

EDUCATION GOES NORTH

Department of Northern
Affairs and National
EDUCATION



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EDUCATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

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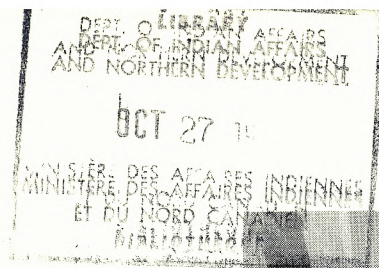
Foreword

Services provided by the Education Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources are many, and extend to numerous settlements in the north. They include building and equipping schools, supplying teachers, setting up vocational training courses for Indian and Eskimo adults, providing libraries, circulating films, sponsoring Girl Guide and Boy Scout organizations, field supervising, curriculum planning, and recently, a venture, five hundred and fifty miles inside the Arctic Circle at Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island, Northwest Territories.

Resolute Bay is a new Eskimo settlement consisting of thirteen houses and seventy-five men, women and children. It may someday have a school and a teacher, but up to now, an Eskimo girl of eighteen has been trying to have a school of her own. Perhaps two years or so in a T.B. Sanatorium gave her the idea. The local R.C.M.P. provided a small warehouse for a classroom. With little equipment and almost as little idea on how to proceed, Leah, the Eskimo girl, made a brave and commendable attempt.

Miss M. E. Sutherland, Educational Specialist with the Education Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources was sent to Resolute Bay to encourage Leah's effort and to help her achieve her ambition of becoming a Teacher's Aide, in preparation for the day when a school is built at Resolute Bay. For two months last fall Miss Sutherland lived with Leah and her family in the house of Idlouk, Leah's father. Although she was five hundred miles inside the Arctic Circle during the season of continual darkness, life with Leah, her class, her family and her friends, was continually bright, lively and exciting!

This, then, is the story of a school, in an Eskimo settlement, where the children look forward eagerly to each day with its new and exciting adventures.



First of all, Leah and I, along with a cup of coffee, go over new books, readers and materials I brought in to her from the Education Division. Behind me you see the cupboard Kadluk, Leah's mother, allotted me in which to store my supply of groceries. These were purchased by the Department from the R.C.A.F. base at Resolute Bay.



I pour my morning coffee while baby Jesse, seven months old, looks on from the safety of his mother's back. The kettle sits on the half of an oil barrel which serves as a stove. Wooden boxes brought from the R.C.A.F. base by dog team, are used as fuel. At night the fire went out and the warmth of the sleeping bag was very welcome. Weather outside was usually around thirty-five degrees below zero.



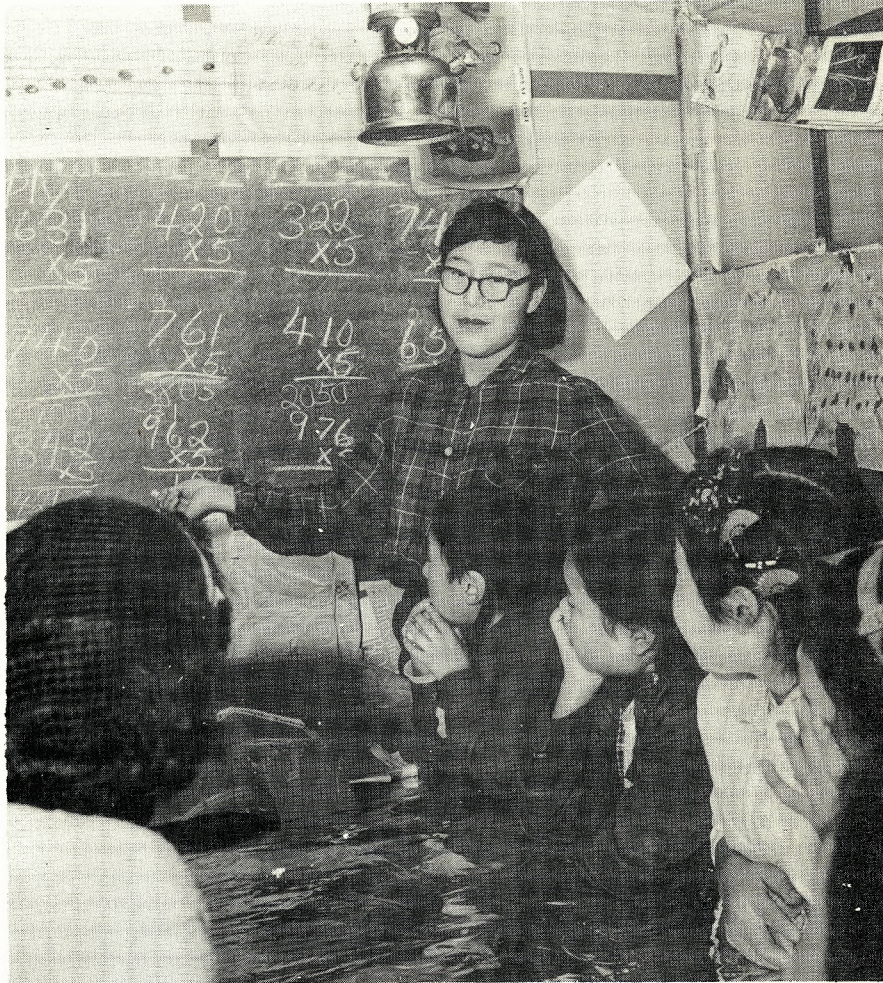
Leah, her mother Kadluk, baby Jesse, and little Ruthee and Suzanne will soon have breakfast. They will have porridge, bannock, honey and boiled tea. Sometimes they have some polar bear steak, seal meat, or fish. They drink lots of milk.



School is so much fun! There are new books, pictures, toys and games!



Here Leah admonishes a group of older pupils to treat new books and readers with respect. As there are no desks the pupils sit round a table. Besides these dozen or so older children another group of smaller ones are taught at a different time of the day.



Arithmetic is easy. The older children like it. The wood burning oil-drum-stove which I found upon my arrival, we replaced with an oil space heater. No more school in a cold building with sweating walls! No more hastening down through the dark and cold to chop up wooden boxes before school commencement. The space heater keeps the building warm overnight.



Leah learns how to teach oral English with some colorful toys.
Parkas line the wall along with books, cut-outs of maple leaves,
and a picture of the Queen.



The Farmer in the Dell, Looby Loo, or any singing game is "tops" with these children in their small classroom where they circle around a ceiling prop. Singing games aid in the teaching of oral English.



More emphasis on oral English. Everyone thinks the English words and sounds are so funny sometimes! We listen, we say and we sing the English sentence patterns. The Christmas tree in the background, is perhaps the first one these children have ever seen. It was sent to them from the R.C.A.F. base. The gas lantern hanging from the ceiling is one of two used to light the classroom. Resolute Bay houses have electric lights.



Paint brushes and tempera colours are new to Mosesee and Dorah. Yesterday they painted Christmas trees and hung them on the wall, what now? The shelves behind Mosesee hold some of the books used by the pupils and Leah.



Mosesee says, "I can print. I know my name and the A.B.C's".

Mosesee can also use the Eskimo syllabic system of writing. He wrote several stories of his hunting trips with his father and gave them to me. Others wrote similar stories of their experiences. They also wrote and illustrated experience charts in English.



Dressed for home but unwilling to leave. The books, the games, the lessons, the songs and the warm stove are all so good! "Let's say those strange English words again, I...you...it...".



Leah, now initiated to a daily plan book for her lessons says, in her quaint English, "I never know school is so much works."