.

2. Suede finish. As much fur as possible is cut off the raw skin with a knife. It is often draped over a pole to facilitate cutting. The hide is then soaked in soapy water, usually over night. Yellow laundry soap shaved into fine fragments or soap in powdered form were observed in use but one informant reported that certain brands become gummy and weaken the hide. Formerly, grease and marrow from the animal were used instead of soap.

After the hide has been thoroughly soaked, it is scraped for the first time with the k'edze. A solid pole about six inches in diameter is leaned at the angle of an easel against a firmly braced horizontal pole and the wet hide is draped against the pole. A woman kneels to do this work in characteristic fashion, buttocks resting on heels, toes pointed inwards and often crossed. The k'edze is grasped at both ends and the hide is scraped with a downward motion. One women closely observed at this work, scraping in this typical fashion, revealed the time and energy consuming nature of the task. She made about twenty downward strokes each time before pulling the hide along to begin scraping the adjacent, unscraped section. The scraped swathe was about two inches wide and she could cover about one third the length of the hide, twelve to fifteen inches, in a single stroke. This work is usually performed in a smoke tepee rather than a family dwelling because of the mess involved. It is customary for a woman to drape a piece of canvas across her knees to protect her dress from the slimy shreds of tissue scraped from the hide. These scrapings may be fed to dogs.

After scraping, the hide is again soaked in soapy water, usually for two nights. It is then wrung out, hung smoothed out over a horizontal pole and allowed to dry. The usual technique of

wringing a caribou hide is to loop it over a stout pole and twist it figure-eight fashion with the pole through the top loop, a stout stick through the lower one.

After the hide was dry it is scraped again with a kwete (see Figure 9) to remove flakey scar tissue and smooth the hide to a consistent thickness throughout. The kwete bears a superficial resemblance to the Eskimo ulu or woman's knife, having a flat rectangular wooden handle about 1/2" x 1 3/4" x 3 1/2" attached to the blade with a rivet. The blade, 1 1/4" wide or wider is as long as the longest side of the handle and curved only slightly at the ends. The blade is usually hammered and filed of scrap iron. Scraping with the kwete may be done by draping the hide over a low horizontal pole and tucking the edges firmly under the worker's knees, or by simply grasping the draped hide firmly in one hand. The scraping is done in a motion away from the worker. After this scraping with the kwete, the hide may be put to soak, wrung, dried and scraped again one or more times until the desired degree of softness and smoothness is achieved. The maximum number of repetition reported for this purpose was four.

The hide is now ready for smoking. However, it may be used as it is after the final kwete scraping, giving the appearance of a fine white suede. Gasoline is sometimes used to make it even whiter. The reasons for smoking the hide are that it does not show soil as quickly and, especially, that it will then remain soft after repeated wettings. Hides are usually smoked twice. The first smoking is accomplished by simply draping the hide over several horizontal poles above a rotten spruce wood fire in a tightly closed smoke tepee. After one side is smoked, it is turned over so that each side is a light golden tan colour. It is then soaked again, wrung out well, and smoothed and stretched into shape by hand. While the hide is still damp warble fly holes are mended with sinew and needle. An alternative technique is to simply plug holes with pieces of rotten spruce wood in preparation for the final smoking.

The hide is folded lengthwise and sewn along the top and side to form a long narrow bag. A width of canvas or old hide is sewn as a collar around the open end. This is placed over the mouth of an old pot in which a smudge fire of rotten spruce has been made. The collar is tied to the rim of the pot to prevent smoke from escaping at the juncture of bag and pot. What had been the flesh side of the hide forms the interior side of the bag. The bag is suspended at the top so it hangs vertically over the pot, the entire arrangement often being set up on a closed smoke tepee. A few hours suffice to turn the hide a rich golden brown colour inside, a lighter tan

outside. The hide is now ready to use. Certain variations in the technique of making suede finish hides were observed in terms of the number of times the hide is soaked and scraped with the kwete and whether the operations are performed in whole or in part in the house or the smoke tepee.

3. Raw furred pelt. This type of processing was observed in caribou leg skin bags and whole pelts used as bedding. As far as could be determined the technique used is the same as that employed for smaller animal pelts used for trade and local consumption. The freshly removed hide is scraped free of flesh with the kwete and the process of scraping can be continued after the hide has dried to further smooth it and make it more supple. However, the flesh side remains like raw hide rather than like suede finish.

4. Softened furred pelt. Two quite different processes were described as used in producing the type of furred pelt which is as soft and flexible as suede finished hide, and indeed the skin side resembles suede finished hide before smoking. The only objects observed made of this type of pelt were parkas from Fort Rae. However, the Lac la Martre people were familiar with the parkas both in style and material and several mentioned having owned or made similar parkas and even trousers of this material. Apparently the types of pelts used in the examples observed are the preferred choice for this processing. They were identified as yearling caribou taken in the woods during winter, and from the description of the animal as being large and dark, appear to be woodland caribou.

According to one method, when the hide is fresh the flesh side is rubbed with a rock. No special stone is used and it was described as the same kind of water worn stones used as net weights. The smoothness of the pelts suggests that they were scraped initially with a kwete and then rather rigorously "pumiced" with the rock. After the hide has been thoroughly rubbed it is soaked in soap and water for a day, rolled up and "put in the fish house" until it is dry. According to the informant, the hide dries in soft, smooth form.

Another method involves an initial scraping and then the rubbing of lard into the skin side. The larded skin is held over a fire or stove to warm it, then water is rubbed into the warmed skin with the lard melted into it. It is then scraped with the kwete and, finally, pulled vigorously back and forth, skin side down, across a taut cord for final softening.

Sinew. Sinew is soaked in water and the fibres twisted into threads by rolling them with a downward motion against the thigh. The

resulting thread is tightly twisted and about half-way in guage between ordinary sewing thread and carpet warp. For storage, sinew is made up into flat loose braids about an inch across. The lengths of sinew thread are usually about 18 inches.

General Comments: - The total utilization of both caribou and moose hide has been noted earlier in that fragments of old, used hide were washed in soapy water, wrung out, sewn into a patchwork bag and resmoked over a pot like a whole hide. Furthermore when a hide has been prepared for smoking, the edges are uneven and not completely scraped. These are carefully trimmed off in a strip of an inch or more in width before the hide is sewn to form a bag for smoking. The strips are saved and used for heavy duty as such as foot lashings on snowshoes.

Moose

Hunting: - Moose can be hunted in any season but the greatest numbers are apparently brought down in the fall and winter. As noted in the discussion of the fall caribou hunt in 1959, many moose were shot along with caribou in the course of travel to and from the barrens. Moose are known as de^{n}di or golo^{n} with no particular preference for either term shown by the Lac la Martre people. They are distinguished as calves, cows and bulls by terms similar to those applied to caribou, that is, as de^{n}di$\overset{v}{c}$ia or golo$^{n}\overset{v}{z}$a, -detsε, and -de$\overset{v}{z}$i. A very large moose is golonetsa, literally "big moose" and not distinguished by a special term comparable to wodjie which connotes but is not literally a large, old caribou.

Formerly, snares were set for moose. The moose would simply be caught about the neck but not strangled to death although the more it pulled on the loop the more tightly it would be held. I could then be approached and dispatched. Moose being large, strong animals, with the use of snares a kill could be assured when bows and spears were the only weapons. Moose are now hunted with .30 calibre or heaver rifles and snares are said to be no longer used.

If a man is alone he trails behind a moose which moves into the wind. This continues until the moose lies down. Then the hunter approaches as close as he can, crawling up to it. He then startles the moose and as the animal rises and presents a good target the hunter fires.

If two men hunt together, one man may circle ahead of the moose allowing it to get his scent. The moose then wheels to run the other way. The second hunter, lying in ambush behind the animal, is able to fire as the moose returns.

In the winter time when moose are slowed down because their weight causes them to break through the deep drifts of snow hunters pursue moose on long snowshoes. These snowshoes are about as long as the hunter is tall and permit him to move rapidly over the snow and overtake the moose.

Distribution and Consumption: - The same difficulties were encountered concerning moose as were encountered in trying to obtain data on this topic regarding caribou. Various general estimates and sampling of households indicate that conservatively about twenty-five moose were killed by Lac la Martre hunters during the year 1958-1959, calculating from fall to fall and not counting the moose obtained in October and November of 1959. Whatever the actual count the supply of moose was considered good. On this basis, an average of about one and one half moose was obtained per household. However, as in the case of caribou, informants denied any distribution of moose meat. A count of moose killed revealed that some hunters got as many as five or six, others got none. That distribution throughout the community does in fact occur was revealed by observation in 1959. In terms of food volume, one man reported that a moose which he shot and shared with no one (he was living at his old cabin in a few miles away) lasted his family, consisting of his wife and two children under the age of ten, for two weeks. He indicated that they ate little else but moose meat as long as it lasted. Another man said that a moose would last two adults as long as three months, presumably varying their diet with other food. He added that in families with a lot of children a moose will last only a couple of weeks.

The first moose kill during the period of the study occurred between the eighteenth and twentieth of September. A party of Marten Lake men were returning from a canoe trip to Rae and visited with a Rae man who has a cabin at the jucture of the Snare and la Martre rivers. He had just shot two large and one small moose. The Lac la Martre men stayed to help him butcher the meat and have a feast. One of the Lac la Martre men was given a large hide and another a small hide. They were reported as not having brought much meat and it apparently was not shared outside of the households that got it directly from the hunters.

On November 14, three men who had gone out trapping the day before killed a moose and returned immediately to the village with the meat. It was cold and they had no tent so could not make dry meat. This meat was widely distributed terms of a community feast and in terms of gifts made by the man who shot the moose as well as by his companions who received a share. The moose was hot and brought back on a Saturday

night. The community customarily eats together (various households contributing bannock, dry fish, rice etc.) at noon on Sunday after saying the rosary together. It is impossible to say if a moose feast would have been held had the moose been shot on, e. g. Monday instead of Saturday. At any rate, the rosary is held at different homes, but in the case in question it was held at the home of the man who shot the moose. Tea was prepared and the moose boiled at his father's home next door and brought to the assembled group after the rosary. The wives of the three hunters prepared the food.

An addition to providing a feast for the entire group, the man who shot the moose gave a large piece to his father's household. He had used his father's gun to shoot the moose. One of the hunt companions said he had given meat to his father-in-law's household and two other households. Later he sent his wife over with meat as he had promised to "give" us some. His wife made a modest request for candles and other small items as counter-"gifts". There is obviously not the even distribution of meat to all households in this community as was observed at the "Lynx Point" Slavey settlement (MacNeish 1958). However, as with caribou some distribution obviously occurs, if not always in the form of a feast, at least among close kinsmen and friends who have developed a pattern of gift exchange in these matters. The speculation of the anthropologists that exchange groups exist was borne out in the definite statement of one informant that her household exchanged meat with some families, never exchanged meat with others.

The distribution of hides tends to follow the patterns noted in regard to caribou. The hunter's wife usually keeps the hide. However, the hide may be given away to companions on the hunt if the man who killed the moose doesn't want the hide. Exchanges in moose hides have been cited earlier in the discussion of caribou hides. Since moose hide is such a vital commodity for making moccasins, it is obvious that each household must have a supply of hides. A household may obtain them through the direct means of hunting, by gift exchange, and/or purchase of hides at Rae. One man whose wife was in the hospital gave one of two moosehides to a sister in return for her labour in tanning them for him.

About ten pairs of moccasins can be made from a moose hide. A woman needs three or four pairs, a man at least four pairs per year. One woman said she makes two pairs of moccasins for her husband in early September and two more pairs at Easter time. She noted that when men work on the roads they need "lots" of moccasins and sometimes buy additional pairs at the store at Rae. Thus, one moose hide would provide moccasins for two adults and possible a small child for a year.

One woman noted that sometimes summer moccasins are made of caribou hide but none were observed in the community. For all practical purposes, moccasins always require moose hide. Mittens are usually made with backs of moose hide and palms of caribou hide and a pair of mitten backs require as much material as a pair of moccasins. Apparently one pair of mittens will see a person through the winter.

Formerly, moose hide was utilized for various purposes. The cariole of sleds was made of moose hide as were a variety of sack type containers. Only one moose calfskin bag (furred) with drawstrings was observed in use in the community. It was reported but not observed that one man in the community had a nicely ornamented moose hide gun case.

A few older informants had heard of moose hide boats and commented they were formerly observed among the Providence and Simpson Slavey but had no knowledge of their use among the Dogrib.

The use of bone and antler has been discussed in connection with similar utilization of caribou.

Processing Meat: - The same processes described for caribou meat are applied to moose meat. Moose meat is sometimes frozen to preserve it. A final culinary note which probably also applies to caribou was the observation of moose meat being roasted in the oven at one home. Moose marrow is treated in the same fashion as caribou marrow.

Processing Hides: - The moose is cut for skinning in the same fashion as caribou but the hide must be worked off the carcass with a sharp knife. Moose calf hide can be treated in the same fashion as caribou but is apparently not ordinarily used for raw hide or babiche. The hide of a mature moose is considerably larger and heavier than caribou and requires special processes and tools to make suede finish leather. It is not made into furred pelts or raw hide. As was the case with caribou, certain individual variations occur in the tanning of moose hide. However, the general steps may be listed.

The hair is cut off. A special flesher, enokwa (see Figure 9), is used on the flesh side. The enokwa is made of a moose hind leg bone, one end of which is sharpened. A strap may be attached to the other end to be worn around the worker's wrist. The enokwa is held like a dagger and brought down forcefully against the hide to loosen and cut away bits of flesh and loose tissue. It probably also breaks the tough fibers to help make the hide more flexible. If the hide is completely dry it is probably soaked at this stage to facilitate stretching it on a

rectangular frame. Slits are cut along the edge and the hide is laced tautly to the frame. Both sides are then scraped with a tool called an i^{n}gu (see Figure 9). This is a S-shaped tool about ten inches long and sharpened at each end. Examples observed were made of old files. One informant said the fur side is scraped with a k'edze. At this point the hide may be kept indefinitely before further processing. One informant stated that it is best to led the hide freeze on the frame--apparently contributing to further fibre break-down and greater softness.

After scraping on the frame the hide is taken off and soaked in lukewarm water with powdered bar soap boiled into a soft soap mixture. A stout pole is driven firmly into the ground and the slit holes used to lace the hide to the frame are threaded over the pole and the loose end is twisted to wring out the water. It may be wrung figure-eight fashion by two women, each twisting a heavy stick in each loop.

After it has been wrung thoroughly, two women pull the hide to make it straight and smooth, sometimes pulling it until it is completely dry. It is then scraped with a kwete. The process of soaking, wringing and scraping is usually repeated as is the case with caribou. But where two such processings are often sufficient for caribou, four are frequently required for moose.

Moose hide may be smoked two or three times. It is first smoked on both sides over a smudge fire of rotten spruce. This was observed being done out of doors and not in a smoke tepee. Apparently the same process of smoking is identical to that for caribou, the hide with fur side inside being sewn into a bag and suspended over a pot with a fire in it.

In the summer hides must be processed quickly at least to the point of lacing them on frames so that t'so fly (unidentified) will not lay eggs on it and spoil the hide. However, the moose is not host to warble fly larvae so fresh hides are not damaged as caribou hides may be.

Bear

Hunting: - Black bears are killed during any season and were formerly caught in snares like moose to be approached and killed after being securely caught in the noose. Now bears are shot with heavy rifles. They are usually taken in the course of other activities such as travelling and trapping. In the winter bears in hibernation can be located by the condensation of their breath near their dens.

Consumption and Distribution, etc: - Little direct data on the subject were obtained. During the period of study one bear was shot

by a man who had gone out trapping. The meat was brought home, apart for an amount he fed to his dogs. As far as known he gave some meat to another household and may have distributed it more widely. Bears are not hunted as purposefully as moose and caribou and are not killed in any thing like comparable numbers. Bear meat is relished because it is often fat. It is made into dry meat and cooked in other ways like caribou and moose meat. Bear hides are not particularly valued and are usually simply abandoned in the bush. They are too coarse and heavy to bother to process in most cases, although bear skins make comfortable under-bedding. Caribou and rabbit skin blankets are much lighter than bearskin. However, several parkas were noted trimmed with bear fur, but the softness of the fur and flexibility of the hide suggest the skins were of smaller, young bears. A polling of seven households revealed a total of four bears killed by them last year. Specific mention was made of bear bone being used formerly to make arrow points, and of bear scapula spoons.

Musk Ox

The oldest woman in the community, listed as born in 1875 but probably older since this is the date of baptism, supplies an account of musk ox hunting along with certain historical details. She stated that her grandparents were among the first settlers at the present Lac la Martre village, coming with the first chief, the grandfather of one of the present headmen. However, she described her people as huizi, coming from "Rock Mountain" which is apparently in the neighbourhood of Ray Rock. Other data suggest that this is where they customarily hunted as she said that they were "just like Eskimo", using only caribou fur bedding because there were no spruce boughs in the barrens, just "little leaves" on the ground. She mentioned having to bring tent poles to the barrens. However, she also said that long ago when people lived in skin tents all year round (which she described as always warm, not cold like the cloth tent she was living in at the time of the interview), they lived in the bush in the summer and not at Lac la Martre.

When she was young, presumably before her marriage, her father hunted musk ox. They hunted them in the spring just as the ice was breaking up and did not take sleds or dogs, but back-packed their belongings. (Russell, 1897, states the fall hunt had been abandoned a few years before his visit. However, the spring hunt he accompanied in March was by dog sled.) When her father went to hunt, she and the other women and children sat on a big rock and watched. The men used guns. She remembered the animals well, describing them as having short legs, only about six inches showing beneath the long fur, and in the winter the fur dragged on the ground. They were big animals,

fat, and good to eat. A single hide was sufficient to make a sled cariole. In answer to questions she said the hide was tanned like moose hide and that calf hide was used both finished and with the fur on. Calf skin was used for moccasins and coats could be made of furred pelts. It had fine, long black hair. Calf skin was also used for making little bags like caribou skin and fur bags. The ox horn was boiled with water to make it soft and then the men would make big and little spoons of the horn. They, one year they did not get any musk ox and stopped hunting them. The musk ox leather also made a good strong dog harness.

In a later interview the informant volunteered that sometimes they went to hunt musk ox in the winter with sleds and dogs. The men would drive the dog sleds round and round a herd, rounding the animals up and shooting them. (In the hunt accompanied by Russell, dogs were loose - 1897:118). She also added that while musk ox hide was processed like moose hide it was tougher and harder to handle so that some women were not strong could not tan musk ox hide.

Musk ox today are so much a thing of the past that the native term has been lost from the vocabulary of some of the young adults.

Russell's summation of his observations is worth quoting.

> The Indians kill the musk ox simply for the robes. The flesh is wasted except for an insignificant quantity which is consumed by the hunters and their dogs on the spot. They depend upon killing caribou to and from the territory inhabited by the musk ox, so that no meat is taken away. The musk ox have been driven back so far into the Barren Ground that they are not hunted in the summer. The robes are trimmed nearly square by cutting away a broad strip, along the breast where the hide is thick and the hair long; experience has taught the hunter that he will get 50MB (Made Beaver: 50MB=$25.00) for the robe be it large or small, so he cuts it down in order to make room on the sled for a larger number. (Russell 1897:235).

CHAPTER VI

NATIVE CLOTHING AND FOOTGEAR

The utilization of hides for clothing continued at least in part into the twentieth century. While descriptions of styles are lacking in details they are noteworthy in indicating the heavier consumption of caribou even in a period when native materials were supplemented by trade textiles. At present, with the exception of an occasional fur parka, all garments are home made of commercial textiles or are obtained ready made. Fur trim may be added to women's parkas and stroud fringe, embroidery and fur to men's parkas, but the parkas are made of cloth. Only footgear, mittens and moccasins are still made of native materials. The following discussion will deal with old styles of clothing for men and women and a separate section will be devoted to footgear, mittens and gloves. (Russell, 1897, gives a good account, which see, of native clothing about 70 years ago.)

Women's Clothing

One dress required three suede finish hides; two for the skirt and one for the waist. The skirt was ankle length and sewn down the side seams with sinew. It was decorated along the hem with beads to a depth of six or eight inches. The belt was sometimes decorated with beads made of small bones of birds and rabbits with other beads made of small bones of birds and rabbits with other beads fringing the ends. The waist pulled over the head without special openings or fastenings. It was described as having a "big collar", stripes of red and black stroud down the front and back, and sleeves which had beading at the cuff and "buttoned at the wrist". Within the memory of informants questioned, women's leggings are made of red or black stroud rather than hide. They were calf length and thigh length, held in place with draw strings. Both types were ornamented with bands of large white beads around the calf and the ankle. Gestures seemed to indicate that the bands followed a curvilinear motif. The leggings extended down over the ankle wraps of moccasins. One woman dated the wearing such leggings with the time sewing machines were first introduced. Our oldest informant observed that one dress would last for a year and not only wore better than cloth but did not seem to get dirty. Another woman remembered that the leather dresses were more wind-proof than the cloth clothing worn today.

It was not clear if women wore skin or fur parkas but mention was made of wearing blankets for shawls and pieces of stroud for headgear as silk kerchiefs were worn today. A further note on women's styles was that women formerly wore their hair in three braids down the

back--at present one or two braids are worn. Although data were collected on bone heads and porcupine quill ornamentation, this was apparently always applied to the garment and no mention was made of separate jewelry. At present the only jewelry worn by Lac la Martre women is the wedding band of gold or silver.

The oldest woman in the community said the caribou skin dresses were made all in one piece. After her children were ~~frown~~ born (she is listed as born in 1875 and has had three children which would probably put this date as about 1900) they began making dresses entirely of stroud, and later began wearing the type of cotton clothing worn today.

Men's Clothing

Men wore separate leggings attached to a belt and in cold weather these were made of furred caribou skin. In recent years, i.e. within the experience of a 45 year old man, actual trousers were made of its material. No data were collected concerning breech clouts. A distinction was made between shirts and parkas. Men's shirts were sometimes made of white, that is, unsmoked, suede finish hides. One very old woman said that two hides were required for a man's shirt. They needed an additional three hides for a parka and other hides for fur leggings. The fur parkas still made occasionally conform to an old style. These have a deep, pointed hood, tapered sleeves, a front opening like a coat secured with ties, and reach to the mid-thigh. Underclothing, as noted, was made of netted rabbit fur and continued in use until relatively recent times. Men have worn hteir hair cut short for many years and one woman over seventy said she never saw men with long hair.

General - Since adults would require a bare minimum of two or three caribou hides each for their clothing and children would each need one or two, a family would have to procure a dozen or more caribou each year for clothing alone. Other uses of caribou hides have been detailed elsewhere.

Footgear

Snowshoes: - Although snowshoes are not footgear in the sense of moccasins, they account in large measure for the continuing need for caribou as they are preferably laced with babiche. Dogrib snowshoes are long and narrow and are made in three sizes: short ones or a.netsale for short trips into the bush to gather wood, etc.; a., which are about three feet long or somewhat longer and are an all purpose snowshoe for breaking trail, travelling over moderately deep snow in the bush, etc.; and a.co or a.tso which may approach the wearer's height in

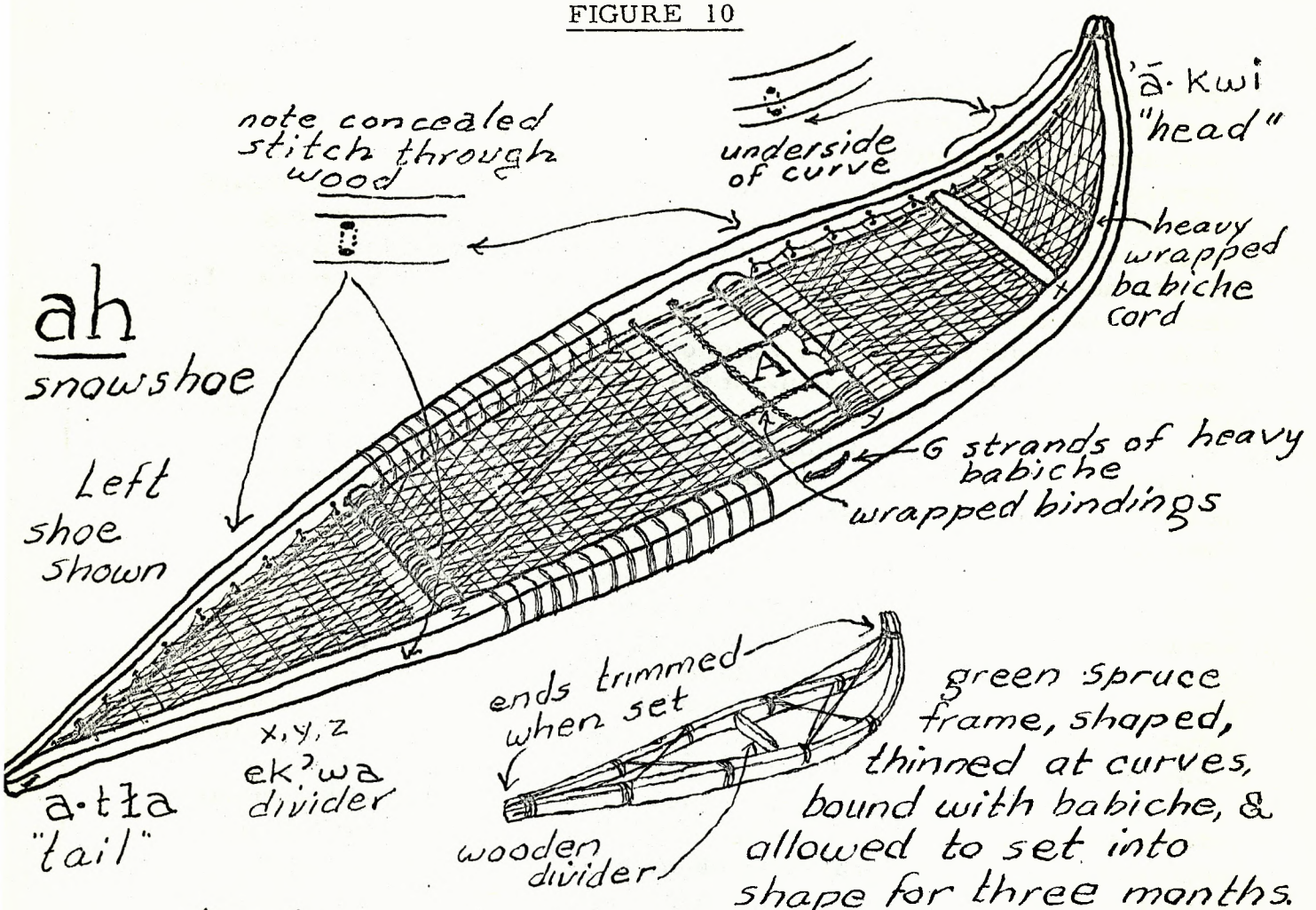
length, almost like skis. These are used in deep snow, particularly to hunt moose. A half a caribou hide supplies enough babiche for a middle sized pair of snowshoes. Men make the wood framing of the snowshoe, but it is more common for women to do the babiche lacing. At least every man needs a pair of snowshoes and they are also worn by women. Women's snowshoes are sometimes ornamented with yarn ties. Among old beliefs is that a ptarmigan foot attached to each snowshoe just beyond the toes will assure that the wearer will "walk smart" like the ptarmigan walks on the snow, but this is apparently only a belief rather than a regular practice. The form of the Dogrib snowshoe and the main steps in manufacture are shown in Figure 10.

Moccasins: - The moccasins of men and women are identical in that no special ornamentation or style distinguished them. At Lac la Martre a few small girls were observed wearing mukluks but adult women seemed to wear only moccasins while men and boys often wore mukluks in the cold weather. There are two basic styles of moccasins which vary in terms ornamentation and materials. These are the pointed toe variety and the blunt toe variety, which may be made with an ankle wrapping or in a slipper style. See Figure 9 for illustrations of moccasin patterns and styles.

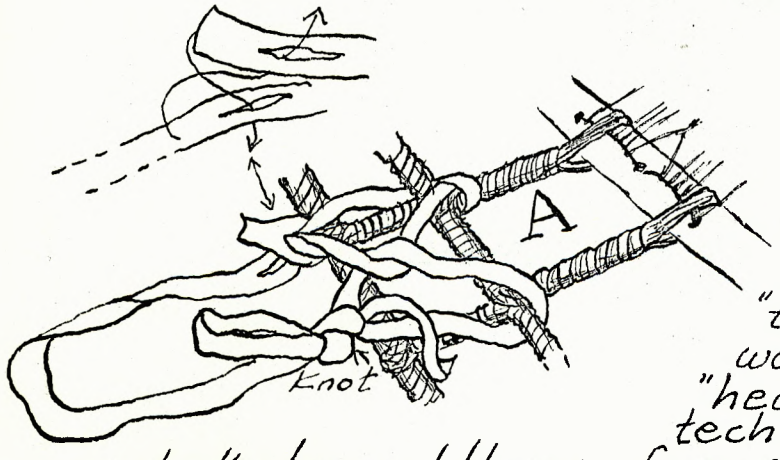
Blunt toe. The sole is made of hide, usually moose, and the basic pattern is a simple U. the flat side forming the heel. The rounded edge is brought up and puckered around a large tongue. The tongue may be made of stroud, hide, or canvas. Canvas backing is usually used with soft hide and stroud. The puckering is very fine and butted against the edge of the tongue, see illustration. Sometimes a strip of hide, usually of a lighter colour, is sewn between the puckering and tongue and trimmed down to form a corded effect around the tongue. The heel is usually finished off as an inverted T. A cuff of stroud is sewn around the top of the moccasin to finish it off; the cuff extends from the ankle almost to the ground. This basic moccasin may be completed with ankle wrapping or simply with a strip of fur above the cuff and along the top edge of the tongue to form a slipper moccasin. The ankle wrapping may be made of caribou hide, or canvas in the case of work moccasins. This is simply a rectangular flap sewn around the back of the moccasin from one side of the tongue to the other, extending loose for a couple inches beyond the sewing. It usually will reach to the shin, but canvas work moccasins may extend well up the calf. A thong of hide is brought around under the cuff, secured by being passed through slits at the back and sides and brought up in a criss-cross fashion to secure the wrapping firmly about the ankle. Most people seemed to bring the outer side of the wrapping over the inner side.

A variety of decorative treatments are used but each is fairly stylized. Stroud tongues and usually the cuffs are white. The cuffs

FIGURE 10

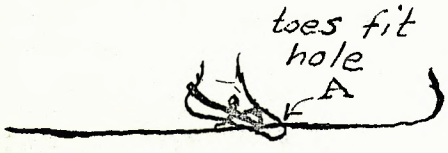


green spruce frame, shaped, thinned at curves, bound with babiche, & allowed to set into shape for three months.



partially tanned thong for attaching to foot

Babiche is soaked in water (or soap and water) before lacing - laced wet. The stitching along inside of the frame at "head" and "tail" inserted first as well as the heavy cord at the "head." Lacing proceeds in technique of chair caning, e.g. from side of middle divider, carry to tip; carry across under frame stitching to form top horizontal element; carry to other side at divider; form bottom horizontal element at divider, etc. Head, center and tail areas each filled in by alternating diagonal and horizontal elements.



may be pinked, cut in squared or rounded notches or left plain. Tongues may be decorated with silk (actually rayon) embroidery in a floral pattern, with beads in a geometric stripe pattern with solid bands of colour paralleling the shape of the tongue, or in the case of the canvas tongues of work moccasins, simply covered with criss-crossings of sewing machine stitching. Hide tongues may be embroidered but more often are treated like canvas tongues. Floral embroidery is of two types. The commonest consists of cabbage roses and buds in shades of red, green foliage, and with a small blue violet or forget-me-not or two to mark the instep side of the moccasin. If the cuffs are embroidered, red flowers are embroidered on the outer cuff, blue and lavender ones on the inner cuff. Occasionally a branching pattern of five petalled flowers is embroidered on the tongue, occasionally in shades of red with yellow centers, but usually in blue. The embroidery is done in various versions of the "satin stitch".

Pointed toe. Although the blunt toe is the commonest style, two examples of the pointed toe style were observed. The foot part is slit and a seam is sewn from the toe to the tongue and the sides are brought up snugly and smoothly around a much shorter and narrower tongue than is found in the blunt toe style. The heel is finished in the T pattern. The moccasin is fitted with cuff and ankle like the blunt toe moccasin. Ornamentation of the tongue also varies. It may be edged with geometric designs of porcupine quills, as was the case in one pair observed, or quills may be used in floral patterns on the tongue. The other pair observed had a black velvet tongue edged with commercially made ornamental braid. At one time horsehair braid was popular both as an edging and applied to the entire tongue.

Moccasin Terms

1. blunt toe moccasin, ankle wrap type: kɛ
2. slipper moccasin without ankle wrap: wekɛtsi^{n}ko^{n}hule
3. pointed toe moccasin: ket'ot'so
4. ankle wrapping: wekɛtsi^{n}ko^{n} (See #3 above, hule - "none" or "without")
5. tongue: kɛt'a
6. stroud cuff: kɛtčaowet'i
7. moccasin soles (a pair): kɛkaitah
8. moccasin string (thong tie): kɛtso^{n}k'łi
9. quill: t'so
10. mukluk: enakɛlibah (-libah is derived from the French for "boot").
11. mukluk, furred pelt type: ekwo^{n}wo (e)dzagwo

Mukluks: - Mukluks may be made of hide and stroud or canvas or entirely of hide, but the latter type is rare today. Dr. MacNeish had

such a pair bought several years ago at Yellowknife. The Lac la Martre people recognized this style but there were none in use at Lac la Martre at the time of the study. These mukluks had suede finish hide soles with the leg portions made of strips of caribou leg fur and were finished at the top with a strip of suede finish hide in pinked bands and secured by a drawstring. They reach to the knee.

The other type of mukluk is more colourful, has a strip of fur ornamentation and is generally shorter in length, reaching just to the calf or only slightly above it. The foot part and tongue are made like moccasins but lack cuffs. The leg part is made of four vertical strips of stroud (or canvas, or canvas and stroud alternated). The stroud strips are in alternating colours, usually black or blue and red, although some red and white examples were seen. The top is finished off with a band of stroud about 2 1/2" to 3" wide with a drawstring. The drawstring is usually 4 strand braided yarn with tassels at the ends. Sometimes a zipper is inserted along the outer seam of the mukluk. A band of fur (wolverine, beaver, etc.) is sewn around the mukluk. The tongue and cuff are ornamented with floral embroidery, often in yarn but occasionally in silk, in the manner of moccasins. The blue flower marks the instep side and blue flowers are preferred for the back of the top band, red for the front. Although the tongue is made separately, it is usually the same colour as the vertical strip of stroud running up the front of the leg. It is secured around the leg with criss-cross thongs like moccasins.

Mukluks are sometimes made entirely of canvas, but these work mukluks do not have fur on them.

Two final observations may be included regarding mukluks. The vertical strips forming the leg and the top finishing strip with draw string are often sewn on a sewing machine rather than by hand. The same is true of the cotton cloth lining usually put in the leg portion of mukluks. A very few examples of mukluks that depart from floral ornamentation were observed. These had cuffs ornamented with one inch squares of contrasting colour stroud appliqued on by sewing machine. The effect was a diagonally oriented checker-board pattern, the stroud band providing one colour the appliques another. In other respects they were identical to other dress mukluks with fur, tassels, and thongs.

The etymology of the native term for mukluk suggests that this style of footgear is a post-contact introduction.

Mittens: - dji, usually called "sled mittens" require both moose and caribou hide. They can be made entirely of caribou but the preferred

style is with moosehide back and caribou palm as it is flexible in the palm yet warm and tough on the back. These are very large in relation to the wearer's hand and thickly lined with duffle cloth or other heavy material. The thumb part is set at a right angle to the palm in an ingenious fashion. The inner part of the thumb is formed by cutting three sides of a rectangle of appropriate size from the point of juncture (of palm and thumb) into the gauntlet section at the wrist. It is folded up along the uncut fourth side of the rectangle. Another separate rectangle, twice as long, is then fitted to form the back of the thumb and fill in the opening in the gauntlet section. The only seams are those around the entire mitten and around the thumb. Sewing may be done by hand or with a sewing machine. Sometimes an extra strip is set in and trimmed along the seam to give a corded effect as is done with moccasins, or the seam may be a simple one turned inside in the finished mitten. Mittens may be ornamented in a variety of ways comparable to moccasins. The gauntlet cuff extends six inches or more up the arm, tapering from top to wrist to accommodate a heavy jacket or parka sleeve. The top edge and the wrist have a band of fur about 1" wide going all the way around.

The outside of the cuff is almost invariably ornamented with floral embroidery and occasionally the back of the hand is embroidered. Since it is difficult to do the familiar satin stitch on tough moose hide, many mittens are ornamented with circles or hearts of stroud which have been embroidered with flowers and appliqued to the mitten. Most mittens have fringes or caribou hide along the outside of the cuff. Mittens are always worn on strings around the neck. These are of four strand yarn braid with tassels about 10" up from attachment to the mitten cuff. Men's mittens often have an additional single large tassel at the mid-point of the string. The string is worn outside the jacket or parka and serves to keep mittens handy as the mittens can be flipped together behind the wearer's back when not in use.

Only one pair of beaded mittens has been observed, beaded in a floral design similar to that used in silk embroidery.

Gloves: - Ladji are more a piece of work apparel than mittens and may be worn in fall and summer in doing heavy labour. The pattern is simply a copy of commercially made canvas gloves, occasionally made with ornamented gauntlet cuffs like mittens but more often finished at the wrist with a strip of fur. They are sometimes embroidered with silk but often strips of cloth, usually red, are sewn from knuckle to wrist in mimicry of commercial glove stitching. They are not worn on a string. The alien origin of gloves is reflected in the name, a combination of a French article and the native word for mittens.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Comparisons of old and new practices, references to on-going acculturation, and reconstructive and predictive speculations have been made. This summary will attempt to generalize on the foregoing material, but a vote of caution is in order. The historical literature has not yet been fully reviewed to substantiate certain tentative conclusions, other such conclusions cannot be documented because no data exist in the literature concerning them. Thus, this present report and summary deals mainly with materials collected in the course of field work along.

The Marten Lake people are today poised between the self-sufficiency of a subsistence economy and dependence upon the world of the market. Neither can at present be abandoned without a severe decline in the living standards. The inter-relatedness of the cash economy and the subsistence economy has brought and will continue to bring new problems which will have to be met. The village itself, as noted, consists of the two former villages plus a scattering of households which extended to the north shore of Lac la Martre. The people have drawn together into the southern village to be nearer to Rae, which serves them as the outlier of the world of the market. The southern village has also attracted them because that is where the government built a day school. It is questionable whether the Lac la Martre people value this development in the sociological terms evisioned by the government, namely allowing children to remain at home rather than disrupt family relations by taking them to distant boarding schools. A number of informants expressed the opinion that children will not learn English as rapidly at the day school as at boarding school, because they will speak Dogrib most of the time. At boarding school, the presence of children from other tribes as well as constant supervision by Whites necessitates conversational ability in English. The presence of the day school holds attractions which are primarily economic. There is the opportunity to earn money in maintenance, supplying of fire wood, and at least at present in the building of the educational plant. The presence of the school means planes arrive more frequently bringing supplies, added to the occasional visits of a doctor or Indian Service representative or school official to pick up children to take to boarding school. The game warden has a patrol cabin at the village which also accounts for an occasional visit by plane. Furthermore, the teacherage is equipped with a radio which can contact Fort Rae. This is a source of comfort to the people in knowing help can be called in the case of emergencies, but more importantly, messages for supplies can be transmitted to the Hudson's Bay store at Rae with the request that they be put on some passing plane.

It is likely that current conditions will produce a number of side effects on subsistence patterns. The present population of the village had doubled in the last five years as a result of migration from other settlements on the lake. At Lac la Martre village, as throughout the north, natural increase is occurring due to lowered death rate as a result of the growing availability of improved medical facilities. (Also, Lac la Martre now has radio contact with the doctor in emergencies, and should the regular clinic under disucssion for the village come into being visiting medical personnel will be able to make more regular and thorough examinations.) Periodic famine is no longer a threat, immunization programs are in effect, and x-ray screening for tuberculosis is now a standard practice. The results of population increase are already seen at Fort Rae where a problem of sanitation and inadequacy of local subsistence resources occur.

It is impossible to say how long it will take for these matters to become a threat at Lac la Martre. The village is built on earth rather than rock so that the drainage of waste is not likely to produce the serious water contamination present at Rae. Nor can the diminution of local supplies of wood, rabbits and fish be predicted. The population of Rae is four times that of Lac la Martre and it is obvious that it is too large to be adequately supported by current subsistence practices in the natural environment of the north.

The focus of this report has been on the extent of which the Lac la Martre Indians continue to rely upon subsistence activities in making their livelihood. It has been demonstrated that many items of consumption formerly made by the people from native materials are now purchased. Not only have there been replacements from European technology of native goods, but many additions of the patterns of consumption have been made. This shift toward a cash economy has been more significant in regard to durable or semi-durable goods such as clothing, furnishings, shelters and tools, utensils and mechanical items and the like and much less significant in regard to food, although certain purchased foodstuffs are considered necessary staples. Except for wood, native flora never played a vital role in the economy. The use of plant products is still frequent, although probably, as for example in the case of berry consumption, of less intensity than in earlier times. The most impressive decline in the exploitation of the biota of the region is in regard to caribou. The extent of earlier exploitation of moose is harder to evaluate. As the more westerly Slavey demonstrate, moose can for many needs serve as an alternative to caribou consumption, although it does not have the advantage of allowing large-scale kills. The Dogrib traditionally seem to have relied more heavily on caribou,

as, is appropriate to their locale. Musk ox exploitation by the Dogrib was never a prime ingredient in the native economy and seems mainly to have been a relatively short-lived outgrowth of the fur-trade period (Russell 1893). Of both moose and caribou, the meat is highly valued by the Marten Lake people but is not essential to life or physical well-being. But the skins (and associated products) which were in aboriginal times for shelter and clothing absolutely essential to existence are today seriously needed only for the manufacture of moccasins, snowshoes and mittens. Even for these items of Western manufacture could be substituted, although it is very unlikely that so efficient a form of footgear could be provided.

The question arises to what extent has the decline in the caribou population conditioned the substitution of manufactured goods for native items formerly made of caribou. The Indians are cognizant of the increasing difficulty of getting caribou; they still value its products and some will go to some effort to obtain them. But large scale use of caribou products, particularly the skins, is already a thing of the past, today through preference even more than necessity. The contemporary Dogrib no more wishes to return to the skin tent and dress than he wishes to return to the birch-bark canoe, if only in terms of escaping the unremitting toil of yesteryear. As one old woman in her sixties put it, in describing her youth, "Before, we were so very pitiful. We are just like ladies now". The expanding cash economy, largely through the advent of wage work and government allowances, has allowed a standard of living that precludes a return to more aboriginal conditions or even, by choice, stabilization at the present living level. For this latter reason, it seems unrealistic, in terms of native consumer interest and standards, to encourage the Indian to adhere to or return to the fur trade economy and the bush life of his father's and grandfather's generation. To be a trapper only, many a bush Indian even today would have to submit to a decline in standard of living. He cannot visualize the possible detrimental consequences in social, familial and personal life greater involvement in the market economy that Western society may bring, but he knows full well that security and pleasures of money in hand. And this knowledge brings even the prideful hunter and master of bush craft out of the bush to seek wage work. (See the personality study of "Marcel Renard", a bush Slavey, to be published in a forthcoming National Museum Bulletin.)

Indirect evidence indicates that within the remaining subsistence economy a shift in subsistence practices has occurred. Basically, the Marten Lake people have become more dependent on fishing and less dependent on hunting to supply food. The descriptions of tents and clothing used within the lifetime of old informants clearly indicate that

formerly caribou were much more vital to existence. The meat of the caribou was used as well as the skins, with a consequent lesser dependence on fish; more time was taken for hunting so less fishing was done, and with more meat less fish were required. Fish are obviously a more dependable source of food if other factors (such as the need for hides) do not draw people from fish lakes. Two other factors seem to condition the dependence on fish. First, use of dogs has increased the dogs must be fed. Fish assure not only adequate human sustenance but dogfood as well. Secondly, a culturally conditioned meat hunger which might lead people to hunt even with an adequate supply of fish has been reduced because other attractive foodstuffs have been introduced. As noted, the possibility of wage work on roads led to a delay in trapping and hunting in the fall of 1959. Men were afraid to leave the village for long periods because they might not be around if a plane came for a road crew. Wage labour on the the teacherage kept many men close to the village all summer and fall so that only four men joined the Rae hunters going to the barren grounds. It is also likely that the introduction of metal tools for chopping ice as well as the use of commercial nets have made fishing more attractive in that quicker and greater return is possible for the amount of labour invested both in fishing process and manufacture of gear.

If, as we have suggested, the relative abandonment of caribou exploitation has let the Marten Lake people to stabilize their subsistence activities even more fully around fishing than in earlier times, this in itself represents today a relatively conservative (in the sense of traditional) and uncommon demographic solution to changing ecological and economic conditions.

The aboriginal economic unit was a small, mobile band, apparently fluctuating in personnel and at times coming together with other groups for specific economic activities. There was an alternation between hunting expeditions for skins and meat with periods at fishing stations. Fishing must have been as vital as hunting in the struggle for survival. (See for example, Richardson 1851:II 16). The relative reliability of fishing to provide a food staple was extremely important. The advent of the fur trade allowed, through the use of firearms, a much easier and richer exploitation of the large game. A concomitant of the trade was the orientation of the native population toward the trading forts: permanent Indian settlements became possible, and these tended to be situated for easy access to the forts. Free flowing waterways were required for summer transportation of goods to go and from the trading posts. But the rivers of the north do not yield nearly the rich catch of fish as do various "fish lakes" in the bush, which were the earlier orientation points of the population. In the establishment of the forts themselves, the fishing potential of the locale was not a main consideration, if considered at all (as witness the present Fort Rae).

The final step in the demographic realigment that has been going on for a century and a half is the settling of the native in the fort itself, with some household heads abandoning any significant effort to make a living from the bush either permanently (e.g., native Bay Company clerks) or for substantial periods (e.g., natives formerly employed at the now inactive Ray Rock mine east of Rae.)

The present-day demographic gradient may be divided into three general stages, and these stages correlate with decreasing reliance on the products of the bush. At the more conservative end are such native groups as the Lac la Martre Indians and the Gens du Large band of the Hare. The latter come into the fort, Good Hope, only in the summer. The colder months are spent in the Colville Lake area to the northeast, where they make a slow seasonal migration from one fishing station to another, with male hunting parties going into the barrens after caribou in the late winter (MacNeish field notes of 1956). Both the Gens du Large and the Marten Lake people continue to live in their traditional regions with fish as their staple food. But the younger people of the Gens du Large band have abandoned this life for that of fort living, and we have seen that at Lac la Martre the lures of the Western world have pulled the people away from the richer portions of the lake and toward the fort.

Most of the bush communities along the Mackenzie River could be cited as illustrative of the mid-stage. The "Lynx Point" Slavey settlement (MacNeish 1958) is one example. The Marion Lake Dogrib settlement appears to be another. Easy access to the fort has been an important factor in the selection of the village sites, and in the Lynx Point case, at least, has meant the relinquishment of adequate fishing. The third stage is the removal adjacent to or into the trading fort, represented by the Indian population of Rae.

To the Indian the rigours of isolated bush living may be too great a price to pay for the independent and self-sufficient life of the old time bush Indian admired by Whites, few of whom would willingly endure the comparable life of a pioneer. Yet these values are not absent from Indian society either. And the bush village, by standards common to both Indian and White (e.g., the egalitarian, i.e., "democratic", relationships, and the almost complete absence of crime, psychosis, broken homes, abandoned wives and children, etc.) is a very healthy social body. Many southern Canadian and United States tribes are not so fortunate. The problem is the eternal one with which man has struggled throughout his entire career of cultural evolution, that of maintaining the more rewarding aspects of the old life, or more realistically, transmuting them, while escaping its environmental and economic bondage through cultural borrowing and change.

APPENDIX

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

by Nancy O. Lurie

A few concluding remarks may be made regarding possible future plans for the Lac la Martre people. If they remain in their present village they will doubtless increase to the point that natural resources will become reduced. They will not only be forced to depend more on purchased goods, but their already great desires for new items will increase as improved communication and transportation serve to bring more knowledge of the outside world and its wealth of material goods. There are at present several sources of cash: trapping, family allowances and other government benefits, occasional wage work in school maintenance and work on roads or at mines. Road and mine work requires absence from the community. Three local sources of cash might be exploited in the future; handicraft, tourism, and commercial fishing.

Handicraft. The primary difficulties lie in capitalizing such an enterprise so that large amounts of goods may be stockpiled during periods when people are free to make craft objects, and in transporting and marketing them in the most profitable seasons either by mail order or to large commercial areas. Certain crafts are regularly produced for home consumption and are attractive enough that with proper quality control (a problem, but not insurmountable) and marketing methods they would probably find buyers. These items include mukluks, moccasins, mittens, gloves and snowshoes. Two crafts rapidly disappearing might be profitably revived; netting of rabbit skin blankets (probably the best market would be in small size baby carriage robes), and wooden bowls and spoons to be sold as salad servers, etc. All of the items are sufficiently light in weight-to-volume that if they could be locally stockpiled the expense of air transport to outside markets could be pro-rated on the basis of a few cents per item. The best model for such an enterprise would not be the sale of Eskimo crafts which appeal to a limited market of collectors willing to pay a high price per item. A successful endeavor along lines more appropriate to Dogrib conditions is seen in the Winnebago Indian handicraft Co-operative in Neillsville, Wisconsin, U.S.A. where baskets, moccasins and beadwork--all expendable "practical" items selling for a reasonable price--are marketed primarily through mail orders.

Tourism. Many Indians in more southerly parts of Canada and the northern United States act as guides to fishermen, hunters, and campers. A resort which might ultimately pass entirely into Indian management could eventually be established in the region. With increased air travel as well as the trend toward greater leisure and higher incomes for middle class people this heretofore inaccessible area could become attractive to tourists from both Canada and the United States. Performances of dances, stick games, etc. could become added attractions. Indians have drifted into this kind of work as their areas have been opened to tourism, but for the most part derive little profit from such enterprises run by white entrepreneurs. Both handicraft and tourism have the value of being work which the individual can engage on a seasonal basis or as his desires dictate and do not require punching a time clock, and the Indians could share profits fairly if businesses were properly managed.

Commercial fishing. This source of income would depend on studies of the region by ichthyologists and economists as to its practicality. Indian-managed fisheries occur on the west coast, but a more comparable case to study would be the Chippewa Co-operative fishery on the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota, U.S.A.

Given the nature of the terrain, individual enterprise simply cannot meet the needs posed by changed living habits and the acquisition of new material goods. A current problem at Lac la Martre is the matter of an adequate water supply for washing purposes. The people are strongly oriented toward concepts of cleanliness and wash clothes frequently under very difficult conditions particularly in the winter. According to professional public health workers one of the simplest general measures in promoting a high level of general health is cleanliness of wearing apparel--aseptically, not just visually clean. Disease bacteria are controlled cutting down on the possibility of widespread epidemics, occurence of various skin diseases is reduced, and disease-bearing parasitic insects can be eliminated in a community. The Lac la Martre people certainly strive for visual cleanliness but difficulty of obtaining sufficient supplies of water and particularly of heating water for laundry purposes prevent aseptic cleanliness. A community laundry would be a real asset to the well-being of the community. Considering the distance that a hose would have to be run out onto the ice in the winter time to procure water, a well with a pump would probably be the best source of water. This could also serve as a community drinking water supply since increasing population will doubtless cause some contamination of lake water in time. A large commercial laundry tank rather than individual machines would probably be most practical for purposes of maintenance, heating of water to adequate temperature, and thorough cleansing. However, the sentiment

of the people ought to be explored whether embarrassment might be experienced in the mingling of one another's laundry, in which case individual machines on the order of commercial laundromat arrangements might be used. Tumbler drying rather than the use of wringers and air drying is recommended on hygenic grounds. One or two individuals could be given a thorough training course in the maintenance and repair of machinery (a single large machine would involve less maintenance) and schedules of use could be worked out.

It might be added that at present the Lac la Martre women iron a good share of the family clothing, all with sad irons heated on stoves. The local diesel plant supplies more than enough power for the school and teacherage and could probably be extended to all the homes. Since people are abandoning tents for cabins, children are getting local schooling and being encouraged to read, and the adopted styles of textiles clothing require ironing, adequate electric power for lighting and small appliances such as irons would also promote community welfare.

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