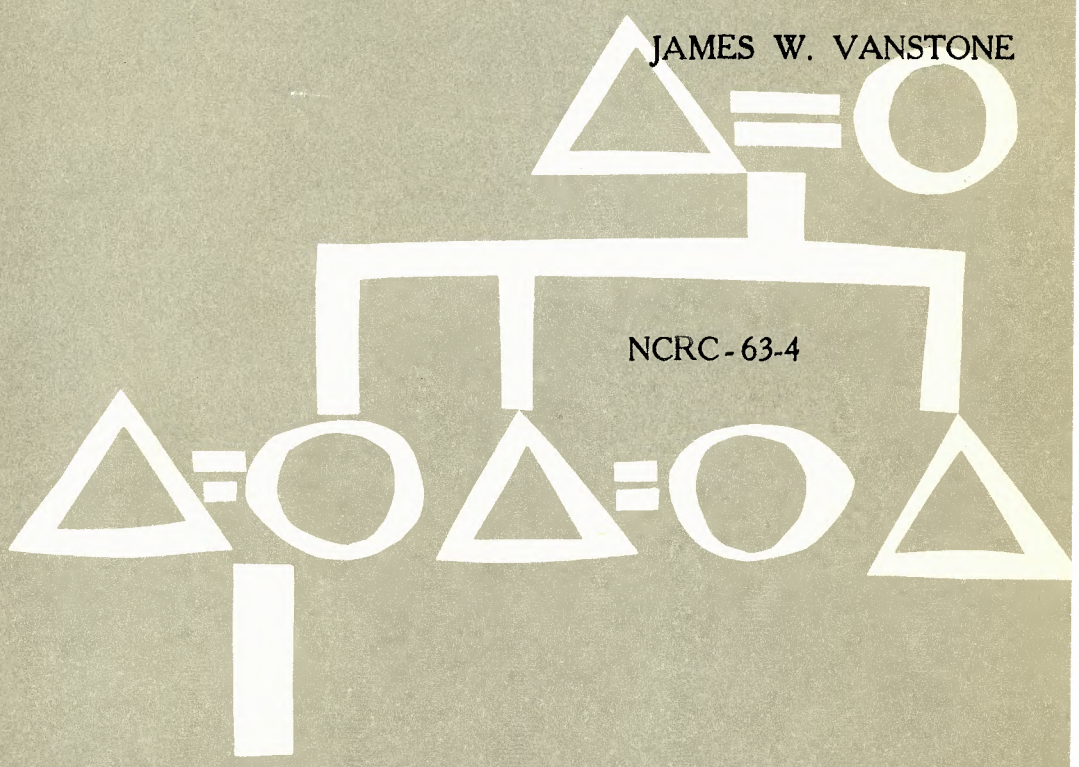
northern co-ordination and research centre department of northern affairs and national resources

THE SNOWDRIFT CHIPEWYAN

JAMES W. VANSTONE



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by

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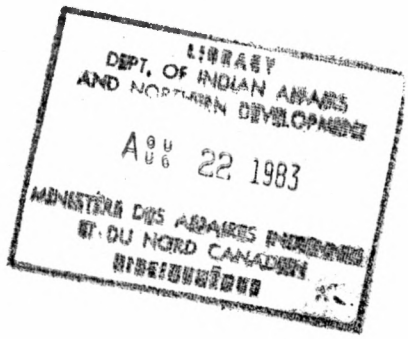

This report is based on research carried out while the author was employed by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre during the summers of 1960 and 1961, and the winter of 1961-62. It is reproduced here as a contribution to our knowledge of the north. The opinions expressed, however, are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Department.

Requests for copies of this report should be addressed to V. F. Valentine, Chief, Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa.

Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre,
Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources,
Ottawa.

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The field work on which this study is based was financed by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The author is grateful to Mr. Victor F. Valentine of the Research Centre for his assistance and encouragement.

In conducting the study, the author relied heavily on participation and observation. Thus, nearly every individual at Snowdrift helped him achieve a greater knowledge and understanding of community life. The following persons were particularly helpful in contributing time and effort toward the assemblage of the data on which this study is based: Father F. Dauvet, O.M.I., Mr. Michael Brown and Mr. Arnulf Steinwand of the Hudson's Bay Company, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Lockhart, Mr. Jim Klotze, Mr. Jim Fatt, Mr. Bruno Nataway, Mr. Edward Catholique, Mr. Victor Catholique, Mr. Robert Noyes and Mr. Louison Abel.

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INTRODUCTION

Field work among the Chipewyan Indians at Snowdrift, Northwest Territories arose out of a general interest on the part of the writer and some of his colleagues in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto in the problems of culture change in the area of the Mackenzie River Valley and Great Slave Lake. Although it was postulated that this region would turn out to be a relatively homogeneous universe of interacting forces, this generalization was qualified by the realization that in the history of contact, different sections of the area would show a variation in effects. Thus, some population groupings in the area would have been exposed more intensively to new penetrations, such as mining and commercial fishing, while others would still be following a trapping-trading economy with much less access to schools and other aspects of an urban environment. Obviously, in order to understand all the operative factors, it would be necessary that sub-groups or communities displaying all the differential effects of the historic acculturative continuum be discovered and made available for study. It was proposed that this information be obtained by a field survey which would be followed by more intensive work in certain communities chosen as representative of specific acculturative levels.

Although this survey was conceived of as being the initial phase of the total project, it was realized that at the same time more intensive work could begin in a community that represented a low level of intensity as far as acculturative factors were concerned and that was farthest removed from the urbanizing influences that are a growing characteristic of the entire region. This intensive study of a relatively isolated community, heavily involved in a trapping-trading economy, was to serve as a comparative foundation on which other phases of the project would be built.

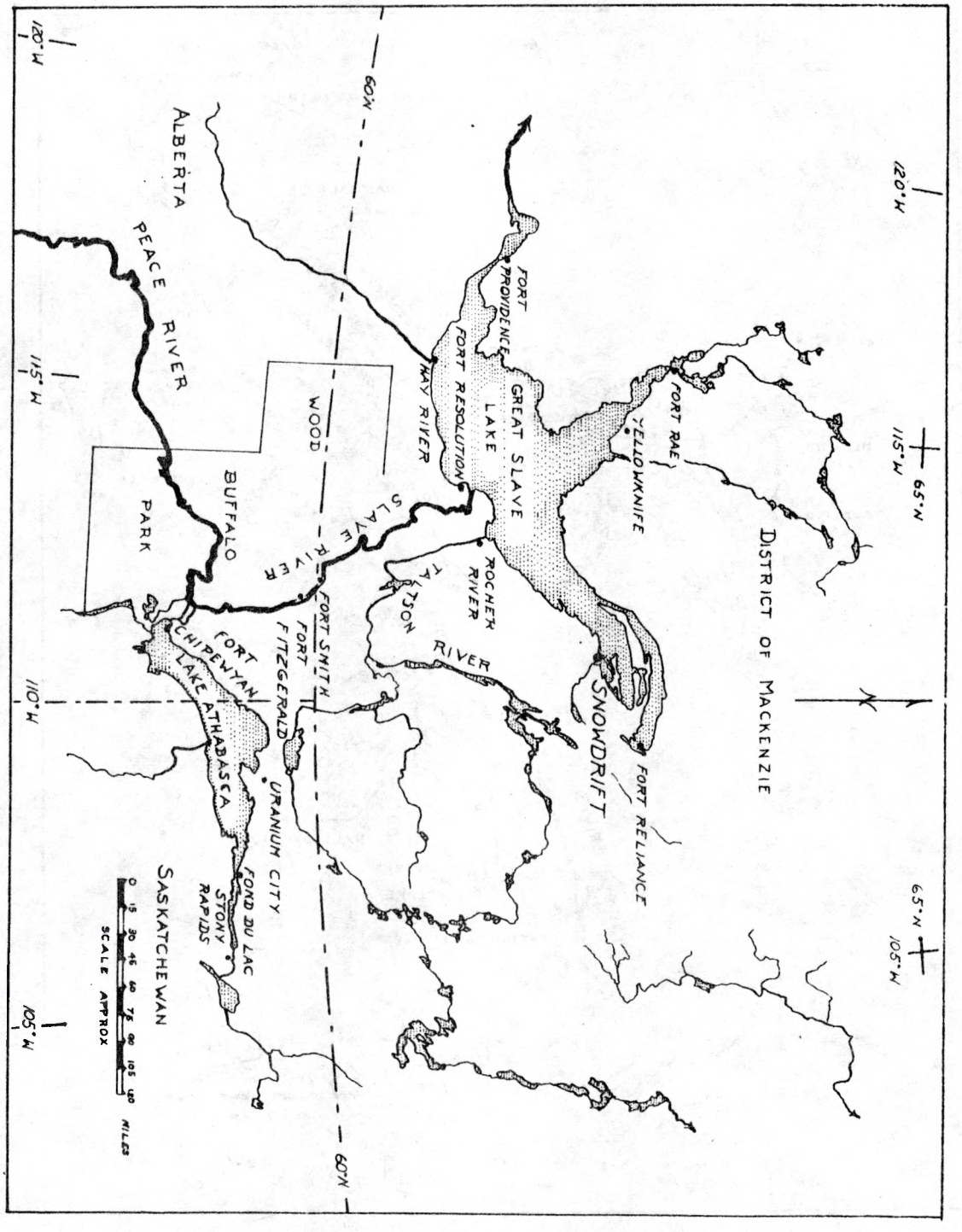
The village of Snowdrift was chosen for this first intensive stage of the project because it appeared to be one of the most isolated communities in the Mackenzie River-Great Slave Lake area, had a relatively homogeneous population, and benefited only slightly from the urbanizing influences that affect many of the river communities and the more accessible villages at the west end of Great Slave Lake. Whether or not Snowdrift was the best possible choice might be open to question. Nevertheless, it fulfilled a sizeable number of requirements for the initial intensive phase of the project.

The work at Snowdrift, begun during the summer of 1960, was continued during the summer of 1961 and for a month in the winter of 1961-62. In all, the writer spent a total of twenty-eight weeks in the village. Prior to the first summer's work, arrangements were made to rent an empty house from an Indian family. The author settled down as unobtrusively as possible and, from the first day of his arrival, received many visitors in his home who were curious concerning the reasons for his presence in the village. Similar arrangements were made during the second summer and in December-January of 1961-62 the writer accompanied a Snowdrift resident on his trap line, thus obtaining a better insight into winter activities than was possible through summer conversations and interviews.

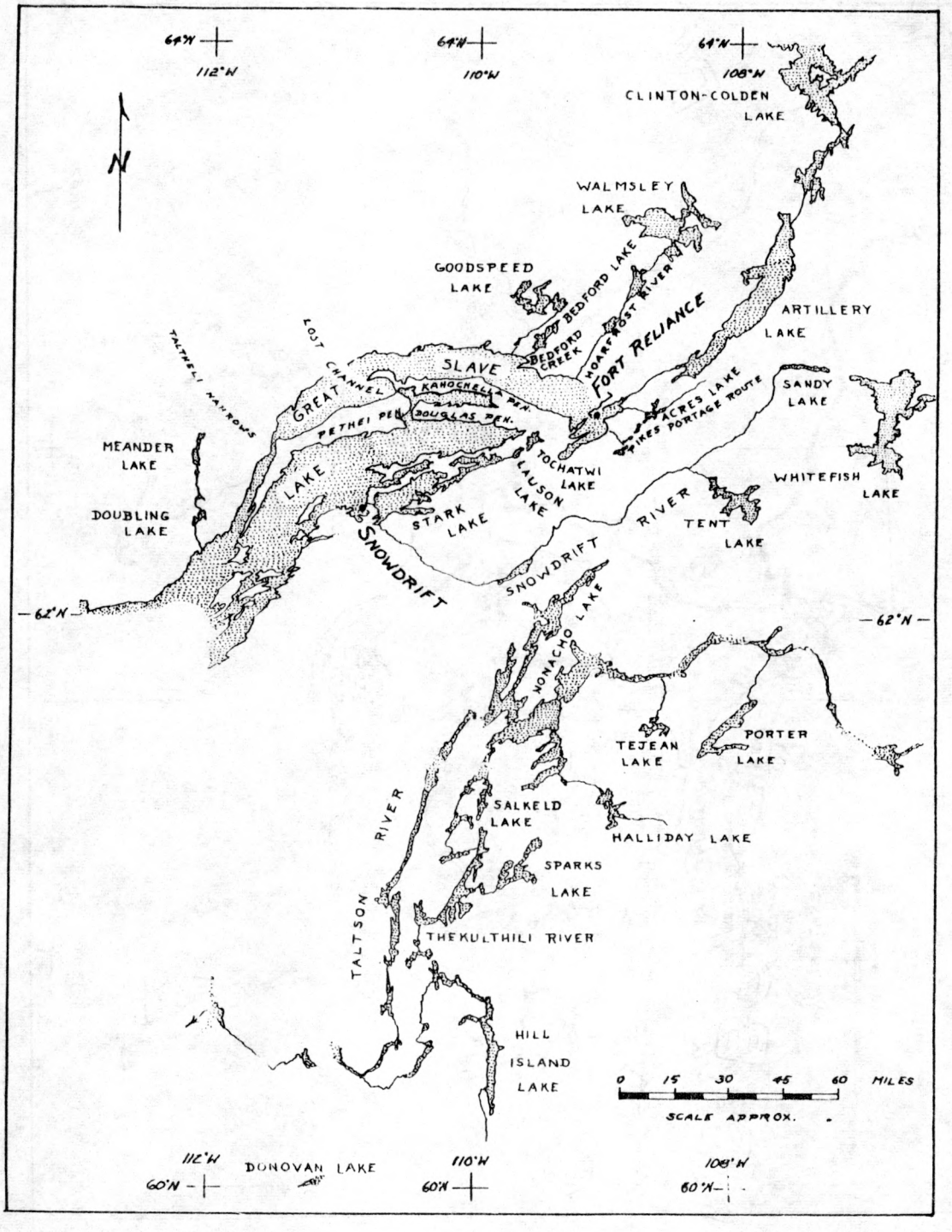
During the course of the field work, very little use was made of paid informants, the major reliance being on participant observation. The writer observed and participated to the best of his ability and then asked questions based on the gaps in his observation. In most cases this could be done informally while visiting or being visited but occasionally it was advisable to hire an informant to obtain such information as the kinship terminology and details about aspects of the seasonal cycle that would take place after the author left the community.

Whenever possible, the information obtained during the day was written down in outline form in a small notebook. At convenient times this information was transferred to five by eight inch punch cards which were punched for the major categories of culture (i.e. the individual, social structure, work round, etc.) as well as the sub-categories (i.e. nuclear family, childhood, artifacts, hunting and fishing techniques). The punched cards were filed according to an outline of desired data that made it possible, throughout the course of the field work, to determine which aspects of culture needed to be emphasized in order to give as complete a picture as possible of village life.

A preliminary report, based on material collected during the first three months of the Snowdrift study, has been published by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre (VanStone, 1961). This report was concerned exclusively with economic data since it was felt that by confining the report to this kind of information, it would be possible, within narrow limits, to provide a concise picture of one of the most significant aspects of life in Snowdrift and at the same time provide a preliminary report that would be of maximum use to the sponsoring agency.



Map 1: Map of the Great Slave Lake - Lake Athabasca area showing locations mentioned in text.



Map 2: Map of region around Snowdrift.

Chapter I

THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION

Since the early history of Chipewyan distribution and its relationship to the fur trade is well documented, a brief sketch, with emphasis on particular historical developments in the Great Slave Lake area, is all that is necessary here. The major emphasis will be on placing the present day settlement patterns in the Snowdrift area in proper historical perspective.[1]

The original centre of Chipewyan Indian distribution during pre-historic times was the Peace River area, and the movements and wanderings that have since taken place were closely connected with the westward advance of the Cree at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. After successfully repelling the Cree from the Peace River country, the Chipewyan spread to the lower Peace River. Certain sub-groups occupied the country along the Slave River and around Lake Athabasca, while others occupied the upper Churchill River. Still another group were attracted to the coast of Hudson Bay by the newly established Prince of Wales Fort. Cut off from the south at the very beginning of their expansion, the Chipewyan gradually took over the whole of the southern Barren Grounds. It appears that about the middle of the eighteenth century the Chipewyan and Eskimos fought over the possession of Barren Ground territory with the Eskimos usually losing because they did not as yet possess firearms. As a result, they were gradually driven northwards and it is significant that Samuel Hearne was able to make his journey to the vicinity of the Dubawnt River and back to Churchill without meeting any Eskimos. Since Hearne's time, the Chipewyan have withdrawn to the tree line, possibly because of the cessation of pressure from the Cree in the south, and the Eskimos have once again taken over some Barren Ground territory. Today the Chipewyan seldom penetrate north of tree line except for brief hunting and trapping excursions; Snowdrift is their northernmost settlement. (Birket-Smith, 1930: 13-15; Mackenzie, 1801: cxvii; Richardson, 1851: Vol 2: 3-6; Tyrrell, 1916: 128-32).

1. Unless otherwise specified, such phrases as "today" and "at present", refer to the period of the field work - 1960-61.

It was after the Hudson's Bay Company established its post at Churchill in 1717 that the Chipewyan, supplied with firearms, not only drove the Eskimos north, but oppressed two of the Athabascan tribes in the northwest, the Yellow-knife and the Dogrib, by preventing them from making the trip to the trading post and by forcing them to exchange their furs for only a small part of their actual value in European goods (Jenness, 1958: 385-86). This was a situation that was unsatisfactory to the Hudson's Bay Company, and one of the purposes in the mind of Moses Norton, the chief factor at Prince of Wales Fort, when he conceived the idea of an overland expedition to the Coppermine River was to bring the "Far Indians", as those Athabascans northwest of Chipewyan territory were called, into the trade at Churchill. It was felt that if direct contact could be established with these Indians, new incentives might be released and a greater desire for trade goods would bring about more intensive trapping (Rich, 1960: Vol 2: 47).

The stage was now set for the three expeditions of Samuel Hearne, on the last of which, carried out from 1769 to 1772, he was successful in reaching the mouth of the Coppermine River. Hearne's report is notable not only as the account of a truly amazing piece of exploration, but as a mine of information on the Chipewyan Indians with whom he traveled. He and his party reached Great Slave Lake in late December of 1771, and probably crossed it in the vicinity of the narrowest part just before the lake opens up into the east arm (Christie Bay). Camsell believes that the crossing was made so that Hearne and his party arrived on the south side of the lake somewhere near the Taltson River (Hearne, 1958: 182).

Following the explorations of Hearne, attention began to be centered on the northwest as a potentially fertile field for the development of the fur trade. In 1778 a number of traders in the Saskatchewan country pooled their surplus goods and dispatched Peter Pond with four canoes up the Churchill River. On the Athabasca River, forty miles from Lake Athabasca, he established a post and spent the winter trading with the Cree and Chipewyan. Peter Pond was thus the first white man to take trade goods to the Chipewyan Indians (Campbell, 1957: 9). The extension of the fur trade to Great Slave Lake took place shortly after Pond's successful winter on the Athabasca River. The famous trader Cuthbert Grant, together with Laurent Leroux, built a post for the Northwest Company on the Slave River near its mouth in 1786. A few years later the traders moved their post to Moose Deer

Island, a few miles from the old site. The Hudson's Bay Company had constructed a post in the vicinity at about the same time, and at the time of the union of the two companies in 1821, this post was called Fort Resolution (Bryce, 1904: 387-88).

It was the establishment of Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca by Joseph Frobisher in 1788 that enabled some of the Chipeywan Indians to trade in the west rather than make the long trip to Churchill. Fort Chipewyan was founded as part of the preparations for Alexander Mackenzie's famous voyage which was begun the following year. The Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Wedderburne shortly afterwards on an island opposite the Northwest Company's post but the former was abandoned after the union of 1821 (Rich, 1960: Vol. 2: 380).

In 1781 a severe smallpox epidemic killed a great number of Chipewyan, as much as 90% of the total population, according to Hearne (1958: 115). After this time it is difficult to find reliable population estimates for the tribe, as most of the primary sources provide only conflicting information. According to Franklin, there were a total of about 450 trappers who traded their furs at the various posts on Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake in 1821 (Franklin, 1824: Vol. 1: 241-42). Petitot tells us that disease and starvation continued to reduce the population. There were 900 Chipewyan trading into Fort Chipewyan in 1862, but in 1879 there were only 537. This latter figure probably includes those Indians who traded at Fort Smith after it was established in 1874 (Petitot, 1885: 51-52; n.d.: 296-97). Curtis estimated a total Chipewyan population of slightly over 1500 in 1924 (Curtis, 1928: Vol. 18: 147) and in spite of a rather severe influenza epidemic in the west in 1929, the Census of Indians in Canada for 1954 reports approximately the same number.

After the two expeditions of Franklin in 1819-22 and 1825-27, there was relatively little exploration in the Great Slave Lake area. The east end of the lake was first charted and explored by Captain George Back and his party during the summer of 1833. After an ascent of the Hoarfrost River, the party wintered at Fort Reliance and then followed the Back River to the sea the following summer, returning again to Fort Reliance for part of the winter of 1834-35. They did not, however, explore south of McLeod Bay in Great Slave Lake (Back, 1836). Until 1921, when G. H. Blanchet began his surveys of the lake for the Topographical Branch

of the Department of the Interior, Captain Back's chart was still the only authority for the shape of the eastern end of the lake. Blanchet completed his surveys in 1925, and Great Slave Lake was accurately mapped for the first time (Blanchet, 1926).

It is of interest for the purposes of this study to trace the expansion of trading operations in the Great Slave Lake area because it has had important effects on settlement patterns in the region. The Northwest Company had a post at Fond-du-Lac on the north shore of Lake Athabasca in the early years of the nineteenth century, which was apparently closed by the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of the union in 1821 and then re-established in 1849. Hay River is another very old post, dating back to the early years of the nineteenth century, and Fort Providence at the west end of Great Slave Lake was established by the Mackenzie expedition in 1789. The Hudson's Bay Company maintained Stoney River, formerly called Black River, as an outpost of Fond-du-Lac at least as early as 1923, and it was given post status in 1934. Rocher River was an outpost of Fort Resolution in 1923, and became a post sometime between 1931 and 1933. The Snowdrift post was established in 1925, and stores in Yellowknife and Uranium City were opened in 1938 and 1952 respectively.[2] The establishment of each one of these posts resulted in a shift in the settlement patterns of the local Indians. The total population of the area became segmented and drawn within the sphere of influence of the different posts.

Information on the history of Snowdrift and the movements of the people who eventually came to be permanent residents will be found in the preliminary report (VanStone, 1961: 5-8).

2. The author wishes to express his appreciation to Mrs. Shirlee A. Smith, Librarian, Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg for information concerning the dates of establishment for the various posts on Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake.

Chapter II

MAKING A LIVING

The Economy of a Frontier Community (VanStone, 1961: 9-26) outlined the yearly cycle of subsistence in Snowdrift. It is suggested that the reader refer frequently to the earlier work while reading this chapter.

Winter and Spring - A trapper who expects to trap effectively should have a team of at least four or five dogs, since the total distance he may travel during the time he is on the trail is likely to amount to as much as three hundred miles. It may take anywhere from one to three days to reach the point where he wishes to set his traps. Once this point is reached, the trapper moves over his area, setting his traps, and camping at night, usually in a small canvas tent heated with a stove made from an old five gallon oil can. In mid-winter, the days are short and if the trapper wishes to do all his work during the daylight hours, he must be on the trail by 9:00 each morning and be ready to make camp by 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon.

Most trappers prefer to set nets at two or three points along their trap lines so that fish for dog food can be readily obtained. The location of these nets will often also serve as a sort of base camp from which various sections of a trap line can be visited. Since dogs must have a day of rest after every two or three days of travel, it is sometimes convenient to have a good camping spot with a ready supply of dog food. The trapper welcomes these days of rest not only to give freshly set traps a chance to catch something, but also to provide an opportunity for more intensive hunting than is possible on a regular day of setting and checking traps.

Each trapper has several areas within his trapping range where he is continually checking and setting traps. Usually the traps are checked every three or four days but when the trapper returns to the village to trade his furs and pick up supplies, the traps are sometimes left set for from two weeks to a month. An area is most effectively trapped when the traps are checked regularly. One section of a trapping area may be more intensively trapped than the others if the trapper observes many signs of animals or has particularly good luck in a specific section. The setting of traps requires considerable care and a knowledge of the habits of the animals. During the winter, the only kinds of sets made are for mink, marten, white fox, lynx and wolverine.

Other animals are sometimes caught in these traps, but since these five animals bring the highest prices, all trapping activity is concentrated on their capture. A trap for mink is set either where a small stream enters a lake or at some point along the shore of a lake. A suitable spot is chosen and a small spruce is cut off a foot or two above the snow in such a way that the trunk will form an anchor for the trap. Small spruce boughs are placed in a leaning position to form an enclosed area around the trap; toward the rear of this closed area a piece of frozen fish is placed as bait. The steel trap, a number one, is placed in such a way that the mink may step into it as it goes for the bait. A light covering of snow is placed over the trap so as to partially hide it. In setting a trap for marten, the same procedure is followed and it is only the location that is different. Marten traps are set at any point in the bush where tracks are seen but preferably where there is a heavy growth of spruce.

In placing a trap for lynx, the trapper selects a spot where there are many lynx and hare tracks. The trap, usually a number one and a half, is either fastened to a small spruce or to a long stick that is buried in the snow. No bait is used, the trap being simply covered with snow. Lynx can also be taken in snares and this is perhaps the more common way of trapping them. In setting a lynx snare, a noose of rope or wire is suspended from a fallen tree in such a way that a lynx might walk through it and be caught. Its struggles would tighten the snare and death would presumably result from strangulation. A pair of small twigs, stuck vertically in the snow on either side of the noose, help to keep it open.

It is usual to trap white foxes at a place where a caribou has been killed on a lake. The intestines are left and the traps set close to them, covered with snow so that the fox will not see them as it approaches the bait. When no caribou carcass is available for bait, the traps may be set on small treeless islands in the middle of lakes or, for that matter, at any point on the frozen surface of a lake. The traps are fastened by means of wrapping the chain around a short stick and placing a heavy rock on the stick. Snow is packed around it and becomes frozen. The trap is covered over lightly with snow and chips of frozen fish are scattered all around the area. As the fox walks about eating these small pieces of fish, it steps into the hidden trap.

The wolverine is a very difficult animal to trap and it is likely that most trappers would not bother trying to take the animal were it not for the fact that wolverines are notorious disturbers of traps set for other animals. It is not uncommon for a trapper to discover that all of his traps set in a given area have been disturbed by a wolverine and this is one of the reasons why traps should be checked as frequently as possible. The longer a trap remains set without being checked, the greater the chance that a wolverine will eventually find and rob it of its contents. A single animal may follow a trapper's trail for as much as fifteen miles, stopping at each trap along the way. In setting a trap for wolverine, a small tree is cut off at a height of about five feet above the snow. At the top is suspended a piece of frozen fish. A number three trap is set at the foot of the tree and fastened to it. Small spruce boughs are placed over the trap and snow sprinkled on it so that it is completely covered. The wolverine gets caught as he leaps for the bait. A trap for wolverine can be set anywhere that tracks are seen, but it is common to set them near mink or marten sets.

Apart from the disturbance of traps by wolverines, there are other hazards that stand in the way of successful trapping. An animal may spring a trap without being caught or it may be poorly caught and escape. A mink or marten, if caught only by a toe, will often chew its way free. Valueless animals, or animals of low value, that are frequently taken in traps include hares, weasels, red foxes, squirrels, ermines and even ptarmigans and Canada jays. Although traps are not usually set for otters, these animals are sometimes seen and shot.

It is perhaps possible to obtain a more precise, total picture of winter trapping activities by referring to a specific trapping area that was visited by the author and an informant during December, 1961. This trap line began approximately thirty miles from the village and ran for a distance of nearly eighty miles. Over a two week period, more than two hundred miles were covered in checking and re-checking the traps. The informant set a total of seventy-two traps and snares of which fifty-six traps were for mink, four for marten, and six for white fox. One trap was set for wolverines, and three traps and two snares for lynx. Of this total number, thirty-one were checked only once, twenty-three were checked twice, fourteen three times and four four times. It only remains to be added that the animals taken on this trip included ten mink, two lynx, one white fox, two red fox, one marten, and one silver fox with a total value of $230.

Trappers always have to do a certain amount of hunting because the supplies they take with them from the village are usually meagre and consist of little more than staples. Ptarmigan, spruce grouse and hares are the common fare in a trapper's camp, although moose and caribou are, of course, much preferred. Hare snares are nearly always set as soon as a trapper makes camp. These snares are similar to those set for lynx only smaller. Ptarmigan and spruce grouse can be shot with .22 rifles. The former are particularly plentiful in the spring. Winter moose hunting requires a great deal of care and a thorough understanding of the habits of the animal. The hunting technique used involves careful tracking similar to that described by Osgood for the Tanaina (Osgood, 1937: 34). Both Hearne and Curtis describe methods of hunting moose in which the animal is tracked on snowshoes through deep snow until it tires (Hearne, 1959: 182-83; Curtis, 1928: 15). Today most trappers appear unwilling to spend any length of time tracking a moose but may do so on a day when the dogs are being rested. If a moose should be seen crossing a lake, however, the trapper may make camp immediately and begin following it.

The most important hunting during the winter and spring is for caribou. The latter are particularly important and some men feel very strongly that their dogs should be fed on caribou during the winter, especially when they are being used on the trap line. Thus, there are some trappers who will not set nets while they are on the line but will spend time hunting instead of trapping. When they are unsuccessful, they must feed their dogs flour or cereal from their own food supply and therefore run out of food rapidly and must return to the village. It seems certain that for many trappers, looking for caribou is the most important thing they do on the trap line and always takes precedence over trapping. Some men are even unwilling to leave the village if no caribou have been reported in the area where they trap. Caribou are most frequently killed when they are surprised crossing a large lake. The Indians seldom attempt to track them through the bush. For hunting moose and caribou, high powered rifles are used, the most popular calibres being .30-30 or .25-35. but some men own .303s'.

In the records of the Hudson's Bay Company at Snowdrift there is a comment made by a manager nearly thirty years ago to the effect that the success of the Snowdrift Indians as trappers was directly related to the presence or absence of caribou in the trapping areas. This statement is included here in order to re-emphasize the importance of caribou hunting during the winter. At the time this statement was written into the records, fur prices, particularly for white fox, were very high, but unless caribou

were reported in the Barren Grounds, the Indians would not go there to trap foxes. Thus trapping seems to have been strictly incidental to hunting even as late as 1925 or 1930. To some extent, the same is true today even though caribou is no longer quite as essential a food item as it was thirty years ago.

As previously mentioned, nets are set under the ice for whitefish and lake trout when the trapper makes camp. According to Birket-Smith (1930: 28), nets were formerly made of willow bass which was knotted under water to prevent it from becoming dry. Netting needles were unknown and the work was done entirely by hand. According to Hearne, however, aboriginal nets were made of fine babiche which rotted easily unless the nets were taken out of the water frequently and dried (Hearne, 1958: footnote 170).

Pointed bone spears, antler gorge hooks and fish weirs have been used extensively in the past throughout Chipewyan territory (Birket-Smith, 1930: 26-27; Curtis, 1928: 20), but nets are the only means of taking fish at Snowdrift today. To set such a net, a number of holes must be made and the net is propelled from one hole to the other by means of a spring attached to a wooden frame about five feet in length. The position of the net under the ice is indicated by sticks placed upright at either end. At one end of the net a long string is attached. The net is then drawn out through a hole at the opposite end and the fish removed. Then the string is pulled and the net is once more in place under the ice.

Reliable figures for the amount of fish caught are difficult to obtain. However, an estimated 75,000 pounds were taken during October, November and December of 1958.

It is evident that the area around Snowdrift is not being trapped as effectively as it might be and this is largely due to the fact that developing tendencies toward a sedentary community life are not compatible with the semi-sedentary routine that is required for effective trapping. Keeping this in mind, it is not difficult to understand why trapping is becoming increasingly unpopular with the Snowdrift Indians. It is a very hard life carried out under extreme climatic conditions and with unpredictable rewards. Not only are there the long, hard, slow trips by dog team along the trap lines in all kinds of weather, but when one arrives at a camping place cold and tired, there is still camp to be made. The tent and stove must be set up, wood cut, the dogs unharnessed and fed, and perhaps a net checked. Then a meal must be prepared and a long, lonely

evening spent in an unevenly heated tent. When this kind of life is contrasted with the comfortable, gregarious life in the village, it is little wonder that the men do not stay long on the trap lines. In fact, during the prime trapping period, which extends from about the first of November until Christmas, most of the village trappers are on their trap lines for no more than four weeks. In recent years there has been only a moderate amount of trapping after Christmas. The value of mink and marten pelts drops rapidly after the first of the year and only white fox pelts continue to be in prime condition. Thus there is relatively little trapping activity until muskrat and beaver trapping begins in the spring.

The centre of the fur trapping activity at Snowdrift, and of almost all economic activities for that matter, is the Hudson's Bay Company. There is a tendency to hold the manager personally responsible for whatever complaints an individual may have about the Company. It is not generally realized that the manager, for the most part, acts as directed by official Company policy. A manager cannot possibly be considered "good" unless he "helps the people when they are in need"; in other words, extends credit. He is thus judged by the extent to which credit can be wheedled out of him. Very often a manager's reputation for being "good" will grow after he has left the post. The Indians may have complained about him when he was in the village, but in retrospect he is thought of as being "better" than his replacement. Although a general credit policy is laid down by the Company, it can be leniently or rigidly applied over the years by different managers. Also, a given manager's opinion of a man as a trapper may be different from that of another despite the records that are kept as a guide to new managers.

Often the relationship between the Indians and the Company manager might almost be characterized as involving a battle of wits, since the goal of the Indians at all times is to obtain credit, often by fair means or foul. The following is an example of the kind of difficulty that can arise under these circumstances. An informant was working on a commercial fishing boat late in the summer of 1960 and on one of his periodic visits to the village, he asked the manager for credit, saying that he was going to make over $300 before he finished work. He even brought the captain of his boat into the store to verify his statement. On this basis, the manager advanced him $100 in credit. However, when the informant's cheque arrived, it was for less than $100 since he had already spent much of the money that was coming to him at the fishing company commissary. Then, when he was trapping the following winter, he gave his furs to someone else to sell in order to postpone the time when he would eventually have to pay his debt to the Company.

Some have been known to obtain credit from the Company in Snowdrift and then sell their furs in Rocher River or Yellowknife. This sort of thing should not be considered as outright dishonesty, since the debt will have to be paid eventually if the informant ever expects to get any more credit. However, it illustrates a type of situation that occurs frequently in the village.

Summer - It is worth mentioning that one of the difficulties which plague Snowdrift men during the summer months is the condition of their outboard motors. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this item of material culture. A man who has no motor, or one that is always breaking down, cannot go on moose and caribou hunting trips except at the invitation of others, cannot get over to the fishing lodges and thus have a chance to be hired for a day or two and, quite apart from these practical problems, cannot take the picnics and other little trips during the hot summer months that Snowdrift families so enjoy. The Hudson's Bay Company carries no motor parts and the local manager is not supposed to accept orders for parts unless a deposit is made. In fact, there are no parts catalogues that would help a man to order the parts he needs from Yellowknife. As a result, most repairs are of a very temporary nature and the motors, old to begin with in most cases, frequently break down. Outboard motors were first used in the Snowdrift area about thirty five years ago. At that time, when few men owned motors, it was not unusual for one outboard powered boat to pull five or six boats when the families left to hunt in the Fort Reliance area in late summer.

Although of less importance than caribou hunting, moose are also hunted during the summer months. Moose are, of course, considerably less plentiful than caribou but they can be killed much closer to the village. Some hunters make two or three week moose hunting trips, usually in the vicinity of The Gap, but most hunters are not gone from the village for more than two or three days. Stark Lake is a good moose area, particularly at the east end and in McLean Bay. During July, 1961 the author accompanied two men on an unsuccessful moose hunting trip to the east end of Stark Lake that was typical of many trips made by Snowdrift hunters throughout the summer. The trip was made in about four hours and camp was set up on a small island which commanded a good view of the shore line so that a moose could be observed if it came to the water's edge. During the late evening, a careful watch was kept for signs of moose, and after a few hours sleep, the watch was resumed about 4:00 am. Later in the morning trips were made to several nearby places along the main shore of

the lake to look for fresh tracks. When this proved unsuccessful, camp was again made on a different island and the party slept during most of the day. In the late afternoon of the second day, a trip was made to a large, nearby island where fresh tracks had been previously located. There the party separated, one man taking the boat to the opposite end of the island while the other two crossed the island on foot, making plenty of noise and hoping to drive a moose into the water near the place where the boat was waiting. This being unsuccessful, the party returned to the village late at night after an absence of approximately thirty-six hours. This moose hunting trip was said to have been unsuccessful because there was a steady breeze blowing most of the time and not many mosquitoes. Moose hunting is best when there is no wind and consequently many insects. Then the animals are driven into the water to seek relief from the torment and can be easily approached and killed.

Hunting trips of this kind, although frequently unsuccessful as far as moose are concerned, are usually not a total waste of time and gas. Hares, spruce grouse and ducks are shot and tern eggs may be collected on large rocks in the lake where these birds nest. Even though moose are hunted all the year round, it appears as though the moose kill for any one family in a year is not great. It is unusual for any hunters, even those who hunt moose frequently, to kill more than two a year. One informant who hunted moose frequently at all times of the year spoke of two very good years during which he killed three and five animals. He also mentioned that it had been five years since he killed one. During the summer of 1961, nine moose were killed as compared to five in a comparable period the previous year.

The uncertainty of commercial fishing from the standpoint of fulfilling local employment needs was pointed up during the summer of 1961 when no boats appeared in the Snowdrift area until September and only a few men were employed for the remainder of the season. This was due to the fact that one of the larger companies which operated boats on Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabasca, ceased its Great Slave Lake operations entirely and transferred its equipment to the southern lake. The three remaining companies fished in the west arm of the lake and found operations so successful there that they did not need to move into the Snowdrift area until very late in the summer, and in August, 1961 the barge bringing supplies to the Hudson's Bay Company brought a tractor to carry the supplies from the barge to the warehouse. This meant less local employment. Only seven men were hired, each earning a total of $13.00.

The owner of one of the fishing lodges in the vicinity of Snowdrift has used Indians as guides only sparingly during the past two summers and has done most of the guiding himself with the help of his partner. This has created a certain amount of ill will in the village. Now his business is improving and he would like to use Indians exclusively in future summers. However, he demands a high standard of guiding and, while willing to explain to the Indians just what is wanted, will probably not be very tolerant of those Snowdrift men who are slow to understand what is expected of a guide. His point of view can be appreciated when it is remembered that most of his clientel who are paying a very high price for the privilege of fishing in Great Slave Lake, have done most of their previous fishing in Ontario and expect guiding service of the quality that can be obtained there. This will be difficult to achieve at first and it is to be hoped that the lodges will be willing to put up with some unsatisfactory service until the principles of guiding are fully understood by the Snowdrift Indians.

A form of employment that was important during the summer of 1961 was fire fighting. Twice during July the Department of Forestry took twenty men to fight fires in the vicinity of Fort Smith. The men were anxious to go even though the wages were reported to be low. The first time the men were out six days and earned $66.00 each, while the second time they were out for twelve days and the average individual earnings were about $120.00. Obviously this is not a type of employment that can be counted on from year to year, but in 1961 it helped to fill part of the gap left by the failure of commercial fishing boats to appear in the vicinity of the village until late in the summer.

Government Assistance - Although the Indian Affairs Branch is well aware of the fact that fish and fur are still the two most important economic influences on the lives of the Snowdrift Indians, and are attempting to encourage the utilization of these basic resources, they are also anxious to take every advantage offered that will permit the Indians to enter a wage economy in any aspect of northern development. In this connection, the Branch has, for the past several years, secured employment for a number of Snowdrift men to clear brush for proposed roads northeast of Yellowknife. During January of 1960 and 1961 twenty men from the village, working in two groups of ten under locally appointed foremen, cleared sixty miles of road-way from Yellowknife toward Fort Reliance. They were paid by the mile, the rate being $1500 per mile for ten men if the brush was not thick and $1800 per mile if the undergrowth was heavy. In 1961 one

group cut two miles and the other three. Indians in other communities in the Yellowknife and Fort Smith agencies also participate in this programme. The Indian Affairs Branch considers that these road-clearing programmes are indispensible in alleviating winter unemployment and they choose married men with families for the work whenever possible. Since this employment does not normally begin until January, it does not interfere with the most productive part of the trapping season which is before Christmas. However, it does have an effect on most of the Snowdrift trappers. They have a tendency to take trapping less seriously than would otherwise be the case since they know that they will have an assured income later in the winter. It may be that by providing this type of winter employment, the Branch is defeating its efforts to encourage the utilization of basic natural resources.

The Indians often do not understand the reasons behind the discontinuing of certain kinds of assistance and this leads to frequent misunderstandings between the government agent and the people. Unfortunately these are not the only misunderstandings that characterize relations between the villagers and the government agency that is responsible for their welfare. The following examples will illustrate the kinds of difficulties that frequently arise. In 1961, for reasons that were obscure to the Indians, it was decided to make treaty payments in April rather than in July as had been usual. This was supposedly done to comply with a request made by the people of Snowdrift and yet most of them, when questioned on the matter, violently objected to the idea. At any rate, because of the intricacies of band reorganization, not all the people were paid in April and it was not made clear to them when they would be paid. The visit of the Department of Indian and Northern Health Services x-ray party, which previously had always taken place when treaty payments were made, was scheduled for July as usual and most Indians took this to mean that there would be another treaty day. When this did not turn out to be the case, there was considerable disappointment and ill-feeling directed toward the Indian Affairs Branch. Others who did not receive their treaty payment had been expecting to be paid by cheque. The Branch did nothing to clear up this conflicting situation although a clear and logical explanation at a band meeting would doubtless have done a lot to straighten things out.

During the summer of 1960 the Indians objected because whites were using the freezer. They particularly objected to the fact that any tourist could prevail upon the Hudson's Bay Company manager to open the freezer at any time so that

fish could be stored. The RCMP also took up a large amount of space by putting in their winter fish supply. The Indians, through their chief, requested the Indian Affairs Branch to rule on this matter and the Branch informed the Company that fish could not be placed in the freezer at all since it was not built to freeze them properly. The Indians have thus been successful in stopping the whites from putting fish in the freezer. However, now when they want to put some in themselves, they are told that they should not do so. It is thus natural that they should wonder why it is that whites could put fish in the freezer and they cannot. Misunderstandings of this kind are the result of a failure on the part of the Indians to understand all the factors that are back of Indian Affairs Branch decisions. This, of course, is the direct result of their limited world view, for, to them, the Agency Superintendent is the government. Given the existing circumstances, it is difficult to see how misunderstandings of the kind described can be avoided.

Chapter III

TECHNIQUES OF SUBSISTENCE

Dwellings and Furnishings

The aboriginal Chipewyan dwelling was a conical frame of poles covered with caribou skins. According to Hearne (1958: 207-08), the cover consisted of several pieces, each of which was made up of about five large skins. At the top was an opening for the smoke from the fire which burned in the middle of the floor. The opening was covered with a separate hood rather than with two fixed flaps as was common among the Plains Indians (Seton, 1920: 149). This type of dwelling, which so admirably suited a wandering people like the Chipewyan, seems to have disappeared thirty-five or forty years ago. Birket-Smith mentions that when he visited Churchill in 1923, he saw only one specimen of the old type. In the Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabasca areas, they disappeared even earlier. Of the fifty Indian dwellings at Fort Chipewyan when Seton visited there in 1907, only two had caribou skin covers, the rest being covered with cotton muslin. He mentions that cotton coverings were popular because they did not require continual watching to protect them from the dogs. Many lodges, however, had caribou skin hoods since they were less likely to burn than those made of cotton. Seton also illustrates a caribou lodge of the traditional kind with a cotton tent addition in the front (Seton, 1920: 149). Canoe canvas later replaced cotton as a more adequate covering for the traditional lodge.

A fifty-five year old informant at Snowdrift can remember his father going to the trading post at Fond-du-Lac and purchasing a commercially made canvas tent, the first such tent in the area. The informant was about seven years old at the time. Undoubtedly before this time canvas had been used for traditional lodge covers and probably was also sewn into tents of the ridge type. Presumably even earlier some Indian families trapping at the east end of Great Slave Lake had begun to build log cabins at points along their trap lines or in the vicinity of the older trading posts such as Fort Resolution. Tents, however, continued to be the most common form of dwelling the year round right up until fairly recent times and it has only been within the past ten years that the majority of families have lived in log houses. Even after the Hudson's Bay Company post was established at Snowdrift in 1925, the Indian families, as previously mentioned, visited it only during the summer when they pitched their tents either in the vicinity of the post or on a small island about one mile distant. As late as 1949 the Indian Agent was

impressed with the small number of log houses at Snowdrift and recommended that the Indian Affairs Branch supply lumber and other materials in order to encourage families to build permanent houses. The reasons for permanent settlement at Snowdrift have been discussed previously. It is sufficient to point out here that in 1961 all families lived in log houses both winter and summer and canvas tents were used only on the trap lines and for extended autumn and summer trips into the bush.

In July, 1960 the Agency Superintendent made preliminary inquiries concerning the construction of houses in Snowdrift and about eleven men indicated that they were interested. However, when the matter was pursued during the winter of 1960-61, only five indicated willingness to participate in the programme. The Superintendent ordered materials for five houses which came in on a barge toward the end of the summer. After some initial difficulties and the replacement by others of four of the original five men who had indicated a desire to build new houses, logs were cut, and by December, 1961, four of the houses had been built. As an added inducement and help to the house builders, they and their families were placed on rations according to the regular ration schedule; $22 a month for a man, $12 for his wife, $15 for each child over twelve, and $12 for each child under that age. The ration issue, which was obtainable in merchandise at the Hudson's Bay Company, began for each house builder as soon as his logs were on the building site and actual construction had begun.

For a while in the late summer of 1961 it looked as though none of the houses would be built. The Agency Superintendent made frequent trips to the village, alternately threatening and coaxing those men who had promised to take part in the programme. There is some reason for thinking that work was finally begun because the people were afraid that the Agency Superintendent would cut off other benefits. Whether or not this is true, there can be no doubt but that the house building programme got off to a very slow start. The villagers, initially enthusiastic, became apathetic and probably never would have begun the houses had the Superintendent not kept after them. An explanation for this attitude is difficult to determine. Several informants who spoke about the matter were philosophical but anxious to point out that Indians are different from white men. The intimation was that the Indians cannot quite reconcile themselves to the fact that they are permanent residents of Snowdrift. Also the point was made that it is the white man's custom to go to a lot of hard work and concentrated effort to build a house. The Indian, on the other hand, is not used to doing this. It is not his way. Therefore, even when a good opportunity such as this comes along, he may be slow to take advantage of it. The Agency Superintendent, however, was convinced that most of the inertia was due to the fact that the Indians do not trust the department. He believed that the Indians expected

the houses to be taken away from them on some pretext or other. Whatever the explanation in this particular case, it is certainly true that relations between the people of Snowdrift and the Indian Affairs Branch have often been difficult and sometimes even tortuous.

There are twenty-six occupied dwellings in the village of which twenty-four are of log and two of frame construction. These range from large two-story, four or five room cabins finished on the interior with plywood, to simple, one-room houses of unpeeled logs with a minimum of interior finishing. Five home owners have taken advantage of the Indian Affairs Branch offer of roofing materials, windows etc. to improve their log houses, and there are the four new houses built as part of the village housing project just discussed. Most of the log houses are chinked with moss or dried mud, but a few of the better ones have cement or okum chinking. In winter, most home owners construct temporary frame storm shelters to protect the entrance of the house from snow and cold wind, and for storage of fire wood. None of the houses has basements.

Most Snowdrift homes, though simply furnished, have the crowded, cluttered appearance that is characteristic of small dwellings occupied by a large number of people of all ages. The house interiors are dominated by the wood burning heating unit. The furniture normally consists of home constructed wooden beds or iron cots set against the walls and crudely made wooden tables and chairs. A few families have commercially made shelves and cupboards as well as table and chair sets ordered through the Company. Bedding consists of sleeping bags, either commercially made or home made from blankets, blanket sheeting, and quilts. Clothing and extra bedding is usually stored in canvas bags or metal foot lockers. Mosquito netting is used extensively during the summer months and is usually hung so that it can be folded back during the day. Those families with two-story houses use part of the second-story as sleeping quarters for older children and part for storage.

The new and better built houses are finished on the interior with plywood, while the owners of older or less well constructed ones often nail cardboard over the inside walls for added insulation. Floors of boards or split logs are common but in a few houses linoleum floor covering or rugs are to be seen. On the walls hang calendars, religious pictures and crosses, and photographs of friends or relations, both alive and dead. Household luxuries include radios, hand operated sewing machines and gas washing machines. About half the Snowdrift families have radios, but the other luxury items are rare.

In the typical Snowdrift one room house, the stove usually occupies a central position. Groups who gather to visit sit on the beds or in chairs while card players usually group themselves on the floor. Babies are occasionally placed in small canvas cribs suspended from the

ceiling. This is a space saving device and also has the advantage of keeping the infant off the cold floor. Most Snowdrift homes are reasonably neat and orderly. Linoleum floors are kept scrubbed and as much orderliness exists as can be expected under crowded living conditions. Only a few houses in the village have more than a single room and the necessity of carrying out all the functions of day to day living in one room complicates housekeeping considerably.

In the vicinity of nearly all the houses in the village are log storage sheds, roughly made and chinked with moss, which contain dog harnesses, hunting equipment, motor parts and other possessions of the householder. Some families use tents for this purpose but they plan to build sheds eventually. The contents of these warehouses are revealing as far as the nature and amount of material goods owned by the various families is concerned. A detailed listing of the materials stored in two sheds owned by one of the wealthier families in the community during the summer of 1961 illustrates this point. In one shed the following items were noticed, although the list is probably not complete: one pair of snowshoes, a large amount of scrap lumber, two rifles and a shotgun, additional sections of birch wood for snowshoes, two old trunks containing winter clothing, a box of outboard motor parts, an old gas iron, a gas pressure lamp, caribou skins tied in bundles and hanging from the ceiling, dog harnesses wrapped in canvas and also suspended from the ceiling, a wooden box containing a large quantity of dried caribou meat, cans of paint, an old stove for use in the house during winter, tent, caribou skin parkas, tools and tool box, large numbers of traps hanging from nails along the walls, two canoe paddles, three nets in varying stages of disrepair, and several old chairs at one time purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company. The second shed is mainly used for storing dried and frozen fish during the winter, but it also contained an outboard motor no longer in operating condition, several gasoline cans, and a number of caribou skins. Outhouses are also located near some houses.

Heating, Lighting and Water Supply

All houses in the village are heated with wood burning stoves of one kind or another. Two houses have regular kitchen ranges but the majority have simple, square "Yukon" type stoves with small ovens, either homemade from a large oil drum or purchased at the Hudson's Bay Company store. Some families use simple metal stoves with no ovens, which can be purchased from the store for approximately $11, and some also have gasoline burning pressure stoves for quick cooking, making coffee, etc., and for general use in summer. Dead trees are cut for firewood near the village and hauled back by boat in summer and dog team in winter. During the summer, trips for firewood are frequent as most families bring just enough on each trip to last a few days. In winter there is a tendency on the part of at least some families to stockpile a two or three weeks supply.

Snowdrift families like to have their houses warm and even in summer a fire is going much of the time, particularly in the evening. Almost no summer evening is too warm to have a fire. During the day in summer, however, the housewife may prefer to do her cooking outside rather than heat up the house. Such cooking may be done over a small fire built in half of an oil drum, either in the open or in the canvas covered conical tent that is used for drying fish and caribou meat. No attempt is made, either in summer or in winter, to keep a hot fire going all night. However, many families will fill the stove with green wood before retiring for the night, as this type of fire will keep going for a long time, give off a certain amount of heat during the night, and can be easily poked into a blaze first thing in the morning. A very few houses have an auxiliary heating stove in addition to the one that is used for cooking. This is useful only in houses with more than one room. A stove of this kind is particularly adapted for burning green wood because it holds the heat for a considerable length of time.

Light in Snowdrift homes is provided in most cases by coal oil lamps, although a few families have gasoline burning pressure lamps. The Hudson's Bay Company sells a large number of candles but these are mostly used in camps during the trapping season. Deleaded gasoline for the pressure lamps costs $1.00 per gallon so these lamps are very expensive to use, particularly in mid winter when light is required during a large part of the day. The cost of coal oil is approximately the same but this fuel burns much more slowly which accounts for the popularity of coal oil lamps.

The lake in front of the village provides a good supply of clean drinking water for the village. Water can be taken with buckets off either of the two docks or at any number of other places around the village. In winter holes are cut in the ice; melted snow is seldom used. Both men and women are seen daily carrying water in galvanized pails but, generally speaking, this is a job for women and young people. Water is kept in the houses in open containers and there is usually a dipper hanging near the pail which everyone uses to dip a drink. However, it was the author's impression that people did not often drink water but more often took it in the form of coffee or tea.

Domestic Animals

There is no tradition for the use of dogs for transportation by the Chipewyan in aboriginal times. This culture trait complex must have been introduced during the 18th century since Hearne (1958: 207-08) mentions that some men with whom he traveled did occasionally harness dogs to sledges. However, even at this time dogs were used mainly as pack animals and the sledges were pulled by women. David Thompson, in a general reference to the Chipewyan, makes the following statement:

> Some of them have an ancient tradition that a Great Spirit descended on a rock, took a dog, tore it to small pieces and scattered it, that these pieces each became a Man, or a Woman, and that these Men and Women are their original parents, from whom they have all come; and thus the dog is their common origin; on this account they have very few dogs; frequently several tents have not a dog among them; (Tyrrell, 1916: 131).

It may have been, therefore, that the aboriginal Chipewyan venerated dogs to some extent and, for that reason, kept few animals and were reluctant to use them for transportation or even as pack animals.

Today the Snowdrift Indians, like all northern Athabascans, are heavily dependent on dog teams for hunting, trapping and transportation; most men keep a team of from four to eight dogs. The type of sledge, or, more properly, toboggan used consists of two sections of hard wood that curve up at one end. These can be purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company for approximately $15 each. They are about eight inches wide and are fastened side by side by means of cross pieces screwed to the two sections at either end. This gives a toboggan approximately sixteen inches wide and about eight feet in length. An upright panel with handle grips is fastened in an upright position about two feet from the back of the toboggan and ropes, one on each side, are run from the upper part of this panel to the front end of the toboggan. These lines are threaded through a piece of canvas which has been laid on the toboggan and turned up at the sides. This forms a sort of basket for carrying things. The driver can ride on the back, particularly when crossing lakes, but in wooded country it is usually necessary to walk ahead of the dogs on snowshoes. In spring, a toboggan may be equipped with two wooden runners which raise it about three inches. Metal shoes are affixed to these runners and help the toboggan to move more easily over wet snow.

Dogs in the village are not housed but are simply chained to stakes near the houses of their owners. In summer and fall the animals are fed on fresh raw fish and in winter on frozen fish. There are nearly 200 dogs in the community and the problem of feeding them can be pressing at certain times of the year, particularly in summer when the fish supply may be low. Sometimes at this time of the year a dog may go two or three days in succession without being fed. Individual feedings in summer are always small, an averaged sized lake trout occasionally serving to feed four or five dogs. Most dogs are very thin by the time autumn comes but they soon begin to fatten up as the fishing improves. In winter when the dogs are being used on the trap

line, they will, if possible, be fed one large fish each at the end of the day. If the trapper is planning to rest his team for a day or two, he may give each dog two or even three fish. The Indians invariably express the opinion that a dog cannot be expected to work well on the trap line if he is not well fed.

During the trapping season a team of five dogs can travel forty or fifty miles in one day if the load is not too heavy. However, since frequent stops are usually made to check traps, twenty to thirty miles is a more common daily average. Harnesses are usually purchased complete from the Hudson's Bay Company although a few men buy only the rigid, padded leather collar and make the rest out of webbing or occasionally, caribou skin. Dogs are harnessed one directly behind the other; long side strips of leather or webbing lead directly from the harness of one dog to the collar of the dog behind it. A team of dogs can present quite a striking appearance if the owner wishes. A few men have sets of small blankets about a foot and a half square that fit over the back of each dog. They are beautifully embroidered with floral designs in different colored yarns and there is also a fringe of colored yarn around the edges. Down the centre of each blanket is a green velvet strip to which a set of six or eight bells is attached. Yarn tassels are also sometimes seen on the harness of each dog or a fox's tail may be similarly used. A whip with colorful yarn tassels is usually also a piece of standard equipment.

Some men name their dogs, usually giving them English names (Smokey, Blacky, Spot etc.) but others do not seem to bother. A relatively small amount of irritability is exhibited during the handling of dogs although harnessing and driving may be accompanied by a considerable amount of what passes for profanity in Chipewyan. Only a few men were observed to beat their dogs regularly and these individuals were apt to be laughed at since there is a general feeling that such actions only provide relief from one's emotional tensions but do not result in better performance by the dogs. An attempt is made to raise pups at least once a year and a few are kept from each litter.

Food Preparation

The foods eaten in Snowdrift homes depend largely on the time of the year and the success of the household head as a hunter and fisherman. All families have a desire and liking for some Canadian foods and will buy them whenever they can. The most popular food products purchased at the store are crackers, peanut butter, coffee, tea, sugar, flour, canned

meats, canned fruits, evaporated milk, candy bars and seasonings. Very frequently the store runs out of some of these items long before the arrival of the barge in midsummer. However, the manager usually has the opportunity to have supplies sent in from Yellowknife on various charter flights when room is available. This not only gives him a chance to order basic staples that are in short supply, but also to obtain shipments of fresh foods such as eggs, bread, oranges and apples that the villagers will always purchase readily.

Products of flour are among the staples of the Snowdrift diet. It is regularly made into bannock and also is used as a thickening in soups and stews. Although crackers and bread are eaten when available, they are not considered as adequate substitutes for products made of flour at home. Bannock is eaten at practically all meals at all times of the year and often a family will have little else but this, together with tea or coffee, particularly if there is no supply of caribou meat in the freezer. Usually, however, a meal consists of some kind of locally obtained meat. All the villagers are very fond of meat and many old people do not consider a meal to be adequate unless it contains meat.

The favorite and almost exclusive type of cooking is boiling. Meats available in the environment are almost always eaten boiled even though people are aware that there are other ways of preparing them. Fish may be fried occasionally but most Indians express a preference for boiled fish. A typical meal at any time of the year, whether in the village or in a hunting or trapping camp, might consist of boiled or dried caribou meat or boiled fish, bannock with lard, butter or jam, and tea. Canned meat from the store is occasionally fried but more often is eaten straight from the can on crackers or bannock. The people use quite a number of condiments that are stocked by the store. Mustard and catsup are used on meat as well as salt and pepper. Large quantities of dill and sweet pickles are also sold. The Indians like their food well cooked and not too hot. Meat and fish that has been boiled is nearly always allowed to cool before being eaten. Tea is by far the favorite beverage although a considerable amount of coffee is also drunk. Small children do not drink coffee but they begin to drink tea at a very early age. The youngest usually have it diluted considerably with water.

Meal patterns in Snowdrift homes vary considerably depending on the time of the year and on a variety of other factors. During the summer months, the general tendency seems to be for most families to take two large meals during the day. One is a breakfast when the family first rises and the other will be about four or five in the afternoon. In between these two large meals, however, there will be a considerable amount of snacks, particularly on the part of children who are fed whenever they say they are hungry. As far as the main meals are concerned, the family eats together and the various members will be called in to eat when the meal is ready. In winter the families rise earlier, partly because children must be at school at 9:00 a.m. where they receive a hot cup of cocoa before classes begin. Three meals a day are more generally the rule at this time of the year. It is also true that trappers on the trail during winter will usually stop in the middle of the day for a meal.

Families usually eat seated around a table but in summer the meals may be taken in the smoke house. Canadian style dishes, cooking and eating utensils are used and most families have enough so that each person can have his own cup, plate and eating utensils. This is not always the case, however, and frequently one member of the family, usually a child, will have to wait until another is finished drinking his tea before a cup is available. Knives, forks and spoons are used for eating but the knife is the most important implement. In fact, trappers in the bush will often have no other utensil with them, meat and bannock being cut and put into the mouth with the fingers. Most people wash their hands before and after each meal. A wash basin of soapy water is kept at hand and everyone uses it. The women and older girls wash and wipe the dishes after the meal is finished. Dishes are washed in warm, soapy water, but are not rinsed.

Dress

Although all aspects of Chipewyan material culture have radically changed or disappeared through more than two hundred years of European contact, the greatest amount of change is perhaps to be seen in clothing. In fact, it is nearly impossible to reconstruct any aspect of aboriginal clothing on the basis of vestiges that may remain among the modern Snowdrift Indians. Descriptions by Mackenzie (1801: cxx-cxxii) and Hearne (1958: 209) are excellent and indicate the heavy dependence on caribou skins for clothing, a fact that is emphasized by one observer of a later period who states that it required from ten to twelve caribou skins just to make a complete outfit for one hunter (Godsell, 1938: 246).

Today nearly all the summer and winter clothing worn by men and women is purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company store. A few men use caribou skin parkas and pants in winter but by far the greater number buy parkas from the store. In summer the men wear shirts and jeans much of the time with sweaters and heavy wool shirts when it is cooler. At any time of the year women wear skirts and sweaters or print dresses, usually with a brightly colored kerchief, and heavy stockings, often with colored socks over them. Younger girls like to wear slacks or pedal pushers and colorful jackets. The young men are particularly fond of black leather jackets, particularly if they have metal ornaments and studs, and every male in the village wears a cap.

The chief exceptions to all this purchased clothing are gloves and footgear. In winter all men wear gloves made from caribou or moose hide. Gauntlet style with attached strings that go around the neck are favored. Women generally wear brightly colored knitted gloves. Footwear, among middle aged and older men at least, consists almost exclusively of caribou skin slippers in summer and wrap-around moccasins of the same material in winter. In spring and summer, rubbers are generally worn over them. Women also like to wear slippers in summer but except for the oldest women, appear to favor commercial footgear in winter. Moccasins and slippers are always elaborately decorated with beaded or woven yarn floral designs. The latter are usually trimmed with muskrat or hare fur. Although some boys and younger men wear slippers in summer, most prefer heavy work shoes, dress shoes or sneakers. Young girls are more likely to prefer commercial footgear.

Most males wear long underwear at all times, even during the warm summer months. Rain gear seems to have little popularity and is not even carried in the store. Some people wear their winter parkas when it is cold and wet in summer and autumn but the majority of people do not seem to be worried about getting wet. Children are dressed like their parents but it seems to be only the older girls who have been away to school who are much concerned with their personal appearance. Many of these young women curl their hair and nearly all up to the age of thirty-five wear lipstick. Small brooches, ear-rings and finger rings are also worn. The store sells perfume and although some of it is drunk by younger men, girls and young women are very fond of using it. Older women use no cosmetics at all and wear their hair straight. Boys and young men like to wear wide belts with heavy buckles and the store also sells many key chains with metals and large wallets with heavy chains attached. Sweat shirts with "Snowdrift, N.W.T." printed on them are also popular. Badges and buttons of all kinds are worn by young men, usually on their caps.

Everybody in the village likes to dress up for important ceremonial occasions. Women will work hard just before Christmas sewing fancy footwear, mittens and other dress clothes. The store also sells a great deal of new clothing just before Christmas and everyone wants to appear at the midnight Church service Christmas Eve looking their best. During the summer when dances are held, the girls will often appear in clean white blouses, sweaters, print skirts and white socks. However, none of the boys or young men appear to make any particular attempt to dress up for these occasions. Treaty Day is another occasion when many people like to appear in their best clothes. It should be emphasized, however, that with the exception of girls and women between the ages of thirteen and thirty-five, the Snowdrift people have only a utilitarian interest in clothing. New clothes may be the object of aesthetic appreciation at the time they are purchased, but the number of occasions in community life for appearing well dressed are too few to attract the lasting interest of very many people.

Division of Labour

Although men dominate the cycle of subsistence activities at Snowdrift today, there is ample historical documentation for the important role that women have always played in the economic life of the Chipewyan Indians (Franklin, 1824: Vol. 1: 250; Godsell, 1938: 250; Jenness, 1956: 23-24). Hearne's faithful companion and guide, Matonabbee, explained the failure of the explorer's first two attempts to reach the mouth of the Coppermine River to the fact that he failed to take women with him.

> .....not taking any women with us on this journey, was, he said, the principal thing that occasioned all our wants: 'for', said he, 'when all the men are heavy laden, they can neither hunt nor travel to any considerable distance; and in case they meet with success in hunting, who is to carry the produce of their labour? Women', added he, 'were made for labour; one of them can carry, or haul, as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, keep us warm at night, and, in fact, there is no such thing as traveling any considerable distance, or for any length of time, in this country, without their assistance. Women', said he again, 'though they do everything, are maintained at a trifling expense; for as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times, is sufficient for their subsistence.' This, however odd it may appear, is but too true a description of the situation of women in this country;.....(Hearne, 1958: 35).

The advent of dog transportation on a large scale undoubtedly lightened the work of women considerably, and the general tendency toward sedentary community living in the Snowdrift area has further restricted their participation in subsistence activities. It appears to have been in the hunting and trapping camp that women played their major role in helping the men. Since the men now tend to trap by themselves and extended hunting trips are restricted to a few weeks in the late summer and early autumn, a woman's role in these activities is correspondingly reduced. The fact that women now spend most of their time at home in the village has tended to restrict their role largely to activities connected with the home and with the rearing of children.

Around the village, as well as in the bush hunting camp, the setting of nets and collecting of fish is done entirely by the men. Most of the cleaning of fish is done by women but men are perfectly capable of performing the task should the occasion arise. Although most of the preparation of meat and skins is the work of women, men sometimes take part in these activities as well. No stigma is attached to a man for performing women's work. Trapping seems to be the one major activity from which women are excluded almost completely. The trapper does all the skinning of animals in the bush and even if he returns to the village before stretching his furs, this is a task which he performs himself without any assistance. As one informant put it, "Women never touch fur". Although this statement was supported by many informants, it was noted that there was one old lady in the village who had her own trap line which she visited on foot. This same old lady, along with a number of others, also set snares for hares in the vicinity of the village. It can be said that a man and his wife form an active partnership for the carrying out of many subsistence activities (see Helm, 1961: 16, 47).

A wife also appears to have definite economic rights within the nuclear family unit and this is a direct result of her aspect of the division of labor. Since caribou and moose hides are prepared by the women, it is they who bring them to the store to sell. If any slippers, skin jackets or other sewed items are to be sold to the Hudson's Bay Company, it is the women who carry out the transaction and to whom payment is made by the manager. One male informant had some caribou skins which he wished to sell to a friend in the sanitarium in Edmonton. Although the informant carried on all the correspondence with his friend concerning the transaction, it was emphasized that the hides were the property of his wife and that he was acting in her behalf.

When not hunting, trapping or visiting nets, men often devote their time to the care and repair of their equipment and houses. There is considerable variation from one individual to another in the way equipment is maintained and this appears to have a lot to do with the success of specific men at subsistence activities. This is particularly noticeable with regard to nets. Some men take good care of their nets, making sure that they are always in a good state of repair, their location carefully marked so that boats will not run over them, kept clean, etc. Others make no attempt to keep their nets in good condition. They allow them to remain in the water even though very dirty, and they do not repair them when the mesh becomes torn. In fact, they may even purposely tear the net when removing fish rather than take the time to work each fish out carefully. This same variation in care of equipment is noticeable with regard to traps, dog sledges and harnesses as well as houses and household equipment. It is worth noting in this connection that items of material culture, particularly those associated with the work round, do not have a very long life. Outboard motors seldom last more than two or three summers and the same is true of other mechanical devices. As previously mentioned, the Indians are skilled at improvising mechanical repairs but they often do not bring this skill to bear until the device has broken down completely and is sometimes beyond repair. There is frequent borrowing of equipment and those who borrow are not often very careful of the equipment they use. There is no attempt on the part of most men to put up their boats or sledges at the end of the season and they are often left just where they were last used, frequently far from the village. Sledges and harnesses may be left along a trap line and boats are simply pulled out of the water and turned over. However, they are one item of material culture that is very expensive and difficult to replace so they are carefully repaired and maintained for years

Women and children perform most of the household chores and carry water. In addition, women have food preparation and child care to occupy their days but these chores do not normally consume the entire day even when the family is large. Children always have plenty of chores to do although the amount of work demanded of youngsters varies considerably. In houses where there are many children, younger ones may get out of helping with chores for a long time simply because their parents would rather have them out of the house so that older brothers and sisters can get the work done. Older boys are expected to take an active part in maintaining the family establishment. They haul water, chop wood, feed dogs and perform other minor chores as well as helping the family head in the major subsistence activities. Girls ordinarily have less to do than boys although they do help their mothers with housework and child care. It should be emphasized,

however, that there is considerable variation in the degree to which all members of a family assist one another. Some families work together as units under the direction of the family head, while in others the older unmarried boys may feel that they do not need to help with family activities. Nevertheless, in all families the family head may count on his sons and daughters to do at least part of the work and even though these young people may not contribute money earned toward family welfare, they will give freely of their time as long as they are resident under the same roof.

Chapter IV

THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

In this discussion of the life cycle of the individual at Snowdrift, emphasis is placed on the developmental and behavioral patterns in the life of a normal individual. Particular weaknesses are apparent in the discussions of birth and infancy, and in the role of women. These shortcomings derive from special attitudes at Snowdrift which close many avenues of approach to a male investigator.

Birth

Children are generally desired at Snowdrift and motherhood is regarded as a normal and expectable situation. The physiological causes of pregnancy are fairly well understood, but contraceptives of any kind, although known by some people, are not used to the best of the author's knowledge. Some of the younger men know about contraceptives from discussions on the subject with Euro-Canadians. Young women may be familiar with them through having had sexual relations with Euro-Canadians, either in the village or in such metropolitan centres as Yellowknife and Fort Smith. However, even those young women who have this knowledge are not particularly interested in using contraceptives nor do they care whether the man uses one. Abortions too seem to be relatively rare, although the author heard an unconfirmed rumor about a young woman who had aborted herself in an unspecified manner after having been made pregnant by a transient Euro-Canadian.

Although both parents welcome the arrival of a child regardless of its sex, it is clear that male children are greatly preferred. One informant was heard to exclaim with approval after the birth of his first son, "He will hunt for me!" This preference for male progeny is clearly indicated in the various kin terms that can be used for son. Even when a male child is very small, his father may use a term meaning "my son who is almost a man". He will particularly use this term in contexts where the child seems to be showing skills or intelligence. When the boy is about fourteen years of age and may have two or three dogs of his own and be helping his father with hunting and trapping, a term may be used which means "my young man". A married couple that has only daughters may be an object of amusement to other people. Similarly when a couple has had a number of girls and finally has a boy, their relief and pleasure is very obvious. The only son in a family will frequently be badly spoiled. He can get away with all kinds of mischief and behavior that would be quickly punished in other children

will be praised as an indication of spirit and liveliness in him.

Women take no particular precautions during pregnancy and there is no apparent concern over an approaching birth. There are no dietary restrictions and the mother continues her usual chores right up until the time that labor begins. However, she will avoid heavy lifting and carrying during the last weeks of pregnancy if this is possible. In recent years it has been generally the case that pregnant women go to Yellowknife to have their babies delivered in the hospital. This is arranged by the Indian and Northern Health Services nurse but some women prefer to give birth in the village, often because there is no one with whom they wish to leave their other children while they are away.

All births that take place in the village are attended by mid-wives, an informal group of elderly women past child bearing age. Several of the mid-wives will attend each birth, one or two to do most of the work and others to watch and give advice and help if necessary. Close female relatives of the expectant mother also sometimes attend. The men in the household arrange to be away at this time. The amount of pain at birth seems to depend upon the physical condition of the mother and how many children she has had. Women who have had many children give birth very easily and occasionally a child is born before a mid-wife arrives.

According to Birket-Smith (1930: 76-77) the traditional position for delivery was for the expectant mother to lay on her stomach, with her knees slightly bent, while another woman assisted by drawing a caribou skin tightly about the lower part of the body. In recent years, however, the visiting nurse has encouraged women to have their babies lying flat on the back. Births are taken very much for granted and there is a minimum of disturbance in the family pattern of living by the arrival of a new child. If the delivery is normal and the mother in good health, she is usually up and resuming her duties within two days after the baby is born, sometimes sooner. It is interesting to note that the lack of precautions during pregnancy, the tendency for most babies to be born in the Yellowknife hospital, and the general matter-of-fact approach to a birth by all members of the family concerned is in marked contrast to the traditional attitudes toward the event as described in historical sources. Hearne describes in some detail the isolation of an Indian woman as soon as labour begins and the long period of uncleanliness following the birth (1958: 58-59). More than one hundred and fifty years of Euro-

American contact, and particularly the intensive efforts in public health over the past ten years are probably responsible for the elimination of the traditional attitudes about birth.

Infancy

The household always receives a new baby with a great deal of affection and joy. Other children adapt readily to a new baby and take pride in being able to hold it. Parents like to play with their young babies but this demonstrative affection tends to taper off as the child outgrows babyhood. However, it was observed that four or five year olds still receive considerable attention, particularly if they continue to be the youngest members of the families. By the age of five or six, however, a child is usually receiving the routine responses reserved by adults for other children.

Although homes where there are new babies are often kept very warm, there seems to be no special attempt to keep the baby warm. In the crawling stage he may crawl on the floor with practically no clothes on when the floor is the coldest part of the house. In the house the small infant remains in a homemade crib or a hammock suspended from the ceiling, or it may simply lie on a bed if no other place is available. In the home of one informant it was observed that the baby spent much of the time in a hammock made from a piece of blanket. It was completely swathed in bedding and had a piece of mosquito netting over its face. If it began to fuss or cry out, the nearest person would simply rock the hammock and this seemed to be sufficient to quiet the child.

Babies seem to be kept reasonably clean. Diapers are usually made from absorbent sheeting purchased at the store and dirty ones are changed immediately. In fact, when a small infant starts crying, one of the first things a mother checks is to see whether the diapers are soiled. As far as general cleanliness is concerned, older boys and girls sometimes contact impetigo but this was rarely noticed with infants up to two years of age. Just the same, when the doctor made visits to the village during the summer of 1960, she commented often to the mothers on the condition of the babies, always stressing the fact that they should be washed and kept clean and pointing in particular to dirty heads and scabs on the heads. Outside the home, infants are not carried in any kind of conveyance but are simply held in the arms. They are dressed in commercial baby clothes purchased at the store.

Small babies receive the breast as soon and as often as they demand it, and children up to two years also receive it on demand if they have not already been weaned. It was noted that in all cases, suckling sessions tended to be fairly brief, usually not more than ten minutes at a time. Breast feeding is relatively undemonstrative and very little emotion seems to be involved. The visiting nurse has told the women that it is unwise for them to nurse their infants after they reach the age of one year. Nevertheless, many mothers continue breast feeding until the child is three or four years old. The age of weaning, therefore, varies considerably and is apt to depend primarily on the time of the mother's next pregnancy. However, one woman was observed by the author to be nursing two infants at the same time.

Weaning is a very easy process and appears to take place without any difficulty. This is probably due to the fact that a baby is usually weaned to a bottle rather than to food. However, this tends to depend to some extent on the age at which the child is weaned. One of the more progressive mothers, who weaned her child at the age of one year as the nurse suggested, kept on bottle feeding for another year and even when the child was nearly four years old it liked to have a bottle once in a while. At any rate, it is certain that babies continue to take bottles long after they are capable of feeding themselves. The bottle is also a favorite device for quieting a tired or angry child.

The problem of correct food for babies and small children is one that is always of particular interest to the doctor and nurse when they make their periodic visits to the village. On one of these visits the doctor pointed out to the author that several of the babies were overly fat with a soft, more or less flabby fat which indicated insufficient solid foods in the diet. She suggested to the mothers that these babies be fed more fish, cut up fine or made into soup. She was also pleased to note that more mothers appeared to be feeding pablum to their infants. In spite of what the nurse and doctor have told them, some mothers do not think that it is right to feed a small child anything but milk. They will not give their infants pablum or other easy to eat foods that are recommended. Instead, they will feed nothing but milk, either from the breast or from a bottle, until the child is old enough to eat meat and other items of the normal adult diet. More progressive mothers look down on this practice and point out that that is why many of the small children in the village are under-

sized for their age. A number of these more progressive mothers were observed feeding their small children crackers spread with lard, fish cut into small pieces, as well as pablum and sweet baby cookies.

Mothers say that their children begin to walk between the ages of one and two years. First steps elicit the same grateful response that is characteristic in our own society and children who are slow to learn to walk are encouraged to try time and time again by their parents. Children between the age when they first walk and six or seven seldom wander far from their homes except when accompanied by a parent or an older sibling.

A baby is allowed to play with practically anything that attracts it although it will be protected from dangerous objects. As soon as a baby is old enough to understand, it will be told to release an objectionable article and some attempt is made to appease it by offering a toy, its bottle, or some other acceptable thing. Usually a considerable effort will be made to quiet a crying infant or small child, but if the mother is occupied with some other activity, an infant may scream a great deal without eliciting any response on the part of the parent. An infant of about two years was observed standing in front of its mother with arms outstretched and screaming to be picked up. However, the mother was very busy talking to her husband who was in the process of putting up a tent. It was not until she had finished the conversation that she took notice of the child.

It was noted that men play a fairly large part in the experiences of infancy and very early childhood. Men are often seen walking around the village carrying their small children and several male informants were observed administering to the toilet needs of their infants. Fathers seem to be almost equally involved with mothers as far as discipline is concerned, and perhaps play an even more active role in comforting and distracting a punished child. Fathers show many signs of affection and often hug and kiss their infant children.

Very little was learned with regard to toilet training. There appears to be no stress placed on rapid training although success in this regard on the part of the child is rewarded with kind words by the parents. Most children between two and three years were observed to be completely trained, although older children sometimes require assistance. During the summer of 1960, a four year old boy was observed using a small pot in the house, but requiring assistance from his

father or mother. The following summer, however, he used the outhouse like adults and older children and did not need any assistance at all. Small boys and girls, under the age of five, will urinate or defecate anywhere outside without fear of being seen. Older children prefer not to be seen but do not make any great effort to hide themselves. Adults always go out of sight to perform toilet functions if there is no outhouse handy.

Today at Snowdrift all the Indians have French or English given and family names and the traditional attitudes associated with names and naming are difficult to determine. According to Hearne, names were always given to children by their parents or near kin and were generally derived from some place, season or animal (Hearne, 1958: 59). Informants claimed that the aboriginal Chipewyan had one name, or possibly more than one, but at any rate no family name. This name was not given at birth but usually at a time when the child first began to make the effects of its personality felt. The name would reflect some aspect of its personality and later on in life it might receive a number of nick-names for similar reasons. The first missionaries who came into the area gave the people Christian names only and these were usually French, just as they are today. The use of family names on a large scale seems to have begun with the first treaties and the first contacts with the government when it was necessary for the various members of a family to be readily indentifiable for the purpose of maintaining accurate band lists and other government records. At that time certain individuals seem to have taken names, perhaps from Euro-Canadians in the area, or from geographical locations, or perhaps English and French translations of their Chipewyan names and used these as family names. Today, new babies are not given Chipewyan names in any formal sense, such as at baptism when they receive their Christian name, but they still tend to acquire nick-names based on the same characteristics as in former times.

It was noted that in most cases of social interaction between two individuals, personal names were used to a much greater extent than kinship terms. One does not often hear kin terms used either as terms of reference or address. The given name is invariably used as a term of address and either the given name or the full name as a term of reference. A man refers to an unrelated married woman by the first name of the husband followed by the term wife. The Chipewyan terms for mother, father, grandmother and grandfather are not used at all. Most children call their parents "ma" and "pa", or "mummy" and "daddy".

Adoption takes place infrequently in the village since no families have more children than they want or feel they can take care of. The most common form, when it does occur, is grandchild adoption. It is sometimes the case that the first child born, whether it is a boy or a girl, is given to maternal or paternal grandparents to help them. From then on the child considers the grandparents as its parents. It may even be the case that the child cannot marry until the old people are dead. In 1961 there were only two cases of grandchild adoption in Snowdrift and one of these appeared to be a temporary arrangement. The principle of grandchild adoption can be seen under circumstances other than straight adoption. There are, for example, several cases in the village where an elderly grandparent is living with a married son or daughter. In these cases the oldest grandchild is usually considered as the special charge of the grandparent and is often with him or her and subject to the grandparent's whim. In one case that came to the author's attention, the grandmother always took her oldest grandchild with her when she went to the store and would purchase candy bars and other things for him which she would not do for any of his brothers and sisters. In cases of adoption, either temporary or permanent, arrangements are always made with regard to the family allowance. If a temporary adoption is brought to a close, the Indian Agent is notified so that the family allowance payment can be transferred.

Childhood

Children form a large segment of the Snowdrift population, there being 75 individuals under fifteen years of age in 1961. Small children stay close to their homes at all times. Children between the ages of two and five stay inside a good deal of the time in winter and in summer are capable of playing for hours by themselves in front of their homes without supervision except for an occasional glance out the door by a parent or older sibling. When people visit one another and bring their small children, these too play close to the house and are watched. Parents always know where their small children are and, should they wander out of sight, will look for them to make sure that they are all right.

When children reach the age of seven or eight, mothers do not concern themselves with their whereabouts during the day. Older boys and girls wander freely around the village in groups or alone and come home only at meal time. If there are chores to do, the child is told of them when he returns; parents seldom go looking for a child to do chores.

When it begins to get dark, children are rarely seen around town but are expected to be home. The author noted that if boys and girls up to fourteen years of age were visiting in his house after 9:00 p.m., their mothers frequently came after them to take them home. After dark it is very seldom that children from one home visit the children of another unless accompanied by an adult. Bed time varies according to the time of the year. All villagers go to bed much later in summer when there are long hours of daylight than in winter when it gets dark early. The fact that children must be at school at 9:00 a.m. from September through June also influences their sleeping habits. Even the smallest children are never put to bed until they want to go to sleep or until they fall asleep. Parents may suggest to a child that it is sleepy and they may wish that a cranky child would fall asleep, but they do not put the child to bed. Since parents and very small children frequently sleep in the same bed, this is a practical move as no child will stay asleep in a one room house when others are present unless it wants to go to sleep or is too tired to stay awake. Sometimes a mother was observed lying on the bed with her child and trying to persuade it that it was sleepy. If the child wants to stay up, the mother will give up this procedure after a few minutes. Older children can go to bed any time they wish. If a child falls asleep during the day, it is not awakened nor is it discouraged from sleeping. In other words, sleep is considered as something natural that should take place whenever the urge comes.

Snowdrift children become aware of the facts of life and death at a very early age, a situation which is understandable under circumstances where many people of all ages frequently live together in a single room. Most children have seen a corpse by the time they are seven or eight years old and have witnessed their parents or married siblings performing sexual intercourse. Children do not often joke or even talk about sexual matters, presumably because it is so much a part of every day observation as to be hardly worth talking about.

Boys and girls play together up to the age of thirteen or fourteen but probably not a great deal after the age of nine or ten. Large groups of older boys and girls occasionally get together in the evening for a game of baseball but these games seldom include girls over the age of fourteen. For the most part, boys and girls form their own play groups after the age of nine or ten. Often a family of boys and girls will play together most of the day around the house and will only join larger sex-divided play groups in the evening. Although larger play groups tend to be made up

of individuals of approximately the same age, brothers and sisters of considerable age difference will play together happily at home.

The games that very small children play in front of their own or neighboring homes are nearly always associated with occurrences around the home or village. Thus the five year old son of an informant, with his cousin of the same age, was observed to convert a small step ladder into a canoe, tie an old motor part to one end, and take imaginary trips to Fort Reliance to hunt caribou.

Older boys and girls are usually observed in groups of two or three wandering around the village, sitting on the steps of the store, or perhaps playing a game of tag or "all-in-free" by the flag pole in front of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the evening, boys between the ages of eight and fourteen or fifteen often play a form of "cops and robbers" in the tall bushes around the village. There seems to be no organization to the games and no sides. The boys just creep through the bush and try to "shoot" one another with roughly made wooden rifles. The popularity of this game has increased considerably since films were shown for the first time in the village during the summer of 1961. However, most of the children had seen films previously while at school at Fort Smith.

The disciplining of children appears to be relatively mild, although it is difficult to be sure since parents often seemed reluctant to administer punishment in the presence of an outsider. Parents usually attempt to distract a child who is misbehaving; nevertheless the author observed more than one case where effective punishment was meted out. On one occasion, a small boy and his mother were seated in a canoe preparatory to departure on a Sunday afternoon picnic. The child leaned over the side and got the legs of his trousers wet. His mother hit him lightly on the side of the head several times and scolded him severely. He cried loudly but was ignored.

It was noted that adults do not often discipline other people's children even when their own child may be the victim of mistreatment. They wait for the parent to administer the discipline or they simply remove their own child from the situation (see Helm, 1961: 87). For example, a small boy was observed seated in a canoe that was pulled up on the beach. An older boy rocked the canoe and made the little boy cry. Nothing was said by either parent for some time and then the father of the small boy removed his son from the canoe. If adults are present, serious aggression of one

child toward another is not tolerated. On numerous occasions parents were observed to severely discipline their children for fighting with another child.

It was noted that children occasionally object strenuously to a parental decision and will sulk or cry for a long time, but will seldom wheedle or in other ways attempt to get the parent to change his or her mind. Outward signs of affection between parents and children appears to end at the age of ten or eleven. After that children are treated more or less as other adults although they may still be disciplined severely.

In concluding these comments on discipline, it can be said that active, responsible participation in the affairs of the household is conducive to the early acquisition of an adult outlook and discipline plays a minor role. Nevertheless, children are expected to conform to definite rules of behavior and are not permitted to be a disruptive force in the household. There are effective means of seeing that a certain standard of behavior is maintained.

The age at which household chores begin for both boys and girls depends to some extent on the ages of other children in the family. It is unlikely that children below the age of eleven have much to do. They may help unload a boat, or do light work around the house, but most of their time is their own. A boy of twelve or thirteen may have most of the light chores to do such as feeding dogs, emptying garbage, hauling water and other similar tasks. Older boys do this sort of work too. In fact, a seventeen or eighteen year old may be the busiest member of the family. He will check the nets, run the boat on family outings, and do most of the heavy work around the house. It was noticed that in families where there are boys of seventeen and up, the family head is relieved of much of the routine work in maintaining the house and equipment.

For girls, helping with the housework and looking after younger siblings are important activities. This work sometimes begins when the child is as young as eight or nine and it is probable that girls begin to play an active part in household activities earlier than boys, largely because much of a girl's work does not require physical strength. The most important chore that older children of both sexes are expected to perform is looking after younger siblings, but they are not expected to have their younger siblings or relatives with them when they play away from the house and only rarely are older children seen wandering around the village with younger brothers or sisters in tow. In

spite of these chores, however, it should be emphasized that children and young people of all ages have a great deal of free time.

It is difficult to detect the ways in which children learn the techniques of sub-arctic living. Education of this kind is an informal process in which the child more or less adopts the example set by older people. This is relatively easy for girls who begin to take their part in household chores at a very early age. Because of the nature of the subsistence activities and the special skills and physical stamina involved, a boy may be nearly out of the period of childhood before he really begins to participate actively. The necessity of attending school further restricts his involvement in adult activities. During the summers of 1960 and 1961 boys between the ages of ten and fourteen, but seldom younger, were frequently observed accompanying their fathers or older brothers on brief hunting trips away from the village. On these trips the boys did not participate in any active way in the hunt, nor were they equipped to do so. These boys did not appear to know much about the operation of a rifle and no rifles were taken along for their use. Usually they carried game bags and perhaps also helped to prepare the fire, and made themselves useful in other ways. As a special treat, they might be allowed to operate the outboard motor on the return trip. In other words, if a boy learns anything on trips of this kind, he does so entirely from observation. His duties on such trips are much the same as his duties at home.

Youth

The period of youth is a relatively long one at Snowdrift and there is no clearly defined limit to it. Boys are regarded as youths when they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen and begin to take on at least some of the men's work.

Several sixteen year old informants claimed they had hunted caribou frequently with their fathers but admitted that they had not as yet shot a moose nor did they know much about moose hunting. Many young men in their early twenties said that they also had begun trapping at about the age of sixteen. Usually they went along with their fathers or some other relative for several years who showed them how to recognize tracks, set traps, skin animals and all other aspects of trapping. Not the least of these, and perhaps the most difficult to learn, would be becoming familiar with the country. It is generally the rule that a young man will trap with some older relative for at least four or five years before

attempting to go out on his own. This means that by the time a man is in his early or middle twenties, he is thoroughly familiar with at least one and probably more trapping areas and is also skilled at other trapping activities. It seems likely that older men began trapping at an earlier age. One informant in his mid forties claimed that he had started trapping with his father when he was thirteen years old. He often stayed in camp as a sort of handy man, feeding dogs, making tea and performing other chores. The increasing tendency toward sedentary community life, as well as school responsibilities, has kept younger children in the village most of the time. It should be emphasized that youths even as old as nineteen or twenty frequently do not trap regularly. It may be that the family does not have enough dogs so that both the father and son can trap, or perhaps a father will prefer to have his son in the village looking after the rest of his family while he is in the bush.

Young women do not form as distinct a group as the young men, partly because the age at which they marry is younger and also because at Snowdrift at the present time there are fewer of them. Young women and older school girls have less free time than the men because of the nature of their duties which tend to increase in a large family as they grow older. Older girls share actively in all women's work and are often as proficient at these tasks as their mothers, a fact that is related to the early age at which they begin them.

Since most young men continue to live with their parents at least up to the time they are married, they are expected to turn at least some of whatever money they earn over to their parents and they apparently do so without much urging. The author found that whenever a family head was attempting to estimate his wealth, he invariably included whatever money was currently being made by members of his family. Occasionally this attitude expands in the mind of the family head to the point where he considers that he can sit back and let the younger members of the family do all the work. For example, one informant used to be considered one of the very best trappers in the village but now that he has two boys to trap for him, he seldom leaves the village in winter. At the same time, spending money may be handed out to young men and women, as well as children, by the family head when it is available. An interesting example of the authority of the family head in situations of this kind is as follows: A sixteen year old informant went out to fight a fire and when he returned his father told the Hudson's Bay Company manager not to give him any credit on his cheque. Instead the father took the cheque when it came and gave his son a certain amount

of spending money.

Young people have a considerable amount of free time, particularly in the evenings, and they seem to spend a lot of time just wandering around town, dropping into the various houses to visit, or sitting in groups on the front steps of houses talking. Since a few families have radios, these houses tend to be the focal points for groups of young people. In summer, nearly every evening a group of boys get together to play a form of baseball in an open area near the store. They have a soft ball and just a piece of wood for a bat. They play a scrub game and any number of players can be on a side. Strikes are called only when the player misses a swing and he can choose to run or not, depending on whether he thinks the ball has been well hit. A player can be put out by being touched with the ball after he hits it. This can be achieved by one of the members of the opposite side throwing the ball at him. He is also out if the ball he hits is caught on the fly or on the first bounce. A side is not retired until all the players have made an out. The players of this unusual game are nearly always the unmarried men ranging in age from sixteen to thirty. The game begins about 8:30 p.m. and most villagers come down to stand around or sit on the steps of the store and watch. It will continue until after midnight or until it gets dark. After that, the players disperse to their homes or go off to visit.

It is difficult to over estimate the importance of visiting as one of the chief diversions for the whole village at all times of the year. For young people, the term used for this activity is to "walk around". This consists simply of going from one house to another, visiting for a little while, and then moving on. This goes on to some extent during the day but it is in the evening that "walking around" is carried on most vigorously. Although visiting is an important form of entertainment for all villagers, for the unmarried men it is an almost compulsive activity as they seem to be restlessly on the move from one house to another, sometimes alone but more often in groups of two or three. "Walking around" is closely tied in with the drinking pattern as will be shown later. As far as young people are concerned, it would seem that this almost compulsive visiting reflects the poverty of their social life and the almost desperate search for something interesting to do.

Sex Relations, Courtship and Marriage

Most Snowdrift boys seem to become interested in girls when they are fifteen or sixteen years old and the girls themselves are about thirteen or fourteen when they begin to receive the attentions of boys. Pre-marital sexual

relations are very common and begin at an early age. Some young men told of having sexual intercourse as early as sixteen and all unmarried men in the age group of eighteen to thirty boasted of numerous conquests. Girls usually have their first sexual experience at the age of thirteen or fourteen and appear acquiescent to such activity largely because of an inability to say no and unwillingness to offend the boys rather than because of any enjoyment on their part. The problem of finding a secluded place for sexual activity at Snowdrift is not an easy one to solve, particularly in winter. Two sixteen year old boys were observed with girls in the home of one of the boys while his family was on a Sunday afternoon picnic and would be away from the village for a considerable length of time. While the girls were in the house, the mother of one of them became suspicious and knocked on the door. Both girls were observed to leave a short time later. Parents appear to be dissatisfied with this state of affairs but it is rare that they take even such overt action as described above. Nevertheless, it is likely that girls in particular are subjected to family pressures at home concerning their sexual activities. One female informant who was well known for her willingness to satisfy the sexual needs of the young men said that she did not really care whether or not she became pregnant but mentioned that her mother would not let her continue to live with the family if she did. She also said that each month her mother asks her whether or not she has had her menstrual period. Women who have given birth to illegitimate children do not appear to be under any particular stigma nor are the children.

It seems likely that the high rate of pre-marital sexual activity is directly related to the large number of unmarried young men in the community. During the summer of 1961, out of the eighteen young men in the village between the ages of eighteen and thirty-one, only three were married. Eight of these men were between twenty-five and thirty-one years of age and only two of them were married. At the same time, there were only three unmarried girls over the age of sixteen and none over twenty. Thus, not only are there a disproportionate number of unmarried males in the village, but their chances for marriage are very slim indeed. They must either look for wives outside the village, which most seem unwilling to do, or wait for the younger girls to grow up. If they do this, they may find that these girls, under the influence of the education that is just being made available to them in the village, will want to leave the community. Thus the men are up against a situation that is difficult to reconcile.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that much of the interest of young unmarried men is centred on sex and the means of satisfying their sexual requirements. At various times in the past, the R.C.M.P. have warned the villagers about the seriousness of having sexual intercourse with girls under sixteen and although this runs counter to accepted village practice, there is at least a tendency for young men to feel that they should be careful about their relations with under age girls. There are reputed to be at least two elderly women in the village who make themselves available to young men for a small payment.

It was possible to observe some courtship patterns in the village even though there were few overt signs of friendship between particular boys and girls. Letters apparently take the place of more obvious signs of friendship and the few eligible girls were constantly receiving letters from various boys. These letters were usually not delivered personally but were left at the home of a relative where the girl would pick them up. It is likely that assignations are planned in these letters. The circumspect nature of boy-girl relations is emphasized by the example of a young male informant whose girl friend returned to the village by plane from the school at Fort Smith after an absence of nearly ten months. Although he was at the dock when the plane arrived, he made no move to greet her. Later that evening, she came over to his house, obstensibly to visit his younger sister, after already having picked up a letter from him at the home of her uncle. This same informant numbers among his most important possessions a small booklet that describes how to write love letters. It is interesting that the concept of romantic love, which apparently was not important to the Chipewyan in aboriginal times, and which is probably not emphasized to any great extent at Snowdrift today, nevertheless has a certain vague attraction for the young men and women. The age group between sixteen and twenty-five, some of whom are at least partly literate, favor cheap love story magazines above all other kinds even though it must be extremely difficult for them to identify with the people and situations that are described in such magazines.

Marriage is, of course, the normal state of affairs at Snowdrift and there are no men or women who would remain single by choice. Nevertheless, there are no rules of endogomy and it would seem that if the young men were particularly anxious to find wives, they would make a greater effort to look for them in Yellowknife and other villages. It may be that since sexual needs can be fulfilled outside the marriage bond without too much difficulty, young men are not in any hurry to take on

family responsibilities. No cases of sexual inversion were known nor was anything to be learned about incest or other forms of abnormal sexual relations.

Information on the aboriginal marriage customs of the Chipewyan in the historical sources is not particularly detailed, but it is clear that since women did much of the work when families were on the move, it was desirable for a man to have several wives. However, since only the best hunters would be able to maintain more than one wife, polygamy, as is usually the case in all human societies, was more the exception than the rule (Franklin, 1824: Vol. 1: 250; Godsell, 1938: 250; Hearne, 1958: 200; Jenness, 1956: 23-24; Ross, 1867: 310). Hearne (1958: 67) also describes the custom of wrestling for wives. A weak man, unless he was a very good hunter, would not be allowed to keep his wife if a stronger man wanted her. This wrestling, however, would normally only take place over women who had no children. Whatever may have been the case in aboriginal times, the Chipewyan have been monogamous since coming under the influence of missionaries over a century ago. At Snowdrift today it would appear that girls are married at about the age of twenty or perhaps a little earlier, while for boys the age of marriage is much later; at least twenty-eight and probably over thirty in many cases. There are only three families in which the wife is older than her husband. As should be clear from the previous discussion, men do not put any particular value on their prospective wives being virgins.

It is difficult to determine how much initiative with regard to marriage lies with the prospective marriage partners themselves. No informants would state that there is any such thing as a preferential marriage partner. A few young men, however, maintained that it would be "bad" to marry a cousin. There appeared, nevertheless, to be numerous cases of premarital sexual relations between cousins. Several young informants mentioned that if they wanted to marry a particular girl, they would first have to secure permission from her father. Although it seems definitely true that marriages are, to some extent, arranged, it is not always clear just who the responsible individuals are. Some informants stated that the old women were very powerful in this regard and that many marriages were arranged by them. Certainly this appeared to be the situation in one particular case when a young man who had been the acknowledged suitor of one girl suddenly married another. In talking about it afterwards, the young man said that his grandmother had decided that it was time for him to be married and since the girl he was interested in was out of the village at the time, he married

the only other girl available. This decision, over which he seems to have had little or no control, did not particularly disturb him. On the other hand, a girl's father apparently has at least some say in the matter even if it is only to act as a front for the old women. The Roman Catholic priest, who visits the village periodically, told the author about a girl who had come to him saying that her father wished to marry her to a particular boy but she did not want to go through with the marriage because she did not like him. The priest confronted the father with this information and he agreed not to insist on the marriage. He said that the old women of both families were the ones who had been insisting on the marriage.

Marriages are performed by the Catholic priest on one of his periodic visits to the village. Sometimes there are two or three couples to be married but one ceremony is usually sufficient. A wedding which took place in September, 1961 was described to the author some months later. The ceremony was held at 8:00 a.m. after which the married couple visited at every home in the community. Usually there was home brew or something else to drink at each house. In the evening a feast was held at the home of the groom's uncle where friends and relatives gave presents to the married couple. Following the feast, there was a dance held at the school.

Although it was difficult to obtain detailed information about cases of infidelity and extra-marital sexual activity, there could be no doubt that these occur. The large number of unmarried men and the scarcity of unmarried young women are undoubtedly contributing factors in this situation. Young men frequently talked in general terms about certain women who would be available for sexual purposes when their husbands were away from the village. Several inquired of the author about the possibility of using his cabin as a place for illicit meetings. One woman, whose husband was in the hospital at Calgary, acted as a sort of family sexual partner for his brothers, three of whom were over twenty and not married, in return for assistance in maintaining the household. This arrangement ceased, however, when the husband returned from the hospital. As will be discussed in some detail later, drinking intoxicants is very closely tied in with the need for sexual satisfaction and whatever resentment is shown by wronged husbands, usually appears under the influence of alcohol. When a man comes back from a hunting trip or in off the trap line, and hears that his wife has been carrying on during his absence, he frequently says nothing but will immediately make a batch of home brew and invite the man who has wronged him. This invitation will be solely for the purpose of getting drunk and fighting with

his rival. Some men, however, realize that they are not physically able to uphold their honor in this way and will either do nothing or punish their wives.

Divorce, or more correctly, separation, was common among the aboriginal Chipewyan, so much so in fact that until the first child was born, the marriage was mostly looked upon as a trial (Birket-Smith, 1930: 68). Hearne (1958: 201) mentions that permanent separation could be caused by unfaithfulness on the part of the wife or for failure to be able to carry out wifely duties satisfactorily. The girl was simply turned out and told to return to her relatives. In recent years at Snowdrift there have been no actual divorces because the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize divorce. There is one couple who are separated. The husband left his wife and is living with relatives. The wife, who was childless, moved in with a single man and has had several children by him. It cannot be said that this couple suffers socially from the fact that they are living together without the sanction of the Church.

Adult Life

Entry into adult status is difficult to determine even though it usually is directly associated with marriage. The speed with which a young married man becomes an adult largely depends upon the extent to which he is responsible for the welfare of his family. Even under the best of circumstances, marriage rarely, if ever, means complete independence for the new family. Though the age of marriage for men is relatively late, they are seldom experienced enough to maintain their families without depending heavily on assistance from relatives.

The early years of marriage appear to be a somewhat difficult time for women. Household chores are considerably more arduous than before marriage and added to these are the duties of child care. Since the preferred type of residence is neo-local, the young married couples usually have all the responsibilities of maintaining a household. In some ways the activities of adult men are less varied than those of the women. Hunting and trapping consume a large part of every day at certain times of the year and strictly follow the pattern of the seasonal cycle. Women work long hours at home at varied tasks and with numerous interruptions of one kind or another.

Ideally, the objectives of the family are achieved by just and harmonious cooperation between husband and wife. As in other cultures, there are households in which there is continual quarreling and dislike between marriage partners.

Often it appears that most disagreements occur in the early years of marriage and that marital problems are largely solved by middle life. Family quarrels often involve infidelities or suspected infidelities on the part of the wife and nearly always take place when one or both individuals have been drinking. Many men become quarrelsome after a certain stage in their alcoholic intake, and at such times they may berate their wives for a whole variety of reasons. Usually they are repentant after the intoxication wears off. Arguments of this kind very frequently involve physical violence, usually on the part of the husband, but sometimes by both marriage partners. It would be unwise, however, to distort the reality of family life at Snowdrift by over-emphasizing the relatively few but spectacular instances when cooperation and understanding between marriage partners breaks down. Much more common seem to be harmonious households in which mutual understanding and toleration are successfully achieved. In most households family activities are discussed together by a man and his wife, and for the most part, they share a common social life.

Visiting is nearly as important for adult married couples as it is for young unmarried people. A man and his wife may do their visiting individually or, more frequently, as couples. When people visit as couples, it is very likely to be for the purpose of playing cards. A couple who visit may spend the entire evening at one house, while those individuals who visit alone will be likely to call at a number of houses in the course of an evening. Snowdrift families generally like to do things as a group. The previously mentioned picnics on Sunday during the summer months are characteristic of a community in which family ties are close. This is particularly true of families where the children are young.

Old Age

The transition from adult life to old age is not a clear one at Snowdrift. In general, parents whose children are grown and married are not necessarily chronologically old. Chipewyan men appear to age very late in terms of appearance and remain active until a relatively advanced age. For women the menopause comes between forty and fifty. Information from women on sexual subjects was almost impossible to obtain but it appears that they are not bothered too much by the menopause and it is not a particularly important period in their lives. If there is a difference in individual reactions to this period, it doubtless has a psychological basis or may reflect the presence or absence of physiological

difficulties. Although younger people may occasionally refer to anyone over fifty as an "old man" or an "old woman", if an individual is over sixty-five and is therefore receiving a monthly old age assistance cheque, he or she will definitely be considered old by the villagers.

Hearne reported that old age was a difficult time for the Chipewyan with whom he traveled because when men and women became too old to work, they were treated with disrespect. He also documents abandonment of the aged and estimates that one half of the old people of both sexes perished in this manner (Hearne, 1958: 221). Godsell also reports this fact and was under the impression that abandonment of the aged probably occurred with greater frequency among the Chipewyan than among the Eskimos (1938: 250).

Hearne's comment about lack of respect for the aged seems to hold true for attitudes at Snowdrift today. In ordinary conversations, people frequently made disrespectful comments about elderly individuals and physical defects in the aged, such as impaired hearing, would inspire scornful comments. In fact, among the Snowdrift Indians it would almost appear as though anything old is an object of scorn. A dog is given an extra kick with the comment that it is old; a tourist fisherman is thought of as being rather peculiar, not because he is white and oddly dressed, but because he is old. If old persons happen to have retained their mental powers and physical abilities to a marked degree, they may still be objects of scorn but there will be a note of awe in any comments that are made about them.

It might be expected that old age assistance would raise the status of old people but it has only to the extent that it is possible for some of them to maintain their own households and thus not be dependent on younger relatives. Lip service may be paid to the desirability of taking care of a person in his old age, but there is a definite impression that statements of this kind are made because the Indian knows that white people expect this kind of attitude. Thus, if an aged person is alone and not in a position to maintain a separate household, he or she will be tolerated only for the sake of obtaining the pension money.

In spite of the generally low status that old people have, it must be stated that Snowdrift people are not particularly depressed by old age, or the thought of approaching old age, unless they are in poor health. Although occasionally mistreated, all the village old people are adequately provided for economically and even the oldest

keep themselves busy with light chores around the house or just sitting and visiting.

Death and Burial

Death is regarded as a normal event at Snowdrift and mourning is restrained and, for the most part, private; this does not seem to have been characteristic of aboriginal Chipewyan attitudes about death. Franklin, in describing five families of Chipewyan Indians which his party encountered near Lake Athabasca, reported that

> this band of Indians had recently destroyed everything they possessed as a token of their grief for the loss of their relatives in the prevailing sickness. It appears that no article is spared by these unhappy men when a near relative dies; their clothes and tents are cut to pieces, their guns broken, and every other weapon rendered useless, if some person does not remove these articles from their sight, which is seldom done (Franklin, 1824: Vol. 1: 206).

Mackenzie (1801: cxxviii-cxxix); Curtis (1928: Vol. 18: 44); Hearne (1958: 218-19) and Thompson (Tyrrell, 1916: 130-31) report similar occurrences and there can be no doubt that death was a time for public display and show of feeling. The aboriginal Chipewyan never buried their dead, but wrapped them in skins and left them on the ground where they would presumably be eaten by wild animals and birds (Hearne, 1958: 218-19; Curtis, 1928: Vol. 18: 44; Godsell, 1938: 250). Hearne states that for this reason the people would never eat foxes, wolves or ravens unless it was absolutely necessary (Hearne, 1958: 218-19).

Ideas about death and after life held by Snowdrift Indians today are essentially simplified versions of those of the Roman Catholic Church. All persons who die are believed to go directly to heaven where they enjoy eternal life free from the worries and cares of this world. Living people believe that they will see their dead relatives in the other world. However, death and after life are not common subjects for conversation. The Indians very infrequently speculate about their own deaths or the deaths of others. Several informants mentioned that the deaths of close relatives had an important influence on their lives, usually in the direction of greater self-reliance and stability. One informant said that since his father died, he had made home brew only twice and had tried to be a better provider for his family.

During the summer of 1961 an elderly woman died after a lengthly illness during which people frequently commented on how tough she was and how it might be better if she would die. As soon as her death was generally known, a number of older women came to her house and began sewing on the shroud. The body was wrapped in a blanket immediately after death and remained lying on the bed until it was placed in a coffin the following day. Construction of the coffin by close male relatives of the deceased had taken place on the day of the death. The dead woman's son estimated that the funeral would cost him approximately $80. This included new clothes for the deceased, plywood for the coffin, colored cloth and ribbon to cover the coffin and food for the family and other close relatives of the deceased at the cemetery. On the day that the coffin was constructed, a small feast was given for close relatives and those who had helped with preparations for the burial. Some of these expenses were charged to the Indian Affairs Branch which usually assists in situations of this kind.

The morning of the second day after the death, the coffin was carried from the house to the church by close relatives of the deceased. The priest, recently arrived in the village, conducted a short service and the coffin was then placed in a canoe in preparation for the trip to the cemetery at the mouth of the Snowdrift River. Six canoes assembled in front of the village, in the first of which was the coffin, the priest, and other individual who sat in the bow and held the wooden cross decorated with ribbons that was to go on the grave. The second canoe contained members of the immediate family while the others carried the remaining thirty-five people who made the two hour trip to the cemetery. A grave was dug and after a brief burial service, the coffin was lowered into it and the grave filled. Following the burial, everyone present held a picnic and then the boats returned to the village.

Earlier during the same summer a three year old boy drowned when he fell from the dock in front of the federal school. His funeral, which was held in the absence of the priest, while basically similar to the one previously described, was notable for a few differences that are worth mentioning. When the funeral party arrived at the cemetery, which had not been visited since the last death had taken place early the previous winter, several men began digging the grave while all others began to clean up the cemetery. Small trees and bushes were cut down to clear the area around the graves. Then people set to work restoring the graves, most of which were overgrown with weeds, to a clean, neat condition. Many of the small wooden crosses had fallen down

and these were either placed upright again or laid on the graves. Green birch leaves were then spread on all the graves and a number of people placed religious medals and figurines on the graves of relatives.

For this funeral, the coffin, which was painted blue and decorated with strips of ribbon and little floral designs made from ribbon, was left open. At the request of the parents of the deceased, the coffin was stood up on end with the lid removed so that pictures could be taken. The body of the small boy was wrapped in a piece of flannelette which was removed for the pictures. The deceased was dressed in a new jacket and his hands were crossed on his chest. After the pictures had been taken, the coffin was placed on the ground once more and all those present knelt around it while one of the older men led in the responsive reading of prayers and chants. Following this, the lid of the coffin was removed once more and the mother of the deceased leaned over and kissed her son, followed by other members of the family and friends who wished to do so. The piece of flannelette was replaced over the face and the lid of the coffin nailed closed. The coffin, after being sprinkled with holy water, was then lowered into the grave and everyone present threw in a handful of dirt. The grave was filled in and at its head was placed a carefully made wooden cross on which was engraved the name of the deceased, the date of death, and the words "rest in peace". A religious medal was hung on the cross and also a small cluster of paper flowers. One informant told the author of having seen some graves at Fort Reliance where a man's pipe, a little tobacco and a knife were placed in a small beaver skin pouch and hung on the cross. This was apparently done in recent years for the graves of very old men.

There are three cemeteries in the vicinity of Snowdrift and at least one near Fort Reliance. Two of those in the Snowdrift area are no longer used and have fallen into considerable disrepair. People feel very strongly about being buried in a cemetery. An informant said that his mother had died when the family was in the bush and that since they did not want to bury her there, the coffin was taken by dog team to a cemetery at Fort Reliance. This was a long trip involving several days in both directions.

The attitude of close relatives throughout funeral proceedings appears to be one of restrained grief. Those not closely related to the deceased seem to take a detached interest in the proceedings and frankly enjoy the picnic that follows. Everyone is genuinely sorry for bereaved individuals, particularly when the deceased is a child or a

person cut off in the prime of life, but they do not allow this to interfere with enjoyment of what is essentially a community social occasion.

Informants could remember no suicides in the village or in the surrounding area. One old man, when questioned on the matter, said that he had not heard of a person taking his own life either at Fort Smith or in any of the villages around Great Slave Lake.

Problems of inheritance are handled loosely in the village as old people often make their wishes known before they die. If this is not the case, the children generally get together after the death and divide the material possessions that are left. Whether this division is always equal could not be determined. There was a definite impression, however, that the oldest male relatives were the favored inheritors. It should be emphasized that inheritance can take many forms and may be related to a great variety of factors. One informant reported that when his grandfather died, his boat and much of his hunting equipment was inherited by the informant's paternal uncle. At the time of the grandfather's death, the informant's father was already dead and the children were all too young to claim the inheritance that was rightfully theirs. Later the uncle's sister's husband inherited the canoe and hunting equipment belonging to the uncle's father because the uncle was already well provided for. It seems likely that most problems of inheritance are worked out with a minimum of friction. This was apparently not always the case among the aboriginal Chipewyan. Penard (1929: 22) reports that if a deceased hunter left only young orphans, their rights were often disregarded and the only redress they had was to resort to force to obtain what was rightfully theirs after they had grown up.

Chapter V

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Kinship and the Family

Collecting information about the kinship system at Snowdrift proved to be extremely difficult. In most cases of social interaction between two individuals, personal names are used to a much greater extent than kinship terms and it is clear that there has been a general loss of knowledge about the kinship system. It was certainly true that there were few individuals who could give even a reasonably complete set of kin terms. Although the author has a reasonable amount of faith in the correctness of the terms listed below, it must be admitted that they were obtained by combining the information given by three Indian informants and the Roman Catholic priest. A marked lack of interest characterized the responses of most informants to questions concerning the kinship system and kinship terminology.

The kin terms listed below are referential as to use and are assumed to represent the system of terminology employed by the majority of Indians at Snowdrift. It should be emphasized, however, that the system employed is probably not completely uniform. The transcription of the terms represents only a working orthography and cannot be considered either strictly phonetic or phonemic.

Snowdrift Kin Terms and Referents

Second ascending generation

GrFa	setsiyé
GrMo	setsounne

First ascending generation

Fa	se'ta
FaBr, FaSiHu	sede'ldhene
MoBr, MoSiHu	ser'e
FaSi, MoSi, MoBrWi, FaBrWi	sank'iyé
Mo	enne
Fa-in-L	ser'e
Mo-in-L	setsun

Ego's generation

Hu	sedene
Wi	setsseyane
OlBr	sounnare
YoBr	setchelle
OlSi	sare
YoSi	seddeze
FaBrSo, MoSiSo, FaBrDa, MoSiDa, FaSiSo, MoBrSo, FaSiDa, MoBrDa	sella

Affinal relatives in ego's generation

BrWi, WiSi: mn sp[3]	setsun
SiHu, HuBr, BrWi, HuSi: wn sp	setchaye
SiHu, WiBr: mn sp	serre

First descending generation

Son, SiSo, BrSo	sinyeze
Da, BrDa, SiDa	selliye
SoWi, DaHu: mn sp	saze
SoWi, DaHu: wn sp	setchaye

Second descending generation

GrSo	sounnaraze
GrDa	sareaze

Characteristics of the terminology: ascending generations --

Designations for relatives of the second ascending generation adhere to only two criteria, generation and sex of referent. Thus there are only two terms, "grandfather" and "grandmother". Lineality appears to be the main principle utilized in the terminology for relatives of the first ascending generation. The terms for FaSi and MoSi are the same but different from the term for mother. Similarly, the terms for FaBrWi and MoBrWi are the same but different from the term for mother. For the comparable male relatives it is noted that the terms for FaBr and FaSiHu are the same, as are the terms for MoBr and MoSiHu, both terms being different from that for father. The term for Fa-in-L equals that for MoBr but the term for Mo-in-L is different from that for FaSi.

Descending generations -- The second descending generation is grouped by sex with two terms used, one for "grandson" and another for "granddaughter". There are two terms for children, "son" and "daughter". The term for son is extended to SiSo and BrSo while the term for daughter is likewise

3. mn sp - man speaking; wn sp - woman speaking.

extended to BrDa and SiDa. With regard to the designation of children-in-law, it appears that a man employs for SoWi the term he used for DaHu, while a woman employs a different term in the same way.

Ego's generation -- The terms for the primary relatives of ego's generation are "husband" and "wife", terms which are employed for spouses only, and four sibling terms, "older brother", "younger brother", "older sister", and "younger sister". In cousin terminology the sex of the speaker is not a criterion. Cross and parallel cousins are called by a single term that is not applied to any other relative. With regard to siblings-in-law, the sex of speaker is a criterion. A man employs for BrWi the same term that he uses for WiSi, while a woman extends the term she uses for SoWi and Da to BrWi, HuSi, SiHu, and HuBr. A man uses a single term for SiHu and WiBr.

Because of the doubtful nature of at least some of the kinship material presented above, the author is unwilling to make an exhaustive comparison with the kinship terminologies of other northern Athabascan peoples, particularly since much of this comparative material is, in itself, no more reliable. It is sufficient to point out that the principle of lineality, an important characteristic of Snowdrift kinship terminology, is consistent with a bilateral system as are the use of generational terms for nieces and nephews. It will immediately be apparent that the Snowdrift kinship system shows the Eskimo type of cousin terminology as described by Murdock (1949: 226-27). The evidence provided by MacNeish's informants suggests that Iroquoian cousin terms may be or have been more characteristic of the Chipewyan as well as other northern Athabascans (MacNeish, 1960: 280). In this connection, all that can be said for the Snowdrift material is that the distinction between cross and parallel cousins seems to have disappeared and that this is possibly a reflection of the acculturation process which has resulted in the loss of significant behaviorial distinctions between certain categories of relatives. With regard to the possibility that forms of marriage can be determinants of terminology, it is worth mentioning that Curtis (1928; Vol.18: 41) and Eggan (1955: 541) assign patrilateral cross cousin marriage to the Chipewyan. According to Eggan, at least, this was coupled with matrilocal residence and both authors emphasize that a man regarded his son-in-law as the support in his old age with relations between them being somewhat ceremonious and restrained. As previously mentioned, although informants at Snowdrift, when questioned directly on the matter, denied knowledge of any preferential marriage customs, it seems at least possible that there has been

a bilateral extension of the incest taboos to include all cousins. If this were indeed the case, it would provide a partial explanation of the disappearance of the terminological distinction between cross and parallel cousins.

Snowdrift social structure, as indicated by the kinship terminology, is further characterized by bilateral descent and the residence pattern in the village is predominantly neolocal. Of the twenty-six residential units in 1961, twenty-one consist of nuclear families with perhaps one or two aged relatives, orphaned children, or unmarried brothers and sisters. Two additional nuclear families have a married sister of the family head and her husband living with them, but both of these couples expect to build cabins in the near future. One old man lives by himself as does another young, unmarried man. Another household contains two nuclear families, the male heads of which are cousins. It is generally the case that a young married couple will seldom set up a separate residence during the first year or two of their marriage. Instead they will normally live with the side of the family that is best equipped to receive them. As mentioned previously, this form of temporary bilocal residence is instrumental in helping a young man to adjust to heading a family. It should be emphasized, however, that neolocal residence is very much the ideal of every married couple and they will attempt to build a house of their own as soon after marriage as they can.

Several of the larger nuclear families, which contain a number of unmarried but adult men, are extremely fluid as far as residence is concerned. A good example is a family containing five unmarried brothers over the age of twenty. Theoretically, the boys are all members of the same nuclear residential unit but in actual practice, it is seldom that more than two are in residence. The others may stay with various relatives, particularly with their paternal uncles or with an older married brother. This family considers itself to be one unit but in reality it is a very diverse unit and is closely integrated with the nuclear families of close relatives in the village. The question is, how do the various members of a diverse nuclear family such as this one feel about their obligations toward one another? This is difficult to say but the author is under the impression that the obligations which the sons in this family feel toward their father are no greater than that which they feel toward some of their other close relatives. That is, they do not identify entirely with the core of the nuclear unit.

Murdock has postulated that with the Eskimo type of kinship terminology, one can expect to find no exogamous unilinear kin groups. Snowdrift is a community which is

characterized for the most part by village endogamy and, as a result, is not segmented by unilinear consanguineal groupings of kinsmen. Within the community the only social structuring is into families and except for the family ties, the strongest sense of identification is with the community as a whole. Murdock refers to this type of grouping as a "deme" (Murdock, 1949: 63) and it seems likely that Snowdrift represents a grouping of this kind even though the community as such is a very recent phenomenon. Many families can trace their relationship to one another through intermarriage and it is almost certain that all the families in the community are related to one another even though they are not always able to trace the exact kinship connections. Because the village is made up of families from many different places in the Great Slave Lake-Lake Athabasca area, the ramifications of kinship ties are complex. Occasionally a man from Fort Resolution or some other community in the area visits Snowdrift, and he is invariably related to many people in the village. It seems likely that any community in the area, no matter how recently formed, would immediately come to exhibit all the qualifications of a deme.

In connection with this discussion of kinship, it seems advisable to say something about concepts of sharing and reciprocal relationships since they are, to some extent, a reflection of community life and the acculturation situation. It was noted that with regard to the killing of moose and caribou there is complete and indiscriminate sharing of the meat. When a villager kills a moose, a representative of every family will pay him a visit and come away with a share of the animal. In one case, a successful moose hunter was observed to distribute his catch almost as soon as his boat landed at the village and he retained only a relatively small share for himself. Another hunter informed the author that by the time he had given every family a piece of moose meat, there was very little for him to put in the freezer. This same indiscriminate sharing appears also to apply to fish and people were frequently observed requesting fish if they had been unsuccessful with their own nets. It should be emphasized that the sharing of both fish and big game takes place irrespective of relationship.[4] With regard to smaller game, however, it seems to be the case that a man will claim only those animals which he himself has killed. During the summer it is common for two or three men to hunt together for hares near the village. The author frequently accompanied hunters on these trips and it was invariably the case that at the end of the day's hunt,

4. This seems to be a general characteristic of Northern Athabascan peoples. See Helm, 1961: 84; Helm and Lurie, 1961: 87; Honigmann, 1946: 105; 1949: 65.

each hunter claimed the animals which he had killed even though one hunter might have been markedly more successful than another (see Helm, 1961: 81-82).

It has already been demonstrated that this pattern of sharing equally the products of the hunt does not apply to trapping partnerships nor does it seem to apply to any community activities except the hunting of big game. The ordinary reciprocal relationships that might be expected to exist in a village that is essentially made up of related individuals has broken down before the tendency for individuals to buy, sell and borrow goods and services. This tendency applies to everyone in the community, no matter how closely related, and has resulted in a strong emphasis on individual as opposed to collective effort.

Another significant factor is a highly developed complex of borrowing that is almost universally condemned by the villagers and yet is practiced to a greater or lesser degree by almost everyone (see Helm, 1961: 83-84). Much of this consists of the borrowing of material possessions and is essentially reciprocal. One individual will lend gasoline to another individual so that he may take his family on a picnic. Later on the first man may borrow the second man's canoe if his is being repaired or being used by tourist fishermen. Individuals who do not repay loans of this kind become objects of derision and will, after a while, be unable to borrow any more. The borrowing of money and store food is also highly developed and may not be quite so reciprocal. Many informants insisted that one of the reasons people hang around the store is to see what others are buying so that they will know from whom to borrow. Frequently a person will lose money playing cards and then will attempt to borrow in order to keep playing. This kind of borrowing is nearly always successful and although the borrower may repay the loan more often than not, the reciprocal nature of the transaction is absent. This is reflected in the tendency for those who win money at cards to leave most of it with the Hudson's Bay Company manager so that they can, when approached, truthfully say that they have nothing to lend. It cannot, therefore, be said that concepts of private ownership actually conflict with aboriginal patterns of sharing. Rather it would appear that the concept of individual effort was deeply rooted in traditional Chipewyan culture and may have been strengthened by the recent changes in economy and settlement patterns. On the other hand, the sharing of the important resources of the environment is also a deeply rooted principle that will be significant as long as subsistence activities remain important.

Formal Community Organization

All the historical sources indicate that leadership was poorly developed among the aboriginal Chipewyan and this appears to be directly related to the very rudimentary form of organization that existed beyond the nuclear or expanded family. Informants indicated that the foremost qualification necessary for a leader was that he be a good hunter. Such a person would assume a leader's role by gathering around him families with less capable hunters, usually, but not necessarily, related. Thus Franklin (1824: Vol. 1: 206-08) mentions coming upon a group of five families near Lake Athabasca who recognized the leadership of an old hunter who was skilled at locating caribou. This seems to have been about the maximum size for these groups and it should be emphasized that the authority of the group leader was based entirely upon his personality and hunting ability. If a leader was not satisfied with a hunter who joined his band, he apparently had the power to send him and his family away. Similarly, any hunter that associated himself and his family with a hunting leader of recognized ability was always free to separate himself from the band he had joined and either put himself under the leadership of another man or else do his hunting as an individual family (Birket-Smith, 1930: 66; Penard, 1929: 22).5

After trading posts were established in Chipewyan territory, the traders endeavored to set up chiefs or to reinforce the authority of those who traditionally commanded respect as a result of hunting prowess in order to encourage trapping and as a convenient method of dealing with the Indians for furs. Presents were given to these individuals in the hope that they would use whatever influence they had to see that furs were brought to the posts at a certain time and in sufficient numbers to satisfy the demands of the fur trade. Franklin describes the ways in which the traders bestowed recognition on certain individuals who, without the approval of the Indians, would allow themselves to be recognized as chiefs. When a trading company chief approached a fort, the flag would be hoisted and salute fired. The chief would then halt at some distance from the fort and dispatch one of his young relatives to announce his approach. The messenger would carry back to him some vermilion to ornament the faces of his party, a looking glass, comb, some tobacco and a few rounds of ammunition so that the party of Indians might return the salute (Franklin, 1824: Vol. 1: 246-47).

5. For a detailed discussion of traditional leadership among Northern Athabascans, see MacNeish, 1956.

Once the Hudson's Bay Company had secured a monopoly throughout the western area of Chipewyan territory, this ritual gradually declined. Whatever leadership existed continued to be vested in the skilled hunters and although an increasingly sedentary life and the importance of trapping have resulted in few subsistence activities that include individuals outside the nuclear family, vestiges of the old leadership pattern are still to be seen. Some of the trapping partnerships at Snowdrift reflect the tendency for young, relatively inexperienced trappers to associate themselves with older, more experienced ones. One such trapper who, over the past five years, has consistently had the best trapping record in the village, traps each year with a different young man. It is significant, however, that this man's acknowledged ability, while it provokes the admiration of other trappers, does not enable him to exercise leadership outside the area of his particular skill.

Snowdrift is in the area covered by Treaty No. 11, signed with the Canadian government in 1921. All the residents of Snowdrift are now members of the Yellowknife "A" band following a reorganization which took place late in 1960. In this section relations between the Agency Superintendent and the villagers will be discussed with a view to determining how leadership patterns have changed under the influence of band organization and changing settlement patterns.

Although the frequency with which the Agency Superintendent visits the village from his headquarters in Yellowknife is dependent upon a variety of factors, it is seldom, even in winter, that more than two months elapse between visits. He does not hold a meeting of the band every time he comes, but he does try to do so whenever there is important business to discuss that is of interest to the entire village. At other times he will confine his activities to talks with the chief, councillors and any other individuals who wish to see him.

In August of 1961 the Agency Superintendent came to the village for the express purpose of holding a band meeting at which a chief was to be elected and the house building program discussed. The first item of business had been made necessary by the resignation of the chief after a series of quarrels with the Agent. This band meeting, which was attended by the author at the invitation of one of the councillors, will be described in some detail even though there is some question as to whether it can be considered typical. At any rate, the opinions expressed and the matters brought up for discussion are similar to those that

would occur at most meetings. The meeting was scheduled for 1:00 p.m. in the school but people were slow to arrive. It was almost 2:00 when the agent decided to begin the meeting but there were only fifteen people present; later the number rose to twenty-one. Although there is no age or sex rule with regard to who can attend band meetings, it was observed that there were few men below the age of twenty-two in attendance. A number of women stood around outside the school while the meeting was in progress but none actually came in to take an active part. Women do occasionally attend the meetings but practically never have anything to say.

At this meeting, both councillors were present but the feeling was against electing a chief because of the small number of band members present. The Superintendent worked through an interpreter who was inadequate since he failed to interpret all the comments made by various individuals who wished to take part in the discussion. The senior councillor, having previously been a sub-chief before band reorganization, considered himself to be the spokesman for the people but seemed more interested in obtaining privileges for himself than in helping the village which he represents. In fact, it was generally noted that nearly all the comments and questions from the floor took the form of specific requests for help. There seemed to be a minimum of interest in general village improvement. For example, the senior councillor requested assistance for the coming trapping season. The Superintendent explained the rules for trapping assistance which stipulate that a person must be a full time trapper with good equipment and willing to spend most of his time in the bush. There seemed to be little understanding on the part of those present that these conditions would rule out aid to just about all Snowdrift trappers. A band member then requested a new net for himself but the Agent explained that the Branch no longer had any new ones to distribute. He pointed out that nets had been distributed two years previously but that they had not been cared for properly. Several band members denied this and the general impression was that the Superintendent could get nets if he wanted, simply by asking his "boss" for them. This revealed another general attitude on the part of the people. Namely, that the Superintendent has complete control over largess to be distributed to the village and can obtain anything he wants simply by asking his "boss" in Ottawa. Thus any objections to requests by the villagers are interpreted as pure stubbornness on the Superintendent's part.

When the house building program came up for discussion, the Superintendent expressed annoyance that no logs had as yet been hauled even though the summer was nearly over. Some Indians countered with the comment that the lumber, which was to be provided by the Indian Affairs Branch, had not yet arrived. The Agency Superintendent, however, expressed the opinion that this was simply being used as an excuse, saying that he would return in a week and if logs were not hauled by that time, the entire program would be abandoned and ration payments called off. Some men began to leave and when the Agent indicated that he did not wish to talk about anything else, the meeting came to an end. Outside the school, several men sought out the Superintendent and said that they would begin hauling logs. In fact, it seems that most Snowdrift men would rather talk to the Superintendent in private which is perhaps not surprising when it is remembered that few individuals wish to discuss matters pertaining to general village welfare.

At most band meetings several individuals will appear requesting relief food and clothing, information about summer employment opportunities, pensions, and trapping assistance. In fact, it probably would not be an exaggeration to say that matters of this kind are practically the only interest of the villagers as far as their relations with the Indian Affairs Branch are concerned. Suggestions on the part of the Superintendent involving cooperative community effort are invariably met with little enthusiasm.

Since the institution of chief is a relatively recent innovation among the Chipewyan, dating only from the time the treaties were signed, and at Snowdrift is linked with a recent shift in settlement pattern, it seems advisable to examine the whole concept more closely and particularly to attempt to discover what the villagers expect of their chief and also what the Agency Superintendent expects of him. Prior to band reorganization in late 1960, Snowdrift residents, most of whom were members of the Yellowknife "A" band, had no chief but were represented in their dealings with the Indian Affairs Branch by two councillors. The chief of the band was resident in Rocher River. Snowdrift people, however, considered one of these councillors to be their chief while the other was regarded as a sub-chief. It is, of course, a fact that these officers were created for the sole purpose of providing the Agency Superintendent with village representatives with whom he could deal and who would, presumably, be able to speak for the entire village. The people recognize this and they also tend to see the chief and sub-chief in this role. The chief, then, is expected to act in a liaison capacity with outsiders, particularly Euro-Canadians and specifically the Agency

Superintendent. Neither the chief nor the sub-chief can be said to have any authority over the daily life of the people and the ideal of a good chief is one who does not interfere with the lives of individuals and yet stands up to the Agency Superintendent and helps the villagers to get as much as they can in the way of assistance from the Indian Affairs Branch (see Honigmann, 1949: 148).

There is general agreement on the part of the villagers as to what the chief's role should be, but they are by no means agreed on what the methods should be for achieving these goals. The selection of the two individuals who occupied the positions of sub-chief and chief before band reorganization appears to be an expression of the ambivalent attitude that the people have toward their relations with Euro-Canadians, and to reflect the fact that they really do not know what is the best way to approach them in order to get the things they want. The sub-chief reflects the easy approach embodied in an individual who has been very successful in adapting to certain aspects of Euro-Canadian culture. Many villagers, however, do not think much of the sub-chief because they feel that he does not stand up strongly enough to the Agency Superintendent. The chief, on the other hand, represents the villagers who feel that a tough policy must be adopted in all dealings with the Agency Superintendent and other Euro-Canadians, and who believes strongly that a tough policy is the only kind of policy that will get the villagers what they want. The Agency Superintendent openly prefers dealing with the sub-chief and this further convinces some people that this person is not emphasizing the interests of the villagers as much as he ought to be. There can be no doubt but that the attitude represented by the chief is the most popular and this fact was made abundantly clear when, at the time of the elections after band reorganization, the old chief was elected chief of the Yellowknife "A" band. The continued importance of the opposite faction was also re-affirmed when the old sub-chief was elected one of the two band councillors. The second band councillor, although a much older man than the other two, appears to subscribe to the chief's attitude.

The chief and councillors have some difficulty in establishing themselves as meaningful figures in the village. Any failure on their part to recognize that their authority is limited to dealing with Euro-Canadians is quickly resented by the villagers. When an Indian is faced with a situation in which he sees himself as possibly being forced to do something that he does not want to do, he is almost certain to make some comment to the effect that he is his

own boss and no one can tell him what to do.[6]

Another factor that makes it difficult for the chief to assert his authority is the general tendency for visiting government officials who come to the village on government business connected with the welfare of the community to ignore the existence of the chief and councillors and deal directly with the Hudson's Bay Company manager or the federal school teacher. In most cases these visitors do not know who the chief is and it never occurs to them to inquire for him. As has been shown, the only government official who deals directly with the chief is the Agency Superintendent so that in a sense, the chief becomes a sort of puppet set up by the Superintendent. This situation becomes increasingly important as the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has more to do with the village. The chief is not a creation of Northern Affairs and therefore it does not occur to their representative to work through him. For example, in August, 1961 two officials from that Department arrived in the village to assess the feasibility of drilling wells. This was a program that would have been of definite interest to the chief, councillors and other villagers. The well drilling experts were met at the dock by the Hudson's Bay Company manager to whom they detailed the reason for their visit. Then they went about their business, completed the survey, got on the plane, and departed without anyone in the village knowing why they had come or who they were. Under these conditions it is not possible for elected village officials to feel very useful or for the villagers to develop much interest in programmes being planned for their welfare.

Relations between the chief and the Agency Superintendent tend to be complicated by the fact that neither understands the authority and limitations of authority of the other. The Superintendent expects that the chief will be helpful and cooperative at all times, that he will be available for consultation whenever the Superintendent comes to the village, and that he will speak for the community as a whole, working to spread and make understandable the ideas and directives of the Superintendent. When the chief adopts a truculent attitude, as he frequently does, and appears not to take his duties seriously, or attempts to further his own wishes instead of appearing interested in community affairs, the Superintendent may complain that the village is not well represented by its leader. The chief, on the other hand, feels that the Agency Superintendent should visit the village much more frequently

6. This strong individualistic attitude has been noted for other northern Athabascans (see Mason, 1946: 43; Honigmann, 1946: 128; 1949: 250-58; Helm, 1961: 174).

than he does because there are always things that go wrong and should be discussed. People are hungry, the fishing is bad and so on. He is convinced that the Superintendent has a lot of money and can remedy these situations if he chooses to do so. The duties of the Superintendent, his obligations to communities other than Snowdrift, and the limitations of his power are completely unknown.

As far as formal community organization is concerned, it almost never operates with regard to strictly local situations involving various individuals living within the community. The residents of the community presumably can be said to recognize their tie with the community next to their kinship ties and yet community members practically never join together to do any work for the community as a whole. There are no leaders who can organize activity for the general welfare and improvement of the village. The community, therefore, can be said to function as a unit only in the most minimal sense. Money is collected for an occasional feast, a dance or two may be organized during the course of a summer, band members are assembled for a band meeting, but this is as close as the community ever gets to functioning as a unit.

In spite of the fact that formal community organization is minimal, a sense of community can definitely be said to exist. There is a definite idea that "Snowdrift people" form a group distinct from the inhabitants of other villages. This concept of "Snowdrift people" is mentioned in many different contexts and definitely takes precedence over tribal ties.[7] One informant proudly told the author that the Department of Forestry was very pleased with the fire-fighting work of "Snowdrift people" in contrast to Indians from Fort Resolution, Rocher River and Yellowknife. The people from Snowdrift worked harder, were friendlier, etc. When the author mentioned to an informant that he had loaned money to various villagers, the informant assured him that he would definitely be repaid in full because "Snowdrift people" are reliable and always pay their debts. Sometimes it even seems that the villagers share the stereotyped ideas about Indians that they hear from Euro-Canadians and wish to except themselves from the stereotype. More probably, they are taking for granted that the author subscribes to the stereotype and are hastening to assure him that whatever might be the case in other places, "Snowdrift people" are different.

7. For discussion of a similar attitude among the Slave Indians at "Lynx Point", see Helm, 1961: 49, 55.

It might be said, therefore, that continuity of location and kinship ties, together with a developing community identity, could, in time, create a firm foundation for a formal community organization that would be meaningful in terms of the activities and interests of the whole community. It is to be doubted, however, whether a true community leadership can develop out of the existing community organization which is so closely tied to the benefits to be derived from the Indian Affairs Branch. Another factor that is sure to hamper community organization is the unwillingness of most people to take responsibility when dealing with others and to tell people what to do.

Along with this strongly developed individuality is the frequently expressed feeling that although "Snowdrift people" are better than others, there are "some people" who cannot be trusted. This general distrust of each other that the villagers seem to have is practically never formalized in specific accusations. There are always "some people" who will not pay back loans, and "some people" who are always looking for trouble. When no fish are found in a net when it is checked, the statement is always made that perhaps "someone" has stolen them even when there are no indications that this is actually the case. This mutual distrust between villagers is apt to come out particularly in their dealing with Euro-Canadians. Each person wants his dealing with a white man to be more or less secret. Thus any request for assistance, a loan or commercial transaction of any kind will always be conducted in private. It appears that a good many people are anxious to profit at the expense of other people and this is the case even between close kinsmen. It is important to stress the fact that this general distrust of each other is nearly always kept well below the surface and does not appear to inhibit daily interaction. Nevertheless, particularly as it concerns relations with the Agency Superintendent and other Euro-Canadians, this special manifestation of individualism is certain to be an inhibiting factor in the development of leadership and community organization.

Before leaving the general subject of formal community organization, it is necessary to say something about methods of dealing with anti-social acts and breaches of traditional rules of behavior. Crimes against the Canadian legal system are, of course, dealt with by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Representatives of this organization make periodic visits to the village but they seldom have legal matters to deal with. If people are caught making home brew, they are subject to legal action and persons so unwise as to appear intoxicated while a police constable is in the village may be charged with disturbing the peace. Aside from dealing with these minor offenses, the R.C.M.P. have little to do with the village as even moderately serious crimes seldom

occur. The community, in spite of its lack of formal organization, has ways of dealing with misdemeanors of a relatively serious nature and other anti-social acts are largely ignored. For example, the stealing of fish from nets is, apparently, a common practice and the offenders are well known to everyone. None, however, is willing to make an issue of this and since it does not occur too frequently, it never becomes a major issue. If a man thinks his net has been raided, he may express annoyance but will simply attempt to remedy the situation by checking it more frequently. Several informants reported that dog harnesses, traps and other materials left in the bush were sometimes stolen. Discovery that such property has been stolen will raise anger in the victim, but it appears that overt action is seldom taken, even when the culprit is known.

There is a general feeling in the community that it is somehow wrong to bring in outside legal authorities to take action against a culprit if the situation can be handled locally. The villagers do not like or trust the R.C.M.P. and do not want them in the village any more than is absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, villagers are not unwilling to threaten legal action and this frequently results in restitution. For example, it is common practice for a person to repair damaged property that results from drunkenness. Sometimes this is done freely and accompanied by an apology or by a joke about the culprit's condition at the time the damage was done, but more frequently the offended party has to threaten to call in the police before restitution is made.

Extra Community Relations

The Chipewyan Indians in the Great Slave Lake area have been exposed to Euro-Canadian culture since the middle of the eighteenth century when the first trading posts were established at the west end of the lake and on the upper Mackenzie River. Over this relatively long period of time, the Indians have become familiar with the technical aspects of European and Canadian culture but their world view has not widened greatly. As far as the people of Snowdrift are concerned, their most intensive extra-community relations are with the villages in the immediate region. Their knowledge of and interest in the greater Canadian culture of which they are a part is minimal in the extreme.

Perhaps one of the most obvious indications of the impact of the outside world on the people of Snowdrift is their possession of a moderately well developed concept of time. Nearly every home has an alarm clock and more than half the villagers own wrist watches, although some who own them, as well as many others, cannot tell time. There are

a number of activities going on in the village that reinforce the awareness of time. The store is open for a specific number of hours each day and closed for an hour at noon. School begins and ends at specific times and the freezer is open once a week at a definite hour in the late afternoon. There are times, however, when this developing appreciation for the concept of time is more apparent than real. The carpenter employing Indians on the construction of the federal school during the summer of 1960 found it difficult to get the men to report for work at a specific time. The author also experienced this difficulty with regard to the scheduling of interviews. Time figures very little in people's conversation but there is a calendar in every house and most people are always aware of the date. This is partly because they are anxious to observe Sundays.

The Snowdrift people are more mobile than their isolated location might suggest. Nearly everyone in the community has visited the other settlements on Great Slave Lake and a number have first hand information about the north shore of Lake Athabasca. Because of recent shifts in the settlement pattern as previously discussed, Snowdrift people have relatives and friends in such places as Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Fort Chipewyan, Fond-du-Lac, Fort Fitzgerald and Rocher River. Although frequent contact is not maintained with these communities, they are well known.

The only other Indian group of which the villagers have detailed knowledge or with whom they have any large scale first hand contact is the Dogribs who live at Fort Rae at the northern tip of the northwest arm of Great Slave Lake. In the past, large numbers of these Indians have stopped by the village on their way east to hunt caribou or have met villagers at Fort Reliance or other places where both groups were hunting. In addition, there are twelve Snowdrift residents who are at least half Dogrib, three of whom are family heads. These families are well integrated into the village social structure and there is nothing to distinguish them from other village residents. They all speak Chipewyan and one of them was elected a councillor after band reorganization which attests to his standing in the village. Aside from Dogrib contacts, knowledge of all other Indians is minimal. A few Snowdrift residents who have spent time in the government hospital at Edmonton have met other Indians from western Canada. Those who have worked at Hay River or Yellowknife have come in contact with Slaveys but the other Indian groups of the Mackenzie River are completely unknown. It is significant that in conversation, Snowdrift people normally refer to other Indian tribes by name and only Chipewyan are referred to as Indians; for example, "He is a Dogrib who married an Indian."

Yellowknife is the best known community to the people of Snowdrift, not only because it is the trading centre and the source of most planes that come to the village, but also because nearly everyone leaving the community to go to work, to school or to the hospital passes through there. When Snowdrift people are in Yellowknife, they usually are able to stay with relatives, but even when this is not possible, there are always many people whom they know.

Most Snowdrift men have an ambivalent attitude about Yellowknife and its attractions. The young men in particular see it as a more exciting, interesting place than Snowdrift where there are plenty of girls and the opportunity to earn money. During the summer, when there is little to do in Snowdrift, the men spend much time sitting in groups of three or four on the steps of the Hudson's Bay Company or around a boat that is being repaired and sooner or later the desultory conversation gets around to the subject of Yellowknife. In the early summer of 1961, a few families went to Yellowknife in the hope of securing employment but did not do well. The Agency Superintendent reported that he was able to obtain jobs for some of them but they usually did not stay employed long. Since they had no nets and could not fish, most them had a difficult summer until they returned to the village around the first of August. Yellowknife seems to have a certain fascination for the men but their conversation indicates that they are afraid to go there. They are afraid of the fact that there is too much to drink and they do not like the idea of living in a place where everything must be purchased at a store and a person is totally dependent upon obtaining and keeping a job. Reports brought back by men who have stayed there briefly are not reassuring. One informant, a single man, who accompanied a family to Yellowknife and expected to stay the entire summer said that when he obtained employment, he had in mind that he would be able to earn enough to purchase an outboard motor. However, he soon found that he was spending all his money in the bars. After working about two weeks, drinking every night, and failing to arrive at work on time in the mornings, he was fired. He spoke of the whole chain of events as though it had been inevitable. Others too expressed their distrust of life in the larger community stating that there were simply too many opportunities to get into trouble.

There is little knowledge in the village of the world outside the Great Slave Lake-Lake Athabasca area. No one subscribes to any newspaper or magazine and few could read well enough to profit from them even if they were available. Few people have any idea what Euro-Canadians in the urban centres to the south do to make a living and some even think

that they hunt, fish and trap much in the same way as Snowdrift people. Those who have spent time in the hospitals in Edmonton or Calgary know something of life in a large city but they do not seem to be able to convey an accurate picture to their friends and relatives in the village.

Ceremonies and Entertainment

The ceremonial life of the people of Snowdrift is limited and restricted almost entirely to activities which take place at the time when the treaty payments are made, usually in the late spring or in summer, and at Christmas. In many Athabascan villages, treaty day is a very important day and is frequently accompanied by an elaborate "tea dance" which consists of a traditional dance, accompanied usually by a feast of roast moose meat and tea. A tea dance is supposed to take place out of doors and the dancing is around a big fire where the moose meat is cooking. At Snowdrift, however, everything is on a much simpler scale and although there is usually a dance and a feast, there seems to be only a moderate amount of enthusiasm for both. In 1960, treaty payments were made early in July. The treaty party, consisting of the Agency Superintendent and his assistant, a R.C.M.P. constable and an x-ray party, arrived by plane from Yellowknife and payments were made the following day. That evening a form of tea dance was held in a large, abandoned tourist cabin in the village. People began to gather in the cabin shortly after midnight when the drums were brought in. The drums are circular hardwood frames covered with caribou skin and with strips of sinew running across the back. The instruments are held by the sinew and struck with a stick on the skin side. They must be heated frequently in order to loosen the skin covering and thereby achieve deeper, louder tones. Only about fifty people gathered in the cabin and three men drummed and sang while the others danced. The drums are hit hard with a simple two shorts followed by a pause. The singing is simply a wordless chant to a single melody. Each dance lasts about fifteen or twenty minutes with the dancers shuffling their feet in a clockwise circle. Many of those present were young people who appeared to have little real interest in the dance but there were also some very old people who danced with considerable enthusiasm and pleasure. This particular tea dance lasted until about 3:00 a.m., after which there was square dancing to a violin and guitar for another hour and a half. It was obvious that the people much prefer square dancing to the tea dance and it is not difficult to understand why. The former is much livelier and presents something of a challenge in terms of intricacies while the latter, being just simple movement in

a circle, probably becomes rather monotonous even to those who enjoy it the most. At any rate, it is certain that tea dances are not held very frequently in Snowdrift, the one described above being the only one held during the two summers that the author was in the village.

Frequently a feast is also held in connection with treaty day and in 1960, such a feast took place on the evening following the departure of the treaty party. The sub-chief went around to every house to collect money to buy food for the feast which was held in his house, one of the largest in the village. Most people gave only twenty-five or fifty cents. Some gave as much as a dollar or a dollar and a half. The Hudson's Bay Company manager contributed some rice and dried fruit as well as one hundred pounds of buffalo meat from the freezer. One man contributed a large portion of a recently killed caribou. A rifle was fired about 11 p.m. to signify that the feast was ready and gradually everyone began to gather at the sub-chief's house bringing eating utensils with them. The various families seated themselves around the wall of the ground floor of the house with the men along one wall and the women along the others. Strips of oil cloth were spread before the seated people and some young men, acting as waiters, began to distribute the food which had been prepared by a group of women earlier in the day. It took nearly an hour and a half to distribute the food and nothing was eaten during this period. In the upstairs of the house, all the children were gathered and their plates, which had been brought by their parents and filled, were handed up to them. Very small children accompanied their parents downstairs. When all the food had been served, the sub-chief spoke at great length about the Bible and particularly the miracle of the loaves and fishes. He also said that people should be industrious and always do what the chief says. Then a prayer was said by everyone present and they began to eat. The meal consisted of boiled buffalo and caribou meat, rice, macaroni dinner, raisins, stewed fruit, cereal, mashed potatoes, tea, bannock and jelly. In most cases, each person received more than he could eat, and the extra food was wrapped up to take home. After the dishes were cleared away and the cooking utensils washed by the young girls, a square dance was held which lasted until about 4:00 a.m.

Feasts are occasionally held at other times during the year, although it is probably very seldom that there are more than two or three a year. In the past they have frequently been held on New Year's Day and in August, 1961, a feast took place soon after the men returned from fire-fighting. It seems likely that they would occur more

frequently if the villagers could persuade the Hudson's Bay Company manager to contribute food.

Christmas activities in the village are minimal and are always organized by Euro-Canadians, not Indians. There is a high mass and low mass beginning at midnight, Christmas Eve, as well as a low mass Christmas morning. For Christmas, 1961, the school and mission together organized a distribution of old clothes that took place the day before Christmas, but it was poorly organized and poorly attended. There was also some candy sent in by the Agency Superintendent that was distributed to the children. In spite of the general absence of organized Christmas activities, the village is an exciting place just before the holiday. All the trappers return and trade their furs before the store closes for Christmas day. On Christmas Eve the store usually stays open until just before the church service begins, and there is much buying, particularly of clothes, toys and other durable goods. Christmas is eagerly looked forward to by everyone. Much home brew is made and generally many people are drunk after the midnight service and sleep most of Christmas day. Friends and relatives exchange presents and children are given money to buy candy, soft drinks and toys. There is possibly more money in the village at this time than at any other time of the year. The trappers have sold their furs and most have some cash in excess of their debt. There are many card games and the money changes hands rapidly. Some people like to decorate their homes for Christmas, putting up Christmas trees or simply decorating the house with colored crepe paper and balloons. Those with radios like to listen to Christmas music. It can be said, however, that the midnight church service and a good lively party afterwards are the main characteristics of a Snowdrift Christmas.

Although ceremonial life in Snowdrift may be restricted, other forms of entertainment do exist. The importance of visiting and summer picnics has already been stressed and something has also been said about the summer baseball games which are popular among young men. Snowdrift people are very musical and nearly every family in the village has at least one member who plays a musical instrument, usually a guitar or violin. Young men in particular may sit in the house for hours playing their guitars and singing western songs. On many nights groups of young men gather at one house to play the guitar and sing. A number of girls also play and they may join these groups occasionally. Older men are more apt to be the ones who play violins and they too may spend a musical evening once in a while. Western songs are particularly popular in the village along with sentimental love ballads. Four families own phonographs

and the store sells "hill-billy" records. A young guitar player may listen to a record many times until he has learned to play a particular tune on his instrument. The Yellowknife radio station also plays songs of this kind as do the stations in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan that can be received in the village.

Square dancing is a very popular form of recreation in the community and evening dances are frequently organized in the school. Many of the Indians are expert square dancers and there are several very good callers. Usually forty to fifty people of all ages gather for the dances which seldom begin before midnight and frequently last until four or five in the morning. Music is usually provided by three or four men playing guitars and violins. During the summer of 1960, commercial fishing boats would tie up in the village over the weekends and their crews would join in a dance held on Saturday night. Most of the fishermen are good dancers and a number play musical instruments. It seems likely that the Indians first learned the many complicated dance-steps from the fishermen.

Undoubtedly the most popular form of entertainment in the community is card playing and the Snowdrift people are inveterate gamblers. The favorite games are blackjack and gin rummy,and nearly every evening there will be at least one card game going on in the village. This is very much a mixed social activity with men and women playing together. People will drop in, join the game for a while depending on how much money they have and how long their luck holds. The players invariably sit on the floor and the cards are dealt onto a sheet or blanket spread in front of them. There are always a number of people watching the game, some of whom may eventually play and some who just come to watch and visit with those who are playing. On a hot summer evening it is common for the game to take place out of doors. In past years when commercial fishing boats frequented the area in large numbers, they would frequently put into the village and the crew members would join an all night card game. Informants stated that Snowdrift people were almost invariably successful in these games.

The amount of card playing depends on the amount of money in the village and it was noted that whenever family allowance cheques arrived, or right after treaty payments were made, or fire-fighting cheques received, there was hardly an adult to be seen around the village. The stakes which are played for also vary considerably. In an ordinary blackjack game, the stakes are twenty-five or fifty cents a hand and even a consistent winner has little chance of making more than five or ten dollars. However, if money is plentiful, the stakes may be much higher. After fire-

fighting cheques were received in August, 1961, the author witnessed one blackjack game in which the stakes were one dollar a hand. A single player won more than fifty dollars in about three hours. The highest stakes witnessed by the author during the period of field work was three dollars a hand at gin rummy. However, informants talked about almost legendary games played several years ago after fifteen men returned from road work in the vicinity of Fort Providence. One informant said that he had won $850 in two nights and had purchased a canoe and outboard motor. When adults have money for gambling, children often beg nickles and dimes from their parents and engage in pitching coins against the wall of the store or a house.

Although gambling is enjoyed by nearly everyone in the village, there are a few individuals who never play cards. These people do not feel that it is morally wrong to gamble, but they usually have experienced heavy losses in the past and are determined not to get in such a position again. One informant said that his passion for gambling was once so great that after losing all his money, he put up his rifle, his outboard motor and even his canoe and lost these. He was appalled at the extent of his losses and since that time has not trusted himself to play again.

In addition to card playing, the Snowdrift Indians also play a variant of the widely spread hand game which has been reported throughout most of northern North America, the Plains, and as far south as Arizona and California (Birket-Smith, 1929: II, 370-71). This game, as played by the Chipewyan, has been described by a number of early explorers, travelers, and anthropologists (Hearne, 1958: 215; Curtis, 1928: Vol. 18: 37-38; Mason, 1946: 34; Birket-Smith, 1930: 70; Munsterhjelm, 1953: 161). It seems likely, at least from Hearne's description, that the game was played prior to European contact, and if this is the case, it is certainly one of the last aboriginal material traits visible in the culture of the Snowdrift Chipewyan.

The hand game, which apparently is subject to many variations, will be described as it was played at Snowdrift during the summer of 1960.. Actually, the game was played only once during the author's stay in the village. Informants generally stated that they preferred cards and also that the drums, which are a necessary part of the game, were in poor condition. At this particular playing of the game, eight to sixteen men sat in two rows opposite each other on the floor. Each participant held a penny, match, cartridge or some other object in his hands. As the singing and drumming began, the men on one side hid their hands beneath a blanket, coat or cap and then brought their clenched fists

forward, crossing their arms in front of them. One member of the opposite side then attempted to guess which hand the object was in. If he pointed to the left hand, the players with the object in the left hand dropped out and he kept guessing until all players had withdrawn. Then it was the other side's turn to guess. A number of wooden stakes were used as counters, one for each man on both sides, and when the guessing side was wrong, the playing side received the number of counters that represented the players who were still in the game. When one side received all the counters, a game was considered played and there was a pay off and brief rest for the singers, drummers and participants. Before the start of each game, the various players made side bets with each other according to their individual desires. Each player can bet with any member of the opposite side and the items wagered range from matches, cartridges and cigarettes to varying amounts of money. The playing of the game was accompanied by rhythmic chanting, bodily contortions of all kinds on the part of the players, and frenzied drumming. The players, in particular, can work themselves into a highly emotional state, largely for the purpose of disconcerting the opposition. Apparently the game can be played by as many as twelve men on each side but when this many are playing, the player on the guessing side who is calling will choose four individuals at a time to guess against, or he may select any one or two at a time that he chooses.

The game witnessed by the author was played in the home of one of the villagers and began about 6:00 in the evening. There were numerous breaks but it continued until 5:00 the following morning. Many people gathered for the game with various individuals participating for a while and then dropping out to watch. Women do not seem to play. In past years when large numbers of Dogrib Indians came east to hunt caribou in Stark Lake or near Fort Reliance, they would frequently stop at the village and this was always the time of a great celebration. Informants said that there would be large numbers of Dogrib canoes drawn up on the beach and the hand game would be played nearly every night. There would also be frequent tea dances. It is unlikely that much money changes hands during the hand game and it seems to be played more for the excitement of the drumming and singing than for any other reason. This may be why it has not been able to compete with blackjack and gin rummy for the position of favorite village game.

Chapter VI

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURE

Formal Educational System

Snowdrift, with a population of approximately 150 individuals in 1961, including 38 children of school age, had no school until the fall of 1960. Prior to this time these children were taken out every fall by air to attend schools at Fort Resolution or Fort Smith. During the summer of 1959 a teachers' residence was constructed at the south-east end of the village and the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources completed construction of the school buildings and power plant during the summer of 1960. In the vicinity of the school buildings several government agencies have constructed small cabins for the use of their personnel when they are in the village; these agencies include the Department of Forestry, the Department of Fisheries and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Snowdrift school is one of the many federal day schools in the Northwest Territories that is operated by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Eight grades are taught and, by law, all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend. In the fall of 1961 there was an enrollment of thirty-eight children who were taught by a male teacher. School hours are from 9:00 until noon and from 1:00 until 4:00 in the afternoon with younger children sometimes being dismissed earlier. Depending upon the wishes of the teacher, the school building is available for a variety of village functions such as occasional films, dances and band meetings.

Prior to the construction of the school, Snowdrift children attended federal schools at Fort Smith and Fort Providence. In the fall, planes would pick up the children about the first of September and they were returned to the village toward the end of June for the summer months. Although village opinion was officially against sending the children away to school, and this opinion was frequently stated at band meetings in the presence of the Agency Superintendent, it was by no means unanimously held. It is true that many parents regretted having to send their very small children away from home for such long periods of time, but some families with older children have very little enthusiasm for the newly constructed Snowdrift school. With the children at home, a family is less mobile and the family head will worry more about the welfare of those he

leaves behind when he is away from the village trapping. More acculturated parents also feel that their children learn to read and write English much faster in the school at Fort Smith. In Snowdrift Chipewyan is spoken in all the homes all the time and this has a pronounced effect on the learning of English. The children themselves seem undecided as to whether they prefer school away from the village or at home. It is probably true that most of the younger ones prefer to live at home, although had the local school not been built, they probably would have looked forward to returning to the larger community. It seems likely that some children might be persuaded to continue their schooling beyond the compulsory age limit if they could be sure of going to school away from the village. One informant, aged seventeen, had been out of school for a year and decided that he would return for the 1960-61 school year. He was looking forward to the winter in Fort Smith but changed his mind about school when he learned that it would be taught locally. It seems certain that the children did benefit in many ways from attending the boarding schools. Not only did they profit from a higher level of education, but they were certain to receive proper food during the winter months. On the other hand, when the children were away from the village for ten months of the year, they had little opportunity to acquire knowledge about the country around Snowdrift in which they will have to make their living when they leave school. It was noted that children as old as fifteen or sixteen had little knowledge of the geography of the surrounding area and some had never hunted, trapped or even operated an outboard motor.

Although the new federal school at Snowdrift has a total enrollment of nearly forty students, there are seldom that many in school at any one time. However, the daily attendance usually does not fall much below thirty. Parents have a tendency to take children out of school for hunting or trapping trips but, in general, they cooperate with the teacher, frequently asking him which child in the family could miss school for a week or so with the least damage. The people are also cooperative in arranging to leave their children with other families when they take extended trips away from the village.

The curriculum followed in the Snowdrift school is largely a traditional one with emphasis on language, social studies, arithmetic, art and music. The daily program of the school is built around these subjects with whatever variations and additions the teacher desires. Of necessity,

the major instructional emphasis is placed on oral English and reading; much of the instruction is of a remedial nature and takes up a good part of the daily program. The teacher in residence during the period of field work complained that the children in the first and second grades were unable to read or write at the beginning of the school year. Many students have advanced to the upper grades without an adequate knowledge of English and this handicaps all their work. During the 1960-61 school year there were thirteen children in the first grade and because of the necessity of special work with these new students, it was decided that for the following academic year, all those children in the fifth grade and over would return to the federal boarding school at Fort Smith.

Generally speaking, adults in the village are non-committal about sending their children to school. They know that it is a good thing for the children to be able to read, write and speak English and there is, for the most part, little complaining about the acknowledged fact that the child's usefulness in the family is impaired by school attendance. Most older adults have very little conception of what school actually is and they tend to more or less accept it as something thrust upon them by the outside world. Some families feel that their children should be working and helping with chores. Older men, particularly, feel that they need their sons to help with trapping. They feel that it is all right for girls to go to school as there is nothing much for them to do in the village and they would probably be better off in school. Boys, on the other hand, must grow up to be trappers and that is something that they cannot learn in school.

In 1958 the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources opened a residential high school and technical school in Yellowknife. This institution has attracted considerable interest all over Canada because it is the only federal high school in the Northwest Territories and one of the few boarding schools where Eskimos and Indians live and attend classes together. As yet, few Snowdrift residents have attended the Sir John Franklin school. None have had the academic requirements to enter the high school but three boys from the village are attending the trade school that is operated in conjunction with the high school. This type of education appeals particularly to boys over sixteen and several additional Snowdrift youths who would like to enroll in the course have been prevented from doing so by the unwillingness of their parents to spare them from the normal family duties. It seems likely that as more Snowdrift children complete the eighth grade, either in the village or at

the Fort Smith school, there will be an increasing tendency for them to continue their education in Yellowknife. This will be true particularly if the upper grades continue to be taught in Fort Smith rather than in the village. At the Fort Smith school the older children are away from village influences and subject instead to pressures to continue their education. It is safe to assume that good students at Fort Smith will be strongly urged to continue on to high school and the school authorities will make it easy for them to do so. Since the children themselves will be spending only the summer months at home and will have become accustomed to life in more urban surroundings, they should be able to withstand whatever pressures are brought to bear by their families to keep them in the village after they complete the compulsory years of education. It is doubtful whether those who do attend the high school or the trade school in Yellowknife will return to the village after they have completed their training since it is unlikely that there will be opportunities for them to make a living at the trades they have learned.

Health, Sickness and Cures

The Chipewyan Indians have consistently suffered from the effects of European-introduced diseases since their initial contacts in the early eighteenth century. A smallpox epidemic in 1781 is said to have killed nearly 90% of the Chipewyan and worked similar havoc among other peoples in the Lake Athabasca area (Hearne, 1958: 115). The Cree, in particular, were greatly reduced in number and the remaining Chipewyan in the area were content to confine their operations largely to the neighborhood of the post at Fort Chipewyan when it was constructed in 1788 (Godsell, 1938: 251; Petitot, 1885: 50). Diseases accompanied by starvation continued to reduce the Indian population of the Great Slave Lake-Lake Athabasca region throughout the historic period, and as late as 1928 an attack of influenza, followed by pneumonia, killed forty-six people out of a total population of 901 in the parish of Fort Resolution which at that time included Yellowknife and a number of other outlying settlements to the east and west. It is reported that 20% of the population of Great Slave Lake communities died during this epidemic and the loss would probably have been much greater had it not been for the efforts of the Catholic priests and sisters in the hospital at Fort Resolution (Bell, 1929: 12-13).

Relatively little is known about the traditional curing practices of the Chipewyan. Shamanistic practices are described in some detail by Hearne (1958: 123-26) and to a lesser extent by Franklin (1824: Vol. 1: 246), but later

observers fail to add anything significant to the observations made by these explorers. Hearne also documents the abandonment of the sick and infirm while an Indian group is traveling (Hearne, 1958: 131) and Captain Back tells of old people who made their way to Fort Reliance after having been abandoned to die because of their infirmities (Back, 1836: 193-94). Shamans have long ceased to be active, at least among the Snowdrift Chipewyan, and contemporary attitudes toward illness and its treatment appear to have developed largely as a result of contact with Euro-Canadian medical practitioners and government organizations.

The health needs of the village today are the concern of the Indian and Northern Health Services, a branch of the Department of Health and Welfare. A nurse, stationed in Yellowknife, makes periodic visits to the community and is sometimes accompanied by a doctor from the hospital at Fort Rae. Both are scheduled to visit the village every three months but they usually come oftener. The doctor will come out any time his services are specifically requested while the nurse, who is expected to visit the community more frequently, often accompanies the Agency Superintendent, the cost of air transportation being shared by the two government departments. The Department of Health and Welfare attempts, whenever possible, to have a lay dispenser in the various villages under its jurisdiction who will administer emergency medical attention and distribute the medical supplies that are kept in the village. A lay dispenser is appointed after an interview and the only qualifications necessary appear to be a willingness to do the work and an interest in the welfare of the people. Very often it is the wife of the Hudson's Bay Company manager or the manager himself. There is a small stipend of about $10 per month. There was no lay dispenser at Snowdrift in 1961 but the manager acted as the distributor of medical supplies that are kept in the store. If medication is to be dispensed to individuals from the village supply, the nurse will inform the manager who then gives the required amount to the person for whom the medicine has been prescribed. The nurse is responsible for replenishing the medical supplies in the village. The manager, although he may not be dignified with the title of lay dispenser, is still the person to whom all villagers must go when they are sick or injure themselves. He must prescribe medication solely on the basis of his own untrained observations and with the aid of a first aid and home treatment manual. He has no judgement but his own to tell him whether a case is serious enough so that the nurse in Yellowknife should be notified by telegram.

The nurse and doctor combine their visits to the community on some occasions but nearly always in connection with the visit of the x-ray party to the village. This takes place once a year, usually in the summer at the time when the treaty payments are made, a good time for the x-ray party to visit the village because all the people are there. In 1960, most of the villagers took advantage of the opportunity to be x-rayed, although a few did not bother; nearly everyone seems to realize the value of being x-rayed. In 1961, however, the treaty day was in April and the x-ray party came in early July. As a result, some villagers were away and could not be x-rayed. In both years, the members of the x-ray party seemed to be much more interested in getting in and out of the village than in x-raying the people. In 1961 they came a week in advance of the well-advertised date and neglected to bring the data cards which showed who had been x-rayed the previous year and gave other pertinent information. In addition to the x-ray for tuberculosis, nearly everyone in the village has had polio shots and immunization against diphtheria and whooping cough. Some have had smallpox vaccinations and a few have had the TABT (tetanus, paratyphoid A and B, and typhoid) shots. When Snowdrift residents have to go to the hospital they are sent either to Fort Rae, Fort Smith or Yellowknife, depending on which hospital has the room to accept them. If a person has tuberculosis, he is sent out to the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton as soon as possible.

The Snowdrift people seem to have no theories, magical or otherwise, to account for illness; it is something that is simply accepted. Nevertheless, they talk a lot about their illnesses and tend to pamper themselves when they are sick. The author found that whenever someone had even the slightest cold, it was a simple matter to elicit detailed information about it and those with any kind of lingering ailment were always ready to discuss their symptoms. It would probably not be fair to say that the people of Snowdrift are hypochondriacs, but the fact remains that they are very much aware of all kinds of ailments and never exert themselves needlessly if they think they are ill. A man who had spent two years in the Edmonton hospital because of tuberculosis never did any work, even after he had been back home for more than five months. His wife did all the hauling of water and cutting of wood, and also carried groceries from the store. In spite of this interest in illness and willingness to discuss symptoms, there is no great rush to see the doctor or nurse when either is in the village. The people are generally shy and their inability to express themselves in English also inhibits their dealings with medical personnel. Thus if the doctor or nurse simply goes directly to the school or the Hudson's Bay Company, as is

usually the case, and wait for sick people to appear, it is unlikely that they will treat very many patients. Instead, visits by medical personnel would be much more effective if every house in the village was visited and the doctor or nurse took the time to discuss problems of health and illness with the people in their homes. Toward the end of August, 1960, a new nurse took over the office at Yellowknife and his visits to Snowdrift were remarkable for the fact that every effort was made to seek out people who were ill and to talk over their symptoms with them. As a result, the people feel that for the first time they are dealing with a medical representative who is really interested in them and their dealings with him are more pleasant and profitable in every way. The doctor or nurse with an authoritarian manner is apt to defeat the purpose of visits to the village by accomplishing little and, as a result, developing an overly critical attitude toward the Indians and their willingness to accept medical treatment and advice.

Although the methods and attitudes of medical personnel can have a great deal to do with the willingness of Snowdrift people to seek treatment and follow advice, there are certain basic attitudes toward modern medicine and its practitioners that inhibit the work of the Department of Health and Welfare. People are willing to follow some advice but are not always very persevering in carrying out the doctor's or nurse's suggestions. The Indians have a great deal of faith in the ability of pills to cure ailments but they have very little patience with such remedies as require some effort on their part such as the applying of hot compresses, soaking, bed rest, changing of bandages etc. If medicine does not taste good, it will simply be put on a shelf and never taken. If children do not wish to take medicines, they are usually not forced to do so. There are also a number of people who need to consult the doctor or nurse but always make themselves scarce when medical assistance is available. These people are usually afraid of being hurt or of having to take some medicine that they will not like. Again, it is probably true that authoritarian behavior on the part of medical personnel in the past is at least partly responsible for attitudes of this kind. It should be emphasized in this connection that home remedies do not play an important part in the unwillingness of Snowdrift people to follow medical advice.

During the summer of 1961, a dentist from Fort Smith visited the village, the first such visit ever made to Snowdrift. He set up his equipment in the teacher's residence but had no time to do anything but pull teeth. He hoped to be able to return at a later date to do preventive dentistry, particularly on school children. Most people were very glad to see him but several mentioned that although

they knew that their teeth were in bad shape, they were afraid to have them pulled. The nurse will also occasionally pull teeth, particularly if a person is in considerable pain. However, he has neither the time nor the training to perform regular dental services. Regular dental care is badly needed at Snowdrift.

It does not seem as though the villagers have any great fear of going to the hospital. Those who have been in the Charles Camsell Hospital at Edmonton or in the hospitals at Fort Rae, Yellowknife or Fort Smith speak as though they had enjoyed their stay and meeting people from other places. During the summer of 1960 there were five individuals in hospital with tuberculosis but by the middle of 1961, all had returned to the village. Only one of these was a family head and he had been away from the village for nearly two years. The Indian Affairs Branch, as previously noted, provides a ration issue for the families of those individuals who are hospitalized. This helps to relieve the anxiety of family heads who are separated from their families for extended periods of time. After a tuberculosis patient returns to the village, a further ration issue is provided for a number of months until he feels equal to resuming normal village subsistence activities.

So far, relatively few family heads have been hospitalized and those young people who have gone have looked upon their period of hospitalization as something of a lark. Most villagers are fully convinced that tuberculosis is a terrible thing which should be treated as soon as possible, and that this can only be done by going to the hospital and doing what the doctors say. When informing people that their x-rays indicate a stay in the hospital is necessary, the nurse or doctor always stresses how fortunate it is that the disease was discovered early so that treatment can begin and others will not be infected. This approach usually works with most people and is particularly successful with those individuals who are experiencing no symptoms at the time their illness is diagnosed. Several informants, who spent periods up to two years in the Charles Camsell Hospital, never tire of talking about the place and the people they met there.

In concluding this section on health and illness, some brief reference should be made to village sanitation and general health practices. This is something that has been of considerable concern to visiting medical personnel and some progress has been made in recent years, particularly with regard to waste disposal and, as previously mentioned,

baby care. For the twenty-six occupied dwellings in the village there are twelve outhouses, usually located some fifty to seventy-five yards behind the houses. While it is possible that several dwelling units use the same outhouses, it is nevertheless true that many people perform their toilet functions in the bushes near the houses. However, the number of outhouses has grown, according to the nurse, from only four to the present total in a year's time. This improvement has been largely in response to an appeal on the part of the nurse and the doctor. As far as general health conditions are concerned, the situation at Snowdrift is not bad. The people have enough to eat and the fact that fish are always available means that the villagers do not suffer so much from seasonal scarcities of meat. From a nutritional point of view the diet is not particularly good but individuals suffering from malnutrition are practically unknown. Present health programmes do not stress education and as a result the people are largely ignorant concerning hygiene nor do they fully understand the relationship between dirt and disease. An effective programme of health education will probably need to be instituted before health improvement on a large scale takes place.

Smoking and Drinking

In the village tobacco is used in five forms; cigarettes, cigars, snuff, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco. By far the majority of people smoke cigarettes and nearly all young and middle aged individuals do so. The store disposes of large quantities of ready-made cigarettes and also sells paper and cigarette tobacco. People much prefer ready-mades but they are more expensive and cannot always be afforded. A number of middle aged men use snuff, but no one under the age of forty does so and, to the best of the author's knowledge, women do not use it. Cigars are a sort of novelty. The store orders a few boxes each year and this number is usually more than sufficient. A few old men and women chew tobacco and, in 1961, one middle aged man and two old men smoked pipes, as did three elderly women. Pipe smoking and chewing are definitely for old people.

With the exception of no more than five or six individuals, everyone in the community over the age of sixteen smokes. The average cigarette smoker smokes at least one pack a day and many smoke two when they have the money. Youngsters of thirteen or fourteen smoke occasionally, particularly when cigarettes are offered to them, but they usually are not regular smokers, possibly because they do not often have money to buy cigarettes and when they do, the lure of candy

bars and soda pop is too great. The author never heard any comments about the presumed evils of smoking for children nor did he hear regrets expressed by smokers that they had acquired the habit. One man who had stopped smoking spoke of the amount of money he had saved since giving up tobacco.

Drinking has presumably been an important aspect of the Chipewyan culture pattern ever since initial contact with Europeans. Early observers have less to say on this subject than might be expected, but Franklin's comments are sufficient to indicate the nature of the situation:

> At the opening of the water in spring, the Indians resort to the establishments to settle their accounts with the traders, and to procure the necessaries they require for the summer. This meeting is generally a scene of much riot and confusion as the hunters receive such quantities of spirits as to keep them in a state of intoxication for several days. (Franklin, 1824: Vol. 1: 241-42).

Today the drinking pattern among the Snowdrift Chipewyan is complex and has come to assume such an important place in the total village culture that it must be dealt with in some detail.[8]

For the most part, the people of Snowdrift drink a mild alcoholic beverage that is home brewed from raisins, sugar, yeast and water. These are the basic ingredients, but there are some variations. Beans, rice and rolled oats are occasionally added although no one seems to know just how these items can be said to improve a brew. Although raisin brew is most commonly made, canned tomatoes are sometimes substituted and any kind of fruit can be used. Dried apricots and prunes are frequently substituted for raisins and fresh raspberries, which grow in abundance around the village, may be substituted in the later part of summer when they are ripe. The number of yeast packages used will vary according to the availability of this item. One package is sufficient for the ordinary batch of brew, but two or three are thought to increase the strength and therefore make a better drink. In past years, the Hudson's Bay Company manager, usually at the suggestion of the chief, has attempted to curtail the making of home brew by withdrawing the yeast supply from the store shelves or rationing it,

8. The drinking pattern among other groups of northern Athabascan Indians is discussed by Helm, 1961: 20-21; Helm and Lurie, 1961: 102-107; Honigmann, 1946: 111; 1949 107-108 and Honigmann and Honigmann, 1945.

one package to a customer. This is seldom effective since people coming from Yellowknife bring supplies of yeast and various individuals are successful in begging it from the manager.

Raisin brew, as manufactured at Snowdrift, is usually made by the following process. A large pail containing approximately three gallons of water and two pounds of raisins is placed over an open fire. The water is brought to a boil and the raisins are cooked for about one half hour. Sugar and any additional ingredients are then added and the mixture stirred until the sugar is dissolved. Then the water is allowed to cool slightly before the yeast is added. Once it is certain that the yeast is beginning to act, the pail is covered tightly and wrapped securely in blankets or clothes to keep it warm during the time that the yeast is working. A batch of brew is usually allowed to stand for about twenty-four hours, after which it is considered suitable for drinking. At this time the yeast is still working and some brewers prefer to let their concoctions stand for three or four days. However, it was noted that even those who were most determined to allow their brew to age for several days were seldom able to withstand the temptation to drink it at the end of twenty-four hours.

Although by far the greatest amount of alcoholic beverage consumed by the Indians of Snowdrift is manufactured locally, the people invariably express a preference for beer and commercial liquor. This, of course, is not readily obtainable in the village, although some Indians will make arrangements with the pilots of the various planes that come to the community to bring a bottle of rum or whiskey from the liquor store in Yellowknife. Understandably, however, the pilots are usually unwilling to perform this service unless they are paid in advance. Overproof rum is much preferred by the Indians and, indeed, they are to a large extent unfamiliar with other kinds of liquor. Since 1959 Indians have been able to purchase liquor at liquor stores in the Northwest Territories, and some Snowdrift people have permits which they use when in Yellowknife. Many people are still afraid that they will endanger their position as treaty Indians if they purchase liquor. At times when brew consumption in the village is high but the supply is temporarily low, some men will attempt to prolong a spree by drinking anything that contains some alcohol. Under this heading it is necessary to list perfume, vanilla extract and Listerine as items that are frequently purchased for direct internal consumption.

The Snowdrift Indians drink home brew at almost any time and for most individuals, there is no need of a special occasion to get a brew party started. It seems to be the case that there is much heavier drinking during the summer months than in winter, but this is probably because most batches of home brew are made outdoors and winter weather is simply not conducive to brew making. Also summer is a time of relative inactivity and there is much more time for drinking and the elaborate preparations that go with it. In winter the men are busy trapping and hunting and, as a result, heavy drinking is likely to be confined to special holidays such as Christmas and New Year when everyone is in the village and in a holiday mood. During the summer months, and at other times of the year as well, certain occasions may give rise to general brew making on the part of the villagers. After treaty payments are made, most people have some money and many batches of brew are usually set. If a dance is going to be held at the school, a number of young men will be sure that they attend in a semi-intoxicated condition. Caribou hunters returning from Fort Reliance in the early fall may consider this a worthy occasion for celebration. The fact is, however, that no special occasion is needed for a drinking party. One informant, typical of many younger men, makes brew as often as he can afford to because, as he puts it, "there is no beer parlour in town."

It is probably a valid generalization that nearly all Snowdrift adult males drink home brew and most of them become intoxicated at least once a month or oftener. Despite frequent and gross inebriety, alcoholism, in the sense of addiction, does not occur. Drinking takes place only within a social context; solitary drinking is completely unknown and is inconceivable to the Snowdrift Indians. Observed drinking groups varied in size from two to eight and the vast majority of them consisted of men only. Women do drink occasionally, particularly with their husbands or other male relatives, but a mixed drinking party is very rare. Most women claim to be afraid of the men when they are drinking and usually leave the house with their small children when a serious drinking party is in progress. Kinship does not seem to figure in any consistent manner or significant degree in the composition of such parties. Nearly all those men who make brew frequently are relatively young, mostly between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. Few, if any, young men begin drinking before they are twenty. One informant, aged sixteen, claimed that he had never tasted brew although he once had managed to become intoxicated on five bottles of Listerine purchased at the store. Young boys and girls frequently stand around and watch during a drinking party but they are practically never invited to join. In no case were women observed to make brew themselves but may be invited to join

a party by the men. The chief once told the author that although the R.C.M.P. had informed him that it was illegal to make home brew, he had nevertheless always made it. However, when he was elected chief he stopped making brew because he was afraid that his enemies would use that against him. Just the same, he is always glad to drink brew when it is made by others and occasionally he finances the making of a batch.

The behavioral patterns associated with drinking are relatively formalized, so much so that it is possible to speak of a definite drinking ritual. Two or three individuals will decide to make a batch of home brew and will pool their financial resources for the purpose of buying the ingredients for its manufacture. The proceedings are nearly always carried out in secret for reasons that are not always clear. One good reason for secrecy is that when many people know that a batch is being made, they will come around to ask for a drink of the finished product. Also, it is not uncommon for a batch of brew to be stolen before the makers have a chance to drink it. In fact, it is considered rather of a challenge to steal someone's brew. It is a legitimate way of scoring off one's friends and neighbors and is generally taken in the spirit of good fun. The victim simply increases his caution the next time he makes a batch. However it must be admitted that much of the secrecy that surrounds the making of home brew is for no purpose at all and is simply part of the ritual.

Sometimes home brew is made in the house, but more frequently, at least in summer, it is made in the bush in back of the village or even at some distance from the community. When the batch is about twenty-four hours old, it may be brought to the house of one of the drinkers or it may be consumed in the bush where there will be no danger of having to share it with others. The participants in a drinking party have a single cup which is dipped into the brew pail by each drinker in turn. The cup is drained in one gulp and passed on to the next person who does the same. Although most people claim to enjoy the taste of brew, the real purpose of drinking is to get drunk and since raisin brew is not particularly strong, it is necessary to consume a large quantity rapidly if one wishes to become intoxicated. Therefore, the Indians look with derision on anyone who consumes his cup of brew slowly in small sips. When the author exhibited this kind of drinking behavior, he was admonished not to drink like a white man. Occasionally some of the brew will be put in bottles and hidden before the drinking party begins. Then what remains in the pail can be shared with visitors who drop in and when the pail is empty, the visitors will leave, and the bottles will be brought out.

It is seldom the case that brew is made without some being bottled in this way. After a certain amount has been drunk, the normal procedure is for the drinkers, usually in a state of semi-intoxication by this time, to "walk around" the village visiting the other houses and drinking from the bottles as they go. They may or may not offer a drink to others, but walking around is definitely part of the drinking ritual and no one would think of becoming intoxicated and staying at home. The drinkers will usually continue to visit up to the point where they collapse and pass out. An intoxicated person may not be welcomed enthusiastically in other houses, but he is always admitted and looked on with kindly toleration. People are amused by his actions and feel friendly toward him. They will always accept a drink from his bottle if it is offered, and may join him in his wanderings around the village.

Sometimes it happens that a batch of brew may run out before the drinkers are thoroughly intoxicated and this always sets off a frenzied search for something more to drink. It is under these circumstances that most of the Listerine, perfume and vanilla extract is consumed. If a frustrated drinker should happen upon someone who has some brew, he will often be willing to pay a considerable amount for it. Several informants mentioned paying as much as $2.00 a pint for brew in order to prolong a drinking party.

Drinking is the time for easy social intercourse. There is usually a low undercurrent of nondescript small talk; conversation about trapping, employment opportunites, a few anecdotes, or simply recounting recent events in the community. The general pattern of individual behavioral changes in inebriation is fairly standard. There is an appreciable increase in sociability in the early stages. The Indians, who are normally taciturn and reserved, become more voluble. Their normal attitude of relative indifference to the world around them is replaced by a self-confidence which is manifested in positive and sometimes even dogmatic expressions of opinion. The amount of English spoken increases with the level of intoxication. Even if no Euro-Canadians are present, the men may speak English among themselves when they are drunk. Conversation, particularly among young men, has increasingly to do with sex. There is much general talk about sex but specific sexual experiences are rarely alluded to. As the drinkers begin to get really intoxicated, there is renewed exhilaration and the conversation becomes boisterous. Men stagger out of the house to urinate, and sometimes to vomit, in the bushes and then return to the festivities. As he imbibes more brew, the individual becomes more voluble but now his attitude becomes demanding and frequently truculent. At this point

the drinkers may begin their wanderings around the village. The period of "feeling good" has now passed and the drinkers are thoroughly intoxicated. Fights frequently occur and some of the young men may be on the prowl looking for women.

The fights that occur are seldom very serious. Usually both combatants are so intoxicated that they do little more than take wild swings at one another. It is rare for one person who is intoxicated to pick a quarrel with another who has not been drinking but occasionally such fights do occur. People seldom attempt to break up a drunken fight; they usually prefer to stand around and await the outcome. As previously mentioned, women are frightened of the men when they are drinking, and other men generally consider a drunken fight to have a certain entertainment value. A few fights do become serious and occasionally the Hudson's Bay Company manager or the school teacher threaten to call in the R.C.M.P. if someone receives a particularly bad beating. During the winter of 1960, one young man was beaten so badly that the manager thought some instrument had been used. The police investigated but no arrests were made.

There does not seem to be any faction in the village, or indeed any individuals, who disapprove strongly of drinking. The ideal drinker, according to village opinion, is the person who drinks just enough to "feel good" and have a good time. Everybody deplores fighting and some of the older people occasionally mention the fact that young men drink too much and are always mean and difficult to get along with when they are drinking. It is also frequently the case that those who drink the most and are notorious for their ability to get into fights while intoxicated, are the first to deplore those who drink to excess and fight. They may also say that though they never start trouble themselves, they are always ready for it when it comes.

The data on Snowdrift drinking supplement those from other primitive societies which indicate that alcoholism is not a function of the alcohol concentration of the beverages used, or of the quantities imbibed. The Indians drink large quantities of a beverage that is low in alcoholic content. They can sometimes stay drunk for long periods at a time and also occasionally begin to show signs of intoxication when a relatively small amount of brew has been consumed. It thus appears that intoxication may be a psychological state as well as one directly related to the consumption of the brew. Such pseudo-intoxication suggests that a definite set of expectations is involved in the Indians definition of a drinking situation (James, 1961: 741).

There is some indication that chronic drinking in Yellowknife is directly connected to the poor employment record of Snowdrift people who go there. It would seem also that alcohol acts to permit the ventilation of anxieties of various kinds and if this is indeed the case, it would illustrate the connection noted by Horton between excessive drinking and culturally induced anxieties (1945: 161).

Gossip, Judgements and Attitudes

Contrary to the situation in many small communities, gossip does not seem to be a potent force in Snowdrift. Although people tend to be distrustful toward their neighbors and relatives, it is rare to hear derogatory comments about others as a part of ordinary conversation. Those few people who repeat malicious information about one another will invariably behave as friends when they meet in the store or in each other's homes. Because the village is small and face to face contacts between all residents are frequent, Snowdrift people fully recognize the necessity of getting along together and preserving the social equilibrium.

Village opinion condemns gossip but, of course, a certain amount does occur and the favorite subjects for such gossip as does exist are gambling, drinking, and begging. However, comments on these subjects are mostly confined to individuals who do not do any of these things, a very small number indeed. Other forms of gossip concern the availability of certain women and the acuity of certain trades or sales. It should be emphasized, however, that the whole idea of being critical of someone's behavior or gossiping runs counter to one of the cherished attitudes of the Snowdrift Indians, namely their general condemnation of people who tell them what to do. Above all, the Indians do not like a person who is bossy and this can be extended to include a dislike of people who tell them how to live their lives or are publicly critical about the lives that certain people are leading.

Aside from these negative factors, it is difficult to determine what the ideal attitudes of Indian character are from the standpoint of the villagers. Informants questioned on the subject invariably referred to one or two specific individuals whom they considered to be leading worthwhile lives. These individuals, who are frequently referred to as the only "good guys" in the community, are presumably given credit for the fact that they are hard workers, always do the best they can for their families, do not drink a great deal and do not gamble. It is certainly true that there are not many individuals like this in the

village, particularly with regard to the latter two requirements. These qualities should be combined with a toleration for the weaknesses of others and a willingness to live and let live at all times.

The general Snowdrift reaction to white people is one of curiosity and a guarded and reserved type of friendliness. This attitude toward Euro-Canadians is colored by the fact that most contact involves superior-subordinate relationship in which the Indian must please the Euro-Canadian in order to obtain a job, material for the construction of a house, rations, transportation etc. Thus the Indian can seldom approach a Euro-Canadian without exhibiting some of the anxieties inherent in a situation of this kind. This fact was emphasized by relations between the author and his informants who, to some extent, became more relaxed and friendly when they realized that they had nothing to gain or lose by associating with him. On numerous occasions informants told the author that he was well liked in the village and it was easy to see that this attitude was not due to any specific personality traits, but rather to the fact that the author had no largess to distribute and was not in any position of authority. On the other hand, as previously indicated, the Indians are well aware of the stereotypic image which most Euro-Canadians with whom they come in contact have of them. Reaction against this stereotype frequently comes to the surface under the influence of alcohol. One illustration will perhaps be sufficient to document this point. On Christmas morning, 1961, an Indian woman, greatly intoxicated, came to visit the author in his cabin. She particularly wanted him to know that although she was not a white person, she really was just like one. She keeps herself, her clothes and house clean and takes good care of her husband. She commented on the fact that her husband would not eat fish three times a day like the rest of the Snowdrift people. Three different meals must be prepared for him each day. "He is a Cree and that is almost like a white man." She also emphasized that she does not chase around after men like other Snowdrift women. Her entire conversation was meant to indicate that she was different from other Snowdrift people and more like a white woman. The significant point here is that this intoxicated woman was insisting that culturally she was equal to Euro-Canadians. By doing this she was, as James has pointed out for the Wisconsin Ojibwa, acknowledging the validity of the Euro-Canadian stereotypic image of Indian behavior (James, 1961: 736-37). This submerged desire to conform to the expectations of Euro-Canadian culture seems to be characteristic of many Snowdrift people and forms one feature of a "complex self-image in which conflict and ambivalence are especially evident" (James, 1961: 737).

Chapter VII

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND CONCEPTS

Information concerning the aboriginal religious life of the Chipewyan Indians is very limited and confined almost entirely to random comments in the writings of early explorers. It would appear as though the religious beliefs of these people were never elaborately developed and had largely disappeared before the advent of serious ethnographic work in the area. It was certainly true that attempts to obtain information about this aspect of aboriginal culture from the Indians of Snowdrift was almost totally unsuccessful.

As nearly as can be determined, aboriginal Chipewyan religious beliefs were comprehended mainly in terms of shamanistic practices as well as numerous hunting or fishing charms and taboos. The people recognized no deities, but believed that both men and animals had a soul. Simply by thought alone, the soul could bring happiness or misfortune to another person. At death the soul was thought to leave the body and to appear as a ghost with the power to harm and help the living (Birket-Smith, 1930: 79). The boundary between man and animals appears to have been very indefinite. In the legends collected by Birket-Smith (1930), Goddard (1912), and Lowie (1912) animals often appear as men and most of the stories are about animals and how they came to acquire their various qualities. In fact, probably the most common theme in these stories concerns man's friendly, kin-like relationship to animals whom, by tradition, he is forced to kill. There is anxiety over this forced hostility and a special attempt is made not to offend the souls of game (Cohen and VanStone, n.d.). Among all the animal souls, that of the black bear and the beaver are the most important (Birket-Smith, 1930: 80).

The use of charms to insure success in subsistence activities was apparently of particular importance. Charms made from bird's bills and feet were frequently tied on fish nets to bring success to the net. The first fish of any species that was caught in a new net was broiled whole on a fire, after which the flesh was removed and the bones laid on the fire and burned. This was also to insure the success of the new net. Charms were frequently concealed under the bait when fishing was done with hooks (Hearne, 1958: 211-212). Every man carried a small leather bag containing his own personal charms. In this bag were things which were considered sacred to the owner and which included such items as bits of beaver tail and fat, otter's teeth, muskrat intestines and tails, squirrel testicles etc. Frequently it was these items that were used as bait on hooks or tied to nets. This sacred bag

of charms could not be touched by a woman or it would lose its power (Hearne, 1958: 112; Jenness, 1956: 17-18).

Another manner in which the aboriginal Chipewyan sought to avoid the dangers of life was by observing a number of taboos. These had to do with hunting, war, and the various phases of life (Birket-Smith, 1930: 82). Many of these were apparently concerned with appeasing the souls of the dead and Hearne gives a good account of the observance of these kinds of taboos after the massacre of the Eskimos by the Chipewyan at Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River (Hearne, 1958: 133). Although detailed information is lacking, the importance of taboos and superstitions is amply attested to in the literature and appears to have exerted considerable influence on the lives of the Indians. George Simpson reports as follows:

> It is an unfortunate characteristic of the Chipewyans that if unsuccessful for any length of time in the early part of the season, their superstitions gain such an ascendancy over them, and they become so fully impressed with the idea that some evil genius haunts them, that they give themselves up entirely to despair; they become careless, neglect their hunting, lay dormant in their encampments for weeks together, while a morsel of leather or babiche remains to keep them in existence, at length to escape the miseries of famine, they murder their families and perish without a single exertion (Simpson, 1938: 197).

Certain magical beliefs of a religious or quasi-religious nature have survived into recent times and can be said to be an important and significant feature of the belief system of the Snowdrift Chipewyan. These are largely apart from the external religious system which the people have adopted, but they are nontheless firmly held. One older informant told the author that when traveling during the winter he never failed to throw a handful of tea on the snow at the beginning of each day's journey. This was done to keep the wind from blowing and also to keep the informant from becoming lost. It was frequently noted that before making a long boat trip, when calm weather is greatly desired, a knife or other piece of metal is thrown into the lake. This is spoken of as being an offering to the water to remain calm.

There is also much discussion among the Snowdrift Indians concerning so-called "bush-men" who are believed to roam the bush during the summer months and frequently

come close to the village. They are sometimes used as a device to frighten children and to keep them from wandering. However, adults believe in them too and several people told the author of encounters with "bush men". Usually they are seen from a distance and disappear before the Indian can get a good look at them. One informant reported that he had seen the trail of a "bush man" on the hill in back of the village and after this, parents were extremely reluctant to allow their children to go up there. The "bush men" wear ordinary hard sole shoes rather than moccasins and are always looking for children to steal.

It is clear that "bush men" are not endowed with real supernatural powers, yet their shadowy existence in the bush and their ability to live apart from other people make them different from ordinary human beings. Belief in these quasi-supernatural beings appears to be widespread among northern Athabascans (Ross, 1867: 309; Hurlbert, 1962: 55; Osgood, 1931: 85; 1936: 154) and has been described in some detail for the Slave Indians by MacNeish (1954: 185-88; 1961: 118) and for the Kutchin by Slobodin (1960).

The author is convinced that there are many beliefs surrounding the setting of traps and various other activities associated with both trapping and hunting. These are carefully learned by young trappers and hunters from their fathers and older male relatives and are clung to avidly. A number of such beliefs associated with caribou hunting are listed by Robinson (1944: 41). Trappers in particular appear to be very conservative and insist on doing things just the way they have been taught and the way they were done in the past. However, it is difficult to obtain details about such beliefs because the Indians are reluctant to talk about them for fear of being laughed at. They mention that these beliefs were held by Indians long ago and because they are certain that a Euro-Canadian will scoff at such things, they sometimes try to pass the matter off with a laugh. Others will say that these beliefs apply to Indians but not to Euro-Canadians. This is one of the few circumstances when the Snowdrift people are willing to acknowledge that there is one way of life for the white man and another for Indians. One example should be sufficient to illustrate this point. There is a long, black caterpillar, occasionally seen around the village in summer, that appears to fill people with considerable dread. Whenever one is seen, much effort is expended to kill it, but all people are very reluctant to step on it. When two such caterpillars were discovered outside an informant's house, he soaked them with kerosene and set fire to them. When questioned on the matter, he said that these caterpillars were very bad for Indians, particularly women and children, but would not

bother a white man. "Everything is different for white men and Indians", he said, a rationalization that would permit him to maintain his belief in the evil qualities of the caterpillar in the face of what he considered to be certain ridicule by a white man.

Since the aboriginal Chipewyan religious system was not elaborate or complex, it is easy to understand, perhaps, why most of it has disappeared under the impact of more than one hundred years of direct contact with Christian missionaries. Shamanism, at least among the Snowdrift Chipewyan, has long since disappeared, leaving little except a residue of magical beliefs and taboos, as mentioned above, that are rooted in aboriginal beliefs. Roman Catholic missionaries first visited the Chipewyan of the Lake Athabasca region in 1847 and as early as 1866 or 1868 a clergyman of the Church of England lived at Fort Chipewyan (Petitot, 1885: 47). The post at Fort Resolution received a visit from a Roman Catholic missionary for the first time in 1852 and a permanent mission was established four years later (Petitot, 1891: 85).

Snowdrift is a Roman Catholic community and the Oblate order has had a church in the area for many years. Formerly it was located on a point of land about two miles from the present village, but in 1952, after it had become obvious that the Indians were going to reside in permanent dwellings around the Hudson's Bay Company post, a church building, which contains a residence for the priest, was constructed in the village. The community has no resident priest but a priest from Fort Resolution makes frequent visits throughout the year, often staying for as long as two months. There is always a priest in the community at Christmas and Easter and it is seldom that more than two months elapse without a visit, even if it is only of a few days duration.

When the priest is in the village there are services twice a day, a low mass in the morning at 8:00 and in the evening at 7:30. On Sunday there are these two services together with a high mass at 10:00 a.m. During the week there are usually between ten and twenty people at the morning service and thirty to forty in the evening. At the high mass on Sunday as many as eighty or ninety will attend. Everyone has a copy of the mass in English and Latin, and most have a Chipewyan translation too. Both men and women have a tendency to dress up for church services on Sunday. Small children attend with their parents and their talking and crying sometimes makes it almost impossible for people in the rear of the small church to hear what is being said. Individuals may leave during the course of a service and many come late.

Confirmation takes place early, usually at the age of eight or nine. Since, until recently, children at this age have been going to school at Fort Smith, their instruction takes place there, although the priest has occasionally held classes in the village and will do so increasingly in the future. In 1961, the priest considered that there were only two or three boys who knew enough to assist with the serving of mass.

When the priest is not in the village, a Sunday prayer meeting is frequently held in one of the houses. There is hymn singing and someone may give a short talk on a religious subject. The former sub-chief, who considers himself to be something of a lay religious leader in the community, told the author that the prayer meetings were usually held at his house and that he frequently gave a little talk on how to lead better and more useful lives. He complained that the young people did not listen to him and it was certainly true that all the villagers objected to his "preaching" on the grounds that, as might be expected, they do not like to be told what to do.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the concepts and ideals of Christianity have become part of Snowdrift life. Outward signs of religious belief are fairly rare, with the exception of religious pictures which are displayed in every house. Grace is said at meals in some homes and always at public feasts. Apparently prayers are also said regularly by some people and one informant admitted that although he does not go to church often, he says his prayers regularly. When people write letters to friends and relatives in Yellowknife and other communities, they almost invariably mention that they have prayed for the recipient of the letter and they usually ask the recipient to pray for them. Although there does not seem to be any strong feeling against working on Sunday, as a rule people look forward to this day as a day of rest. If there is work that needs to be done, they will do it, but most people like to sleep late, go to church, and spend the day loafing, going on a picnic, or visiting.

Discussion on religious subjects is rare and the author cannot escape the feeling that religion is not really important except to a relatively small number of older people.[9] On the other hand, true skepticism also seems to be rare, most people being willing to accept what they are told in church whether or not they use the information as a guide for the conduct of their lives. Several informants did say

9. A similar lack of religiosity is noted by Helm (1961: 116) for the Slave Indians of Lynx Point.

that they occasionally argue with the priest against religion. These men said that they did not know whether to believe or not to believe. The Bible talks about hell and heaven but who knows whether these places actually exist. One informant thought that perhaps heaven was just for white people. They make a lot of money and have lots of nice clothes, a nice house and a warm place to live. Then when they die, they go to heaven. The Indian, on the other hand, has a very hard time making a living and he is often cold and hungry. Sometimes his house is not good and he has to work hard outside in very cold weather. Maybe he is already in hell. The priest has a pretty good life too, with lots of food sent in to him from outside the village. He too has a place to live that is warm and comfortable. What right has he to preach about people going to hell? He is living in a kind of heaven right now. Still, this particular informant does not like to think that everything will be finished when he dies. He admits that he really does not know what to think. It certainly cannot be said that skeptical comments such as these are typical of the majority of Snowdrift people and it is probably true that speculation about religious doctrines is not indulged in very frequently by the villagers. Nevertheless, these few comments seem to indicate that at least some of the people consider the Roman Catholic faith as being something essentially alien to the Indian way of life.

If some Snowdrift Indians think of Roman Catholicism as being something basically unrelated to their way of life, it is certain that all of them think of the church as being a large, impersonal, wealthy organization, like the Canadian government and the Hudson's Bay Company, imposed on the village from the outside and to be viewed as a possible source of income for the villagers. The people expect to be hired for jobs at the church just as they are hired by other outside agencies. In other words, people do not think of the church as part of the community or something which is an essential and integral part of their every day life. When an informant was asked why he thought that the church did not maintain a priest in the village permanently, he answered that it was because there is not enough money to be made from the people of Snowdrift.

With this point of view in mind, it is easy to understand why, when some work needs to be done around the church or some new construction is planned, the people immediately look upon the church as simply another potential source of wage labour. The priest, quite naturally, does not approve of this attitude and tries, without notable success, to persuade the people to contribute their time and labour to the church. The Indians believe that to help the priest or to do something for the church is good and that a person will receive his reward in heaven. However, this is not

nearly as much of an incentive as a cash payment. The priest is determined not to be a source of wage labour for the villagers and tries to do all the work he can himself.

There can be no doubt that the attitude of the villagers toward the church depends a great deal on their feelings about the priest. A popular priest is one who is friendly and informal in conversation and gives the impression that the interests of the villagers are uppermost in his mind. They do not like a priest who is abrupt and overly critical or who berates them for not going to church or offering their services free to the church. By the very nature of his position, a priest is in a difficult position in the community since he must, to a certain extent, tell the people what to do and, at the very least, point out the difference between right and wrong behavior. The people do not like this and frequently in the past relations between the villagers and their priest have been strained.

In conclusion, it must be said that the church might have done something to improve its position in the community. In the past the church has not concerned itself with social problems and little or nothing has been done to help the people to prepare for the sort of community existence that has been forced upon them. The author is under the impression that the church might have been an important factor in helping to develop a sense of community cohesiveness. Instead, many priests appear to have simply gone through the motions of fulfilling their duty to their parishioners. It has been almost as though the church and its activities were an end in themselves rather than a service for the village and an integral part of village life. The attitude sometimes seems to be that the church is in the village and the people can take advantage of that fact if they wish, but if not, it does not really matter.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Chipewyan Acculturation

Recently some anthropologists, particularly those concerned with comparative acculturation and acculturation theory, have noted a distinct similarity among present day Indian communities in the United States and Canada. Spicer (1961: 1) has pointed out that

> as knowledge of life on the reservation deepens, the repetition of certain combinations of Indian and Anglo-American ways becomes unmistakable. Similar trends in the replacement of material culture, similarities in dialects of English, likenesses in kinship behavior and types of extended families, comparative growths of nativism and ceremonial life, and even what one feels to be nearly identical constellations of personality traits thrust themselves on one's attention. As one goes from reservation to reservation, the feeling grows that what one sees today is what one saw not long before on some other reservation.

All this has led Spicer to the belief that

> there are fewer than half a dozen, perhaps no more than three or four, ways of life, or that is to say distinctive cultures, in all the reservations of the United States and Canada (Spicer, 1961: 2).

While it is true that the large number of studies of acculturation of North American Indians have provided data from which identification of recurrent processes may be made, it is also true, as James has pointed out for the Wisconsin Ojibwa (James, 1961: 728), that a deculturative process can be noted for many Indian communities. Native cultures have, in many cases, been replaced by what James calls "reservation subcultures of a 'poor-White' type" (1961: 744). This deculturative process occurs, then, when the abandonment of an aboriginal cultural trait is not replaced with a White cultural equivalent. For the Ojibwa, according to James,

> loss of ... religious beliefs has not always meant Christianization, and, similarly, decline of rice gathering or sugar making has not necessarily meant compensatory White orientation of cash pursuits (1961: 728).

It is true that as far as the loss of Chipewyan culture traits is concerned, Snowdrift has become a deculturated community and its minimal appropriation of new cultural traits has produced, to some extent, a "poor-White" type of subculture. Although it cannot be stated clearly that a conservative-progressive distinction actually operates as a socio-economic class line in Snowdrift as it does for James' Deerpoint Ojibwa community (1961: 728), there is a growing tendency for the more progressive, more well-to-do individuals in Snowdrift to be considered White-oriented while the so-called "poor" families, in the economic sense, are apt to be considered as Indian-oriented. This has nothing to do with the presence or absence of Chipewyan cultural habits or techniques.

The process of documenting the deculturation process at Snowdrift is complicated by the paucity of detailed information concerning aboriginal Chipewyan culture. There is, therefore, no really adequate base line against which to measure either the extent or the rate of deculturation. However, it is certainly safe to say, on the basis of the data previously presented, that there is very little that is distinctively Chipewyan which remains as a part of present-day Snowdrift life. Not only do village residents fail to identify much in their way of life as being linked with the past, but ties with the community are generally recognized as being more important than ethnic affiliation. As previously mentioned, Snowdrift people consider themselves superior to residents of other communities but this superiority is always based on personality and character traits rather than ethnic background. The sole identification that is purely ethnic is identification based on linguistic usage.

The deculturative process is particularly evident with regard to the economic criteria discussed in Chapter II (see also VanStone, 1961). Aboriginal hunting patterns have been either replaced or completely altered, even though hunting cannot be said to be subordinate to the trapping from which the Indians derive the largest amount of their cash income. The shift to a trapping economy has, over time, resulted in changes in the settlement patters that have been accentuated in recent years as a result of other factors. Trapping can be considered deculturative because, as a subsistence technique, it has, to some extent, replaced traditional hunting without providing an acceptable food substitute or wages that would permit the purchase of comparable amounts of food. At the same time, this involvement in an external economic activity has, in addition to partially displacing traditional subsistence activities, created a greater need for and dependence on trade goods, a need that cannot always be adequately

fulfilled by a trapping income. The changes in settlement patterns that have resulted from this increased dependency on those who furnish trade goods have created new deculturative problems that will be discussed presently.

In a paper concerned with the processes of culture change, Murphy and Steward have pointed out that

> the process of gradual shift from a subsistence economy to dependence upon trade is evidently irreversible, provided access to trade goods is maintained. It can be said, therefore, that the aboriginal culture is destined to be replaced by a new type which reaches its culmination when the responsible processes have run their course. This culmination point may be said to have been reached when the amount of activity devoted to production for trade grows to such an extent that it interferes with the aboriginal subsistence cycle and associated social organization and makes their continuance impossible (1956: 336).

Such a culmination point has long since been reached by the Snowdrift Chipewyan and the deculturative result has been the creation of a community that is "lower-class" as far as economic criteria are concerned. The income from trapping, as shown in Chapter II, is generally low and unpredictable and yet there is considerable dependence on the products that must be purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company. The standard of living in the community is uniformly low and most of the earned income of the villagers, aside from trapping, is also an outreach of Euro-Canadian institutions.

The subcultural status of Snowdrift is also reflected in its institutional life. What little formal organizational activity there is in the village is confined entirely to school and church affairs or takes place at the behest of the Indian Affairs Branch. As previously indicated, village leadership is poorly developed and can be said to exist only in so far as it has been deemed necessary by the Indian Affairs Branch to have individuals in the community with whom Branch representatives can deal. Thus the chief and councillors are creations of the Branch and their authority is limited to dealings with the Agency Superintendent concerning projects for the community that are conceived and put into effect by the external agency. This situation is a further example of the deculturative process. Aboriginal social structure, suited as it was for the pre-contact groupings of single families or groups of families, has proved totally inadequate for dealing with the kinds of organizational problems that arise as a result of community living. The

absence of community organization, then, is not only a significant aspect of deculturation, but poses a real problem as far as the future of the community is concerned.

Viewing the acculturative influences that have affected the Snowdrift community, it is obvious that there has been little uniformity to the rate of change which has occurred over time since initial contact in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Residence patterns have been shifting to a more centralized and settled type, a process that has been going on more or less steadily since the time of initial contact and has recently reached a sort of culmination in the community as it exists today. Presumably the next step would be the abandonment of outlying communities like Snowdrift and the concentration of population in selected urban settlements like Yellowknife. Christianity, on the other hand, presumably gained a firm foothold at the time of its introduction about one hundred years ago and has remained relatively unchanged up to the present time. It cannot really be said that the people of Snowdrift have been affected by rapid or drastic change. The introduction of formal education, wage labour, and innovations in technology have come about gradually and their effects are just beginning to be felt.

The introduction of trapping and trap lines where the emphasis is on individual effort and initiative undoubtedly helped to weaken the social groupings of families based upon the leadership of a skilled hunter. Wage labour, which rewards only the individual, is likely to establish even more atomistic relationships. However, it has been noted that with regard to most products of hunting and fishing, the traditional patterns of sharing are still maintained. The extent to which a new language, a new religion, and western education have brought with them new values and created new objectives is difficult to determine. These are factors, however, that are going to be significant for the future.

The result of the acculturation process is generally assumed to be some form of cultural integration whereby there is an adjustment of beliefs and customs from the differing traditions that have made up the contact situation. This adjustment among the Snowdrift Chipewyan has been extremely one sided and may therefore be thought of as a case of directed culture change. According to Spicer (1961: 521), directed change can be said to have taken place if one or both of the following two criteria can be distinguished:

> (1) If definite sanctions, whether political, economic, supernatural, or even moral, are regularly brought to bear by members of one

> society on members of another, one condition for directed contact is met. (2) If, in addition, members of the society applying the sanctions are interested in bringing about changes in the cultural behavior of members of the other society, then both necessary conditions for directed contact exist.

With regard to Spicer's first condition, it is obvious that what might be called the political or organizational life of the Snowdrift people is almost exclusively guided by governmental personnel. Village leadership and community organization is non-existent except with reference to the Indian Affairs Branch. Most of the wage labour opportunities for the Indians are also made available by the Branch. The relationship of the Hudson's Bay Company with the Indians, though largely non-directed at present, has been a major aspect of directed culture change in the past. All religious sanctions stem from the activities of Roman Catholic missionaries and a certain amount of moral training can be said to be a part of the educational system now available to the villagers. As far as Spicer's second criteria is concerned, it is certain that the mission and school personnel are attempting to bring about changes in the behavior and values of the villagers. The same can be said for the Canadian government, the avowed policies of which have been aimed at raising the standard of living in the community and instituting forms of self-government. In fact, it can be said with some degree of assurance that all outside agencies with which the Snowdrift people have dealings are interested in some way in changing the cultural behavior of the Indians.

These circumstances of directed culture change that exist at Snowdrift are by no means unique and can even be said to be characteristic of the acculturation process among most North American Indians. It is this type of change that is essentially deculturative and produces the reservation subcultures which James has described (1961: 744). Sometimes it is the relative lack of complexity of the Indian culture or the nature and duration of contact that hastens the deculturative process. Sometimes it is the reforming or uplifting zeal of the stronger, more complex culture that is responsible. More often, and particularly in northwestern Canada, it is a combination of these factors that has produced the uniformity that can be noted among Indian communities regardless of size, location or ethnic affiliation. With this in mind, the important thing to realize about Snowdrift is not that it is a Chipewyan community or that it is inhabited by a group of people whose way of life is characteristically Chipewyan, but

rather that it is a characteristic northern community tied into Canadian culture in a particular way. In other words, Snowdrift is a bush community exhibiting a sort of bush culture that is duplicated many times in many places throughout the Canadian north. Like other communities similarly situated, it is heavily dependent on outside sources of supply and is changing and developing along particular lines that have little or nothing to do with ethnic background. It is the author's impression that the pattern of directed culture change and resulting deculturation have largely eliminated ethnic differences throughout the entire Great Slave Lake-Mackenzie River area and created the kind of reservation subculture that has been noted in the United States and southern Canada. However, further studies in the area are needed to adequately document this point of view.

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