

**INDIANS OF YUKON  
AND NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES**



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Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

## **INDIANS OF YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

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A trapper's cabin

Photo — Dept. of Indian Affairs Northern Development



## INDIANS OF YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Indians who occupied the northern parts of North America in pre-European times spoke in dialects of the Tinné or Dene language. This is the northern division of the great Athapaskan linguistic family whose southern division is found in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, and includes the Navaho and Apache. Seven Athapaskan dialectal groups lived north of the 60th parallel, namely the Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Slave, Dogrib, Hare, Nahani, and Kutchin\*. Today, these groups occupy much the same territories as they did when encountered by the early explorers.

### CHYPEWYAN

The Chipewyan were generally found east of Great Slave Lake and Slave River, and composed the most numerous northern Athapaskan group during the first half of the eighteenth century. Their name derives from a Cree word meaning "pointed skins".

They usually lived on the edge of the woods, where some bands moved from one grove of timber to another and others spent the summers on the barren grounds. They followed the movements of the barren-ground caribou, in summer spearing them in the lakes and rivers, in winter snaring them in pounds or shooting them with bows and arrows. When caribou were scarce they hunted buffalo, musk-oxen, moose and smaller game, snared water-fowl, and caught fish with spears, bone hooks and babiche nets. They ate raw meat and fish, or pounded dried meat into pemmican.

The Chipewyan Indians had learned to make hatchets, ice-chisels, awls, knives, and arrow and spear-heads from copper. Birch-bark vessels were used for boiling food, and caribou skin was used for tents, lines, nooses, and nets for fish and beaver.

Clothing consisted of robe, shirt, leggings, moccasins, breechcloth, cap and mittens, all made of caribou skins, a full costume for a man requiring eight or ten skins. The name "pointed skin" is said to have come from the shape of the deerskin shirt, which sometimes had a queue appended to it in the back. Faces were tattooed with three or four parallel bars across each cheek.

As with other Athapaskan peoples there was little political unity between the numerous Chipewyan bands, large and small, which went their separate ways. Again, leadership within the bands was generally informal and loose.

Girls were separated from their boy companions at the age of eight or nine and married at adolescence, often to older men. They dragged the heavy toboggans in winter, and in summer carried the household goods, food and hides on their backs, freeing the men to hunt. Babies were carried on their mothers' backs as with the Eskimos.

The Chipewyan religion focused on a belief in guardian spirits. Success in hunting was thought to depend on communications from a supernatural world in the form of dreams and visions. Illness and death were attributed to witchcraft and medicine-men claimed the power to cure or cause disease with the aid of familiar spirits. The souls of the dead were thought to travel in a stone boat along a river to a beautiful island abounding in game. The good reached the island safely; the evil sank and struggled in the water forever.

Artistic expression was found in wood drawings and in decorative work with porcupine quills and moose hair.

\* includes the Loucheux in the northern Yukon and Mackenzie delta.



Drying Pelts

Photo — Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development



## YELLOWKNIFE

The hunting grounds of the Yellowknife were northeast of Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes. In dialect, appearance and customs they closely resembled their near neighbours the Chipewyan.

Like the Chipewyan they lived on the edge of the woods in skin-covered tipis, hunting caribou and musk-oxen on the barren grounds. Their name appears to have been related to their use of copper implements.

## SLAVE

The name "Slave" was applied to these Indians because of their reputedly peaceable nature, although warfare was not totally absent from their culture. They inhabited the territories surrounding Athabaska Lake, Slave River and the western half of Great Slave Lake during the early eighteenth century. When the Cree invaded their country they retreated down the Mackenzie River and occupied the land beyond both its banks from Great Slave Lake to Fort Norman.

The Slave lived in the forests and along the river banks, hunting woodland caribou and moose. These they snared with the help of dogs or ran down in deep snow with the aid of snowshoes. In the autumn they trapped the beaver in their ponds and in winter broke down their houses and killed them with spears and clubs. Nearly half their diet was fish which they caught in nets of twisted willow bark or with lines of the same material. Hooks were made of wood, bone, antler or birds' claws.

In summer the Slave lived in conical-shaped lodges covered with brush or spruce bark. The lodges were usually pitched together in two-family units which faced in opposite directions and had a common fireplace in the middle. For winter they had low, oblong cabins of poles, the walls chinked with moss and the roofs of spruce boughs. This type of winter dwelling was common to many other as the Athapaskan groups.

Beaver-tooth knife blades were used to whittle wood or bone, and stone implements with wooden handles were used to cut down trees. Clubs, spear-points, daggers and arrowheads were usually fashioned from caribou antlers, although there was some use of copper and flint as well. The bark or woven roots of the spruce tree were made into cooking vessels.

Slave Indian clothing resembled that of the Chipewyan but was often bordered with fringes and ornamented with moose hair and porcupine quills. Moccasins were joined to the leggings and the men wore a tassel instead of a breechcloth. Women made garments and cradle bags of woven hareskin. Both men and women wore belts, bracelets and armlets of leather embroidered with porcupine quills. Men wore necklets of polished caribou antler and when engaged in fighting as they sometimes were they wore head-dresses of bear-claws or caps with upstanding feathers. To protect their bodies in combat they had cuirasses of wood or willow twigs. Sometimes a goose quill or a wooden plug was passed through the nose.

The Slave were divided into numerous independent bands generally small in number. An experienced man might be chosen to lead war parties in each band but his authority usually ended with the termination of the fighting. Local quarrels were settled by compensation or an informal council of hunters.

The tasks of women were easier than among the Chipewyan, the hardest work, including the preparation of the lodge and the procuring of firewood, being done by the men. Infanticide was not unknown in what was often a harsh life but the aged and infirm were seldom abandoned, even when there was great hardship on the family and band.

The Slave Indians believed in guardian spirits who appeared in dreams and gave aid in times of need. They held that sickness and death were caused by witchcraft, and so great was their reputed magical skill that other tribes hesitated to attack them. Their medicine-men had no herbal remedies but used massage and suction to draw from the bodies of patients splinters of bone or other objects supposedly placed there by the sorcerers. Patients confessed their wrong-doings in the hope of delaying death. The dead were deposited on scaffolds or covered with leaves or snow with small huts erected over them.



Indian Graves

Photo — Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development



as a protection from wild animals. Their property was placed beside them. The souls of the dead were believed to cross a large lake, guided by the spirits of otter and loon, into the world of the after-life.

#### DOGRIB

The Dogrib Indians believed they were descended from a supernatural dog-man. Their traditional home is the country between Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes. The Dogrib language closely resembles that of the Slave and one group of Dogrib Indians is said to have originally shared with the Slave the country between Lac la Martre and the Mackenzie River. A band descended from both these groups hunts in the same territory today.

The main food supply of the Dogrib was the barren-ground caribou which they snared in ponds or speared in lakes. However they remained out on the tundra for only brief periods because of the lack of fuel. They lived in conical, skin-covered tipis, or, in winter, rectangular huts of poles and bush. Clothing consisted of a shirt, breechcloth, leggings and moccasins, the leggings separated from the moccasins.

As with other Athapaskans the Dobrib Indians believed in guardian spirits acquired in dreams, and they made offerings to local spirits thought to haunt lakes and rapids. They had medicine-men to prophesy and to inflict and cure diseases. The dead were deposited on scaffolds which were decorated with streamers to amuse the souls of the deceased and keep them near their resting places. Mourners destroyed all or most of the property of the dead and the women gashed themselves as a sign of grief. About a year after the funeral the remains were uncovered, the death chants sung once more and a memorial feast held.

#### HARE

These Indians were named for the Arctic hare from which they derived much of their food and clothing. They lived west and northwest of Great Bear Lake, avoiding contact with other people and going so far as to conceal their camps in the depths of the woods.

In early spring and late summer the Hare Indians hunted the barren-ground caribou which wandered in herds over the tundra north of Great Bear Lake during these brief periods. Throughout most of the year they lived on fish supplemented by hare particularly during the winter months. Since the Arctic hare is subject to an extreme population cycle, there was sometimes much hardship if not actual starvation for these people.

The Hare also lived in rectangular huts of poles and brush, with gabled roofs and covering of spruce boughs. In summer they lived in lean-tos. Their implements and weapons were knives, daggers and ice-chisels of caribou antler, whittling knives with beaver-tooth blades, bows and arrows, fishing spears, hunting snares, and nets of willow bark. They cooked in water-tight baskets of woven spruce roots and willow, dropping in pre-heated stones to boil the water.

Their clothing resembled that of the Slave and Dogrib except for a more extensive use of hare fur and the lack of ornamentation. In summer they wore a shirt, leggings and moccasins, and in winter they added a hare-skin robe and attached a hood to the shirt.

Hare medicine-men suspended themselves from poles to achieve closer communion with their guardian spirits. They held a lunar feast on the occasion of each new moon, and like the Dogrib, held a memorial feast to the dead a year after burial.

#### NAHANI

The Nahani whose name means "people of the west", lived in a mountainous area between the Upper Liard River and the 64th parallel. They were composed of two principle subdivisions, the Kaska and the Goat Indians. There were apparently several other sub-groups of Nahani, the names of which are now uncertain.

Their principal game animal was the caribou but they also hunted buffalo, mountain sheep and goats. Their weapons were bows and arrows, spears, clubs and snares.

Conical tipis covered with bark or brush, or rectangular huts of the same materials, were the winter dwellings. Simple lean-tos sufficed in summer. Spruce-root baskets were used for cooking with spoons made of wood or the horns of sheep or goats. They had stone adzes and hammers, antler chisels, bone awls, and knives with stone or beaver-tooth blades.

The usual costume was a skin shirt fitted with a hood in winter, long leggings fastened to a belt above and sewn to the moccasins below, mittens, and a robe of caribou or woven rabbit skin. Garments were generously ornamented with porcupine quill embroidery. The women carried their babies in bags of beaver or other skins, padded with moss and rabbit fur.

In their social organization the Nahani aligned themselves into two phratries, the Raven and the Wolf, with descent reckoned through the female line only. Prospective bridegrooms hunted for the parents of the brides for a season before marriage but following the marriage avoided all speech with their in-laws. Potlatch or wealth distributing feasts, common amongst the Pacific Coast Indians from whom the custom was borrowed, were held between the two competing phratries.

Medicine-men practised much as they did in the other Athapaskan groups. The dead were wrapped in skins, placed on the ground and covered with brush.

## KUTCHIN

The Kutchin Indians who refer to themselves by this name meaning "people", were also known by the French term "Loucheux" a reference to their eyes, albeit a misnomer. They inhabited the basins of the Upper Yukon and Peel Rivers.

The culture of the Kutchin Indians resembled that of the other Athapaskan tribes. In summer they fished with hooks, spears, dipnets and fish baskets of willow. In winter they hunted caribou, moose, hare and other game, with snares, bows and arrows and the caribou pound. They cooked their food in baskets woven of spruce and tamarack roots.

They lived in domed houses, well banked with snow along the outside walls, the floors strewn with fir boughs, and with a smoke hole in the roof. These houses could be kept comfortable on the coldest day with a small fire. For summer, some of the Kutchin had oblong huts of poles, brush and bark, which could also be used for smoke-drying their fish.

The Kutchin costume consisted of a short-waisted caribou-skin shirt with long tails before and behind, full leggings attached to moccasins embroidered with beads or porcupine quills, long mittens and a hood. The shirts had long fringes decorated with seeds or beads of dentalia shells, and bead or porcupine-quill embroidery on breast, shoulders and back. Men wore head-bands, necklaces and nose-pendants of shells. They painted their faces with red ochre and black lead, placing bright feathers in their hair which was covered with oil and red ochre. Women were tattooed with lines radiating from the lower lip to the chin. They carried their babies in birch-bark cradles.

The Kutchin were divided into three phratries which counted descent through the female line. Courage and wisdom were qualities esteemed in their leaders but they accorded them little authority. Men without relatives attached themselves to leading families in a mild form of servitude. The Kutchin were extremely fond of games, singing and dancing, and young and old, men and women, took part in them.

Women did much of the heavy work, being responsible for transporting the family possessions. Their one main prerogative in family affairs was that of choosing husbands for their daughters.

The Kutchin Indians made offerings of beads to supernatural beings which they believed haunted certain places. Medicine-men fasted and dreamed to gain supernatural powers, and misfortune was attributed to witchcraft. Hunters prayed to a moon-deity and burned fat to ensure success in the chase. In times of extreme hardship the aged and the infirm were sometimes put to death at their own request.

The dead were cremated and their ashes suspended in bags from the tops of painted poles, or, if noted persons, they were put in wooden coffins and left in trees for several months, then burned.

Funeral rites included destruction of property and a memorial feast at which the guests sang mourning songs.

## PRE-HISTORY

The first human beings ever to set foot in what is now Canada probably entered through the Yukon Territory. It is generally accepted that man first came to North America by way of the Bering Strait although there is some difference of opinion among authorities as to the time of arrival. Estimates range from 10,000 to over 25,000 years ago with the longer period receiving increasing support. Recent archaeological discoveries in Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories have added greatly to the knowledge of aboriginal prehistory, and searches and studies are in process which should result in a much clearer concept of the first people to inhabit Canada.

Geologists believe that from 10,000 to 15,000 years ago a land bridge existed across Bering Strait, which joined Asia and America. It is thought that during the last part of the glacial epoch, in a period of moderate climatic conditions, people hunting big game animals followed them across the land bridge into the Seward Peninsula of Alaska. From there they may have penetrated through the forested land that borders the Yukon River, until they reached the Mackenzie River, and then down the Mackenzie Valley gradually spreading southward. No doubt they would have arrived from Asia in small groups and and over a very long period of time.

Archaeological sites in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories have already yielded many artifacts, the earliest of which are estimated to be at least 7,000 years of age. Several cultures are represented in these discoveries, ranging up to late prehistoric or early historic times.

One of the latest cultural traditions was that of the Athapaskan or Denetasiro, "parent of the living Dene people". The time of their migration from Asia has not been exactly determined but it is thought that they were among the last Mongoloid peoples to come to North America, the earlier bands having dispersed southward throughout both Americas.

Among the most ancient archaeological sites are the Firth River on the Yukon coast, the Klondike site near Fort Liard in southwestern Mackenzie District, certain points in the Great Bear Lake region, and several sites in the southern Yukon and the southwestern Northwest Territories.

Life was often difficult for the Indians, and particularly so in the northern regions where winter was long and severe, and game was variable from season to season both in numbers and habitat. The migrating bands gradually pressed southward and eastward until some of their descendants reached as far as Tierra del Fuego, the southern-most tip of South America. Arriving in comparatively recent times, the Athapaskans constitute the most northerly group of Indians, not counting the Eskimos who are the most recent arrivals from Asia. However, one group of Athapaskans, the Sarcee, drifted down to the prairie region, and joined the Blackfoot. Others found their way out to the Pacific Coast where some are still living as far south as California. Still others migrated into the American south-west, probably along the Interior Plateau between the Coast Ranges and Rocky Mountains.

## EXPLORERS AND TRADERS

Martin Frobisher was the first explorer to reach the Northwest Territories. His voyages, which were made in the period 1576-8 seem to have had no perceptible impact on Indian life. The east coasts of Baffin, Devon and Ellesmere Islands became known to Europeans through various voyages made between 1610 and 1630, but it was not until 1717, when the Hudson's Bay Company established a post at Fort Churchill, that the Athapaskans came into permanent contact with the Europeans. There was also some influence from the early Russian fur-traders in Alaska.



Before the end of the eighteenth century the fur trade had reached the Mackenzie Valley making a profound effect on the native economy and inter-tribal relations. For some time the Chipewyan, supplied with firearms by the fur-traders, were able to dominate the Yellowknife and the Dogrib Indians, keeping them from the trading posts and obliging them to pass on their furs for far less than full value.

The introduction of firearms also led to the gradual diminishing in numbers of caribou and other game animals. As game grew scarce the Indians became more and more dependent on the trading posts for food and other necessities. Beaver disappeared from some areas because of intensive trapping and the Indians had to move on in search of more fur, which took them into the territories of other tribes. This sometimes led to armed conflict among hitherto peaceable groups.

The Chipewyan fought intermittently with the Cree on their southern border until the two peoples agreed to peace around 1760. However, the Chipewyan suffered terribly from a smallpox epidemic in 1781, the majority dying of the disease. In 1788 Fort Chipewyan was established on Lake Athabaska and thereafter the Chipewyan traded at the new post, avoiding the long, dangerous journey to Fort Churchill.

The Chipewyan had dominated the Yellowknife Indians and they, in turn, harassed the Slave, Dogrib and Hare. At about the end of the eighteenth century the Dogrib retaliated by attacking the Yellowknife. Notwithstanding, some Yellowknife Indians began hunting north of Great Bear Lake, within the territories of the Dogrib and Slave. One Yellowknife band which traded at Old Fort Franklin, frequently raided the camps of the Slave, Dogrib and Hare in search of wives. In 1823 the Dogrib again retaliated, killing many of the Yellowknife and driving the remainder to the northeast corner of Great Slave Lake where they amalgamated with the Chipewyan. The Dogrib have gradually expanded the area they occupy since that date.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the Slave Indians occupied the land surrounding Athabaska Lake, Slave River, and the western half of Great Slave Lake. Later on the Cree invaded their territory and many retreated down the Mackenzie River to the territory they occupy today.

In 1769 Samuel Hearne, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, set out from Fort Churchill with a band of Chipewyan Indians to explore the far north. Twice he had to turn back, but the third attempt was successful and in 1771 he travelled overland to the mouth of the Coppermine River, the first European to reach the polar sea by land.

There was a traditional enmity between the Chipewyan Indians and the Eskimo, which prevented them from intermarrying or becoming friendly in any way. At Bloody Falls, twelve miles from the mouth of the Coppermine River, the Indians with whom Hearne was travelling, attacked and killed a band of twenty Eskimo men, women and children, as they slept in their tents. This event prolonged the enmity between the two peoples for another hundred years.

In 1789, Alexander Mackenzie, a fur trader with the Northwest Company, went by canoe from Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska down an unknown river to which he gave his name. The trip to the mouth of the River and return took 102 days. Thereafter the Mackenzie River was opened up for the fur trade, and by 1800 trading posts were established at Lac la Martre, Fort Providence, Fort Liard, Livingston's Fort and Rocky Mountain House. The latter two forts were abandoned after a few years.

In 1821 the Northwest Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company and by 1850 many trading posts had sprung up along the Mackenzie River as far as the Arctic Circle. From 1821 to 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company held sway over all of the north-west.

## CONFEDERATION TO WORLD WAR 1

In 1869 the Government of Canada secured Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company and in 1870, by an Imperial Order in Council, Great Britain formally transferred all the land in question to the Dominion of Canada. The fur trade of the Hudson's Bay Company continued but its control of the territory was ended. A second Imperial Order in Council, dated July 31, 1880, transferred Great Britain's

Arctic Islands to the Dominion of Canada. Thereafter the entire region was known as the Northwest Territories.

Whaling ships operated in Canadian Arctic waters in great numbers from around 1830 until 1906 when the industry failed because of the invention of a commercial substitute for whalebone. The whalers introduced rifles, imported food and readymade clothing. They also introduced European contagious diseases such as measles and influenza which decimated the northern populations who had little natural resistance against them.

From 1844 Canadian Government ships were sailing in and out of Hudson Bay and to the Arctic islands on missions of exploration and administration. Government geologists and surveyors investigated the Barren Lands and the Mackenzie Basin.

Gold was discovered in the Yukon by the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1850's and prospecting began in 1872. Fine gold was found on the bars of most of the main rivers and coarse gold was located in the side streams. The Klondike placer creeks were discovered in 1896 and the Klondike gold rush began.

Thousands of would-be miners found their way to the Klondike and during the next ten years they spread out over the whole territory. Rich deposits of copper, silver, lead, antimony, tungsten, zinc, arsenic, manganese, iron, mercury, tin, platinum and bismuth were found, in addition to the gold.

There was no formal administrative authority in the Yukon at this time. The Bishop of Selkirk, The right Reverend W.C. Bompas, reported on conditions from time to time, and as early as 1893 noted the increased activity of prospectors in the area. He was largely responsible for the sending of Inspector Charles Constantine in 1894 to look into conditions which resulted from prospectors and miners moving into the country.

Inspector Constantine was empowered to act for "the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in the Yukon country, to deal with the Indians in that country, and to take such action as he can within the law, as may seem to him advisable in their interest; it being understood that no authority has been given him to make or negotiate any treaty with any of the Indians of that country, or to incur any expenditure or bind the Department of Indian Affairs or the Government of Canada to any expenditure other than may be absolutely necessary for the relief of actual cases of destitution". He reported in 1896 that the Indians were well able to maintain themselves without any assistance from the Government.

The Yukon was created a separate Territory by Act of Parliament in June 1898 and provisions were made for an organized government.

During the late 1890's and early 1900's Bishop Bompas made representations on behalf of the Indians for assistance in the form of medical attendance, relief, land, and education. As a result provision was made for granting relief and medical attendance through the Northwest Mounted Police, providing grants for education, and beginning in 1900, reserving such land for the use of the Yukon Indians as they might require, mainly sites for settlements and woodlots. All this was done under the general supervision of the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory.

From time to time consideration was given to making a treaty with the Indians of the Yukon. After discussions of the general conditions among the Yukon Indians it was decided not to enter into treaty with them.

In 1914 an Indian Superintendency was set up in the Yukon Territory with the office located in Dawson. The Indians' chief means of livelihood was hunting, fishing and fur-trapping, which was growing more precarious every year, as the spread of mining operations drove the animals further inland. On the other hand, the mining centres provided good markets for furs, fish and meat. Some of the younger Indians worked as deck-hands on the steamers plying the Yukon River. Most of the Indians lived in log cabins while not away hunting and fishing or on their traplines.

In 1897 Commissioner L.W. Herchmer of the Northwest Mounted Police pointed out the desirability of making a treaty with the Indians occupying the proposed route from Edmonton to Pelly River. The



Indian Commissioner reported on this and, in line with his recommendations, the Government decided to enter a treaty, the territory to be treated for in a general way to be restricted to the provisional District of Athabaska and northern British Columbia east of the height of land.

Treaty 8 was accordingly concluded in 1899. By this treaty aboriginal title to a large triangle of land in the Northwest Territories, between the 60th parallel and the south shores of Great Slave Lake, was surrendered by the Chipewyan Indians of Slave River. In return the Indians received hunting, trapping and fishing rights over the territory subject to usual governmental regulations. Annuities were granted of \$5.00 to each band member with \$25.00 to each Chief and \$15.00 to each Headman. Reserves were to be laid aside for such bands as desired them, although no reserves have been taken up to date.

The Slaves of Upper Hay River, the Dogribs, Chipewyans and Yellowknives of Great Slave Lake, and the Slaves of Lower Hay River and Great Slave Lake signed adhesions to Treaty 8 in 1900.

The signing of the Treaty had little or no effect on the traditional economy of the northern Indians. They continued their nomadic hunting and fishing life, enduring intermittent hardships caused by the cyclical scarcity of game. Some Indians such as the Slave of Hay River clustered around the missions, built log houses for themselves and produced good gardens.

In 1908 the Hudson's Bay Company launched the first of its stern wheelers, "The Mackenzie River" which carried passengers and freight and improved communications greatly.

The Fort Smith Indian Agency was opened in June, 1911, taking in the Fort Smith, Smith's Landing and Cariboo Eater bands on the Great Slave River, as well as the Slave of Resolution and the Dogrib and Slave of Hay River. A sawmill was set up for local use.

In July 1911 an Indian Agency was opened at Fort Simpson, in territory where the Indian title had not been extinguished by treaty. It took in all the Mackenzie basin, including nine posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Indians were divided into nine bands as to habitat, and three tribes as to origin, namely, Hare, Slave and Kutchin.

The Fort Simpson Agency included a demonstration farm, stocked with animals and implements; a sawmill; and a shingle and planing mill. Enough timber was sawn for the mill, barn and stable.

Some of the Indians feared that settlement might result in the gradual extinction of game and fur-bearing animals upon which they depended for their basic livelihood. In October, 1911, a deputation of Indian hunters called on the Indian Agent and asked him to write to the government and say that "fur is scarce and food dear". Fur and game animals were in fact becoming less plentiful through heavy trapping and hunting, and the Agent recommended that a closed season be placed on any animal that seemed in danger of extinction. He also suggested that a large supply of provisions be used for welfare purposes each year to prevent hardship and suffering.

The Indian Agent further recommended that an experienced physician be stationed at Fort Simpson, from which point he could travel to adjacent posts and Indian camps by steamer in summer and dog-train in winter. A doctor from Fort Resolution had been making annual visits to the district but this was not sufficient.

Forest fires were a perennial problem, devastating large areas of the country each summer, and driving game and fur-bearing animals into more remote parts. In 1914 the Forestry Branch put a new patrol boat on the Lower Slave River and elicited the Indians' co-operation in controlling fire hazards.

## WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II

The First World War, although it was far removed from the northern part of Canada, had a strongly adverse effect on the economy. The prices of fur fell steadily and the revenue of the Indians was greatly diminished. The fur-bearing animals included bear, beaver, ermine, red fox, cross fox, silver fox, white fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, skunk, wolf, and wolverine. Before the war the Indians had been able to supply themselves with clothing, groceries and other materials from proceeds from furs but when

the fur prices dropped they could barely furnish tea and tobacco to their families. Fortunately the caribou still travelled in fairly large herds and mountain sheep could be hunted in nearby ranges. Fish were found in lakes scattered throughout the country.

In 1917, John Campbell, an Indian who lived on the Arctic coast, travelled three thousand miles by trail, canoe and river steamer to Vancouver, in order to enlist for overseas service in the war.

The end of the war marked the beginning of considerable changes in the way of life in the Far North. The women of the Yukon began to derive a revenue from handicrafts such as moccasins made from moose and caribou skin and ornamented with beads, silkwork or dyed porcupine quills. Some men made sleds and snowshoes and sold them to the whites. A number of the younger men began to act as guides and packers for hunting parties. The fur trade continued, however, as the main industry in the Territories.

In 1920 oil was struck below Fort Norman on the Mackenzie River and the attention of prospectors was again directed northward.

The discovery of radium-bearing ores on the eastern side of Great Bear Lake in 1930 inspired a world-wide interest in the minerals of the Northwest Territories and production of radium became a stable industry.

In 1898, and again in 1910, some consideration was given to making a treaty with the Indians of the Mackenzie River district, but as the influx of miners and prospectors into the country was comparatively small, it was decided there was no necessity for taking that action. However, by 1920, owing to the rapid development of the country, and the increasing immigration of prospectors, trappers, traders and settlers into the north, it was considered desirable to take a cession of the aboriginal title to lands in the Mackenzie River district.

By Treaty 11, dated June 27, 1921, Commissioner H.A. Conroy obtained from the Indians the surrender of aboriginal title to a tract of land in the Mackenzie River District containing about 372,000 square miles. The terms of the treaty were similar to those of Treaty No. 8, and it was signed by the Indians at Fort Simpson, Fort Wrigley, Fort Norman, Fort Good Hope, Arctic Red River, Fort McPherson and Fort Rae.

In 1923 the Dominion Government took steps to assist in maintaining the fur industry of the Northwest Territories with the establishment of the first of the Native Game Preserves. Trapping in these reserves was confined to Indians, Eskimos, Metis living the life of natives, and such white trappers as were already operating in the areas. On September 22, 1923, three preserves were established: the Yellowknife, 70,000 acres; the Slave River, 2,152 acres; and the Peel River, 3,300 acres. In 1926 the Arctic Islands Preserve, containing 571,605 acres, was set aside; and the Mackenzie Mountain Preserve, containing 69,440 acres, was set aside in 1938.

The federal government has made other arrangements to protect the fur industry of the Territories. Trapping is entirely forbidden in the Thelon and Twin Islands Game Sanctuaries. The Thelon Game Sanctuary, 15,000 square miles in extent, contains the largest remaining herds of musk-ox on the North American mainland. Large herds of barren-ground caribou cross it each year.

Wood Buffalo Park, of which 3,625 square miles are in the Northwest Territories, was established mainly for the protection of a herd of wood bison or buffalo, although other big game and fur-bearing animals find sanctuary there. The buffalo are rigidly protected but Indians, Metis, and whites who trapped in the region before the park was established, are permitted to hunt and trap under license.

An Indian Agency was set up at Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories, in 1926. Indian communities were established at Teslin Post and Nesutlin in Yukon in 1930, and in 1931 an Agency was established at Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories.

In 1927 a severe epidemic of influenza broke out at Fort Smith and spread quickly to Great Slave Lake and Aklavik. The doctor at Fort Resolution and the mission personnel there and at Hay River looked

after the Indians and a doctor was sent from Edmonton. The doctor from Fort Simpson followed the epidemic down the river to Aklavik. A warehouse fire at Edmonton had burned the year's supply of drugs before they could be shipped and emergency supplies had to be sent in. Whole settlements were stricken at once and the death toll was heavy, notwithstanding the self-sacrificing service of the workers.

Reindeer were introduced from Siberia to Alaska toward the end of the nineteenth century. Following a recommendation made in 1922 by a Royal Commission appointed to study the possibility of developing reindeer and musk-ox herding in Canada, the government selected a reindeer range of approximately 6,000 square miles on the east side of the Mackenzie Delta. In 1929 arrangements were made with an Alaskan reindeer company to deliver a herd of 3,000 reindeer to this range. The drive began that December with Andrew Barr, a veteran Lapp herder, in charge. The journey was difficult. Many animals broke away and returned to their home range and blizzards, intense cold, wolves, straying and accidents added to the losses. A herd of 2,370 reindeer was delivered on March 6, 1935.

Today there are two reindeer herds totalling about 6,000 head. The larger, some 4,000 head, belongs to the Government but is managed under contract. The other herd is owned and managed by an Eskimo. The reindeer are rounded up in late summer for counting and inoculation and animals surplus to herd requirements are slaughtered for food, which is sent to mission hospitals and residential schools of the Mackenzie Delta area, or used for relief. A limited quantity is sold.

In winter the reindeer subsist on moss. In spring they migrate to the summer feeding grounds along the coast, obtaining relief from the insects of the interior and foraging on grasses, shrubs and sedges.

## WORLD WAR II AND POST-WAR YEARS

During the Second World War the Old Crow Indians in Yukon Territory sent annual contributions to several agencies in England and their contribution to the London Orphans Fund was mentioned in an article in the London Times. The Canadian Red Cross sent a letter of appreciation to the band through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Alaska Highway was commenced in March 1942 as a military road from British Columbia to Alaska. This had the effect of opening up previously isolated areas of the Yukon Territory, bringing the Indians into more frequent contact with outsiders.

The Canol Project, also commenced in 1942 to provide an increased fuel supply to the United States Army, included a drilling program at Norman Wells, the construction of a pipeline from Norman Wells to Whitehorse, and the erection of an oil refinery at Whitehorse.

The establishment of new industries and the construction of highways and buildings were fortunate circumstances for the Indians whose traditional means of livelihood were becoming less and less reliable.

In 1945 the medical care and hospitalization of Indians was made the responsibility of the Department of National Health and Welfare. The Indian Affairs Branch had just taken over the Mission Hospital at Fort Norman and made alterations to increase capacity and improve facilities. This hospital had surgical and X-ray equipment and was under the charge of a resident doctor with graduate nurses in attendance. The federal government had also subsidized the construction costs of some of the mission hospitals, and located medical health officers in several districts. It furnished medical supplies to mission and government hospitals and had them delivered by aeroplane in emergencies. The hospital at Fort Norman was totally destroyed by fire in February 1946. All patients were evacuated without injury or loss of life thanks to prompt and heroic action by staff members.

A cold wave, beginning the middle of January, 1948, covered Yukon Territory for four weeks. The all-time North American minimum temperature was recorded at Snag with an official reading of 84 degrees below zero. Game, especially rabbits and muskrat, suffered greatly, and predatory animals holed up throughout the cold wave. Entire dog teams succumbed to the cold and trappers were confined to their cabins.

The Indian administration in the Northwest Territories was reorganized in 1949, involving a re-allocation of regional offices and new personnel. This was intended to provide closer supervision and and greater educational and health facilities. Statistics on births and deaths were compiled for Family Allowances and Old Age Allowances.

A fishing industry was organized in the Northwest Territories with the opening of the Mackenzie Highway, and commercial fishing in Great Slave Lake helped to increase the income of the Indians. Through the co-operation of the Northwest Territories Administration and the Department of Fisheries, steps were taken to reserve fishing grounds for the domestic use of Indians and other local residents near Great Slave Lake. Commercial fishing operations were also developed at Hay River where a group of Indians was issued the necessary equipment on a repayment basis and given the requisite guidance.

In 1956 the Indian Affairs Branch initiated trout and whitefish operations on Great Slave Lake and supplied fishing gear, transportation and food supplies to the Indians for a fishing project at Trout Rock where the catch exceeded 100,000 lbs. In 1957 domestic fishing projects were organized at Snowdrift and at Willow Lake near Fort Simpson.

Large "walk-in" refrigerators were installed at Fort Resolution in 1950 for the storage of game and fish. Refrigerators were installed at Fort Providence and Fort Rae in 1952 and at Snowdrift and Fort Franklin in 1955. By the end of 1964 refrigerators had been installed at Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson, Fort Norman, Fort Smith, Liard and Rocher River in the Northwest Territories, and at Old Crow, Dawson and Teslin in the Yukon.

Summer employment for Indians increased with the construction of new roads and buildings. The provision of fire-wood for Whitehorse and Dawson and for military establishments became an industry in itself, some Indians purchasing trucks for greater production. Many Indians became skilled in the operation of bulldozers, tractors and graders. Construction of concrete and steel bridges on Teslin Lake, and the Takhini and Yukon Rivers gave employment in 1955.

In 1950 a small Indian settlement was established on Latham Island at Yellowknife, and a number of houses erected there. In 1955 building lots were cleared and six new houses constructed at the Indian settlement near Whitehorse. New wells and a pump house were also provided. Small sawmills were set up at several points, the lumber to be used for housing improvements. Over several years parcels of land were also set apart for Indian housing needs in the Mackenzie District. The first "Homemakers' Clubs" for Indian women in the Yukon were organized at Mayo and Teslin in 1960. Market gardens were being maintained at Marie River, Arctic Red River, Fort McPherson, Fort Norman, Fort Wrigley and Fort Simpson.

Twenty elk were brought from Elk Island Park, Alberta, in 1951, and released north of Whitehorse. Five buffalo, a gift from the Territory of Alaska, were released in the same region, a corral for the animals being paid for by the Yukon Government. The excess animals were to be killed for the use of the Indians. In 1954 three Indians were specially trained in live beaver trapping and a small number of beaver was planted on denuded Indian traplines. A supervised caribou hunt was conducted for the first time in the Yellowknife and Rae districts, and the meat stored in local cold storage lockers for summer food.

In 1959 the Indian Affairs Branch introduced a special program of repayable assistance to trappers to allow them to reach and remain in remote trapping areas that had been dormant for years. As a result a greater number of Indian trappers returned to their traplines.

Increasing numbers of Indians were employed as guides, packers and general labourers with prospecting and survey parties, and several Indians with prospecting knowledge staked their own claims. Mining centers were Camacks, Keno and Cassiar Asbestos and later Snowdrift, Rayrock and Yellowknife. A number of young Indians enlisted in the Armed Forces in 1952, still others preferred to find work in construction projects or in the lumber camps, rather than follow the trapline.

Modern conveniences found their way to the north. In 1951 Indian Health Services and Indian Affairs jointly purchased a 16 mm. projection machine, and obtained a portable generator for showings



in small settlements without electricity. Films were shown on wild forest conservation, health care and other educational subjects.

In July 1957 twenty representatives of Indian bands in the Northwest Territories and the Athabasca Indian Agency in Alberta met with the Director and Indian Affairs Branch officials at Fort Smith. Among the matters discussed was the alarming decline of the barren-ground caribou, then under study by federal and provincial agencies to discover its cause and possible cure. As a partial solution the Government has been endeavouring to promote domestic fisheries as an alternative source of human and animal food. Also, high powered rifles have been supplied to prevent wastage of game through wounding. There has been stronger enforcement of protective legislation, and buffalo, moose and elk meat is purchased from the National parks to help fill meat requirements.

The production and sale of handicrafts manufactured from tanned moose hides has been promoted. Jackets, gloves, mukluks and moccasins all of the highest quality are produced by Indian workers. New outlets were found for the sale of these goods and in 1961, by arrangement with the Department of National Revenue, an amended Marketing of Imported Goods Order was enacted, providing protection of Indian handicrafts against imported imitations.

In 1958 a new band council was chosen for the first time by secret ballot at Old Crow. Other councils became more aware of the importance of their roles, and an increasing number of bands adopted the elective system. A two-day conference, with 10 Indian delegates representing various bands, was held by the Indian Affairs Branch at Whitehorse in 1958, where welfare, education and general advancement were discussed.

In 1959, welfare services involving neglected or dependent children and care of the aged and infirm were taken over by Territorial or municipal social workers on a reimbursement basis from the Indian Affairs Branch.

A Branch regional office for the District of Mackenzie, with headquarters at Fort Smith, was established in 1960 and a new Indian agency office located at Fort Simpson. An economic development officer was appointed for the Mackenzie Region and located at Fort Smith and another for the Yukon Territory was located at Whitehorse.

## MISSIONS

The first missionaries to penetrate beyond the southern boundary of the Mackenzie District were Fathers Faraud and Grandin who reached Great Slave Lake in 1852. They founded St. Joseph's Mission at Fort Resolution but remained there only briefly. In 1858 Father Peter Henry Grollier of the Order of the Oblates founded a more permanent mission at Fort Resolution. The following year he founded a mission at Fort Rae on the north arm of Great Slave Lake and then went north to start missions at Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Fort Norman and Fort Good Hope. In 1860 he organized the first mission within the Arctic Circle, at Fort McPherson. Returning to Fort Good Hope, he built a church and mission house there. He died in 1864 at the age of only 38.

Archdeacon Hunter of the Anglican Church reached Fort Simpson during the summer of 1858. He remained in the north all winter, visiting Forts Liard, Norman and Good Hope. In 1859 the Reverend W.W. Kirkby started a mission at Arctic Red River. He then went on to Fort McPherson, and later to Fort Simpson where he made his headquarters, assisting Archdeacon Hunter, Robert McDonald, later Anglican Archdeacon of the Yukon, went to Fort Yukon in 1862. The Reverend William Bompas visited Fort Simpson from 1865 to 1866. He then went on to Fort Norman where the Hudson's Bay Company built him a house. Once there he engaged a schoolmaster to assist in teaching the Indians. The school he supervised was established principally for orphans left by a scarlet fever epidemic in 1865 and was later closed in 1868.

Bishop Grandin founded Providence Mission at Fort Providence in 1861. Houses were built, the Hudson's Bay Company lending the services of some of their men to assist in the work. School was



opened at the Mission in October, 1867 with 11 pupils. Grey Nuns arrived the same year, established a convent, and ministered to the sick. An Oblate mission was started at Hay River in 1869 closed for a period, and was re-established in 1900.

In 1874 William Bompas was made Anglican Bishop of Athabasca. He chose Fort Simpson where a church and mission house had already been built, as his first residence. By 1875, there were Anglican missions at Fort McPherson, Fort Norman, Fort Simpson, Fort Rae and Hay River Fort. There were 100 children in the various mission schools.

A Missionary See of the Mackenzie River was created by the Church of England in 1884, and the Right Reverend William Bompas was its first bishop. He directed the missions from his residence at Fort Simpson.

In 1893 the Slave Indians of Hay River asked for a Protestant minister and Mr. T.J. Marsh went to them. A group of 60 or 70 Slave Indians lived in tipis or log huts in a clearing on the bank of the river. The chief welcomed Mr. Marsh and provided a one-roomed building for the Mission. Mr. Marsh built a school, house and chapel, most of the work being done by his own labour, and altogether developed a successful school and mission.

The first missionary to live on the Western Arctic coast of Canada was Mr. Isaac Stringer, who resided on Herschel Island from 1892 to 1902. In 1902 he became Anglican Bishop of the Yukon.

The Oblates had a permanent mission in the north by 1884, and the Grey Nuns continued to come into the country. In 1902 Mgr. Gabriel Joseph Breynat, O.M.I., was consecrated Roman Catholic Bishop of Mackenzie. His diocese extended from Fort Smith on the Slave River to the Arctic Red River, more than 1,000 miles. There were 10 churches in the diocese. Native children were taught at most of the smaller missions, and a yearly visit was made to each mission post to supply the necessities of life. The Grey Nuns went to Fort Resolution in 1903, where they established a convent with a school for Indian children. They had established a mission at Fort Smith in 1888 and built a hospital and school there in 1914-5. In 1914 a hospital was established at Fort Simpson, the Government furnishing the building.

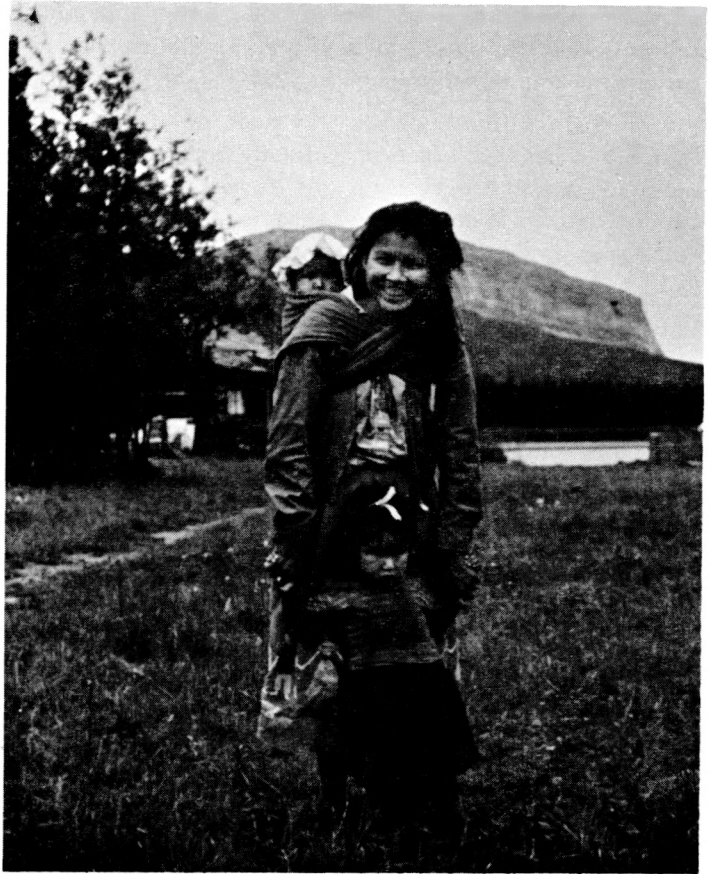
The Anglican Diocese of Mackenzie River was divided in two in 1890, Archdeacon W.D. Reeve becoming Bishop of the eastern portion and Bishop Bompas working along the Yukon River. In 1904 a new mission school was erected at Carcross (Caribou Crossing). The Church Missionary Society worked for the Indian missions, and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge aided in erecting churches and providing scholarships for Indian schools.

Today the majority of Indians throughout the northwest are of the Christian faith and there is scarcely a band or group that is not within easy travelling distance of a mission. The first missionaries were either Roman Catholic or Church of England and today native church membership is divided mainly between these two churches.

## EDUCATION

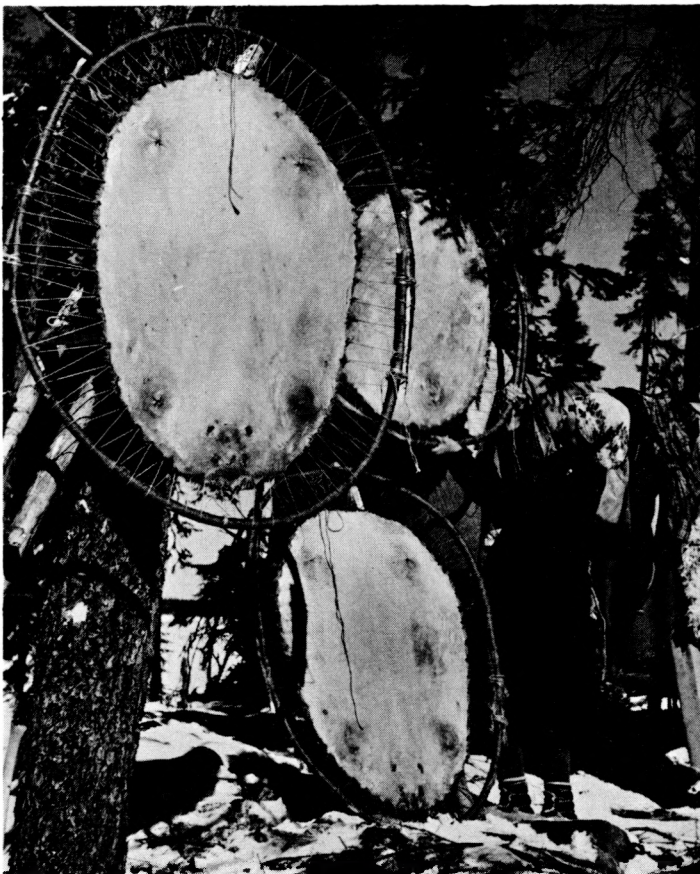
As in other parts of Canada, the early education of the Indians of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories was left to the missionaries. The first year in which a government grant to a school north of the 60th parallel was recorded was 1894, when the school at Fort Resolution under Church of England auspices received a special grant of \$200 from the Department of Indian Affairs school appropriation fund, 31 pupils being enrolled. In 1896 the Providence Mission, under Roman Catholic direction, was voted \$200 and had 26 pupils. The Church of England school at Fort McPherson received a grant in 1899 and the following year grants were made to Buxton Mission in the Yukon, St. Peter's Mission at Hay River and St. David's Mission at Fort Simpson, all under the Church of England.

In 1903 the Church of England boarding school at Hay River received a grant of \$72 per capita for 20 pupils, and in 1904 the Roman Catholic boarding school at Fort Resolution received the same grant for 25 pupils. Providence Mission became a boarding school in 1907 with 25 pupils.



Woman with children.

Photo — Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development



Hanging beaver pelts out to dry.

For the Indian, beaver is still important as a source of income.

Photo: National Film Board of Canada



The Roman Catholic boarding schools at Fort Resolution and Fort Providence and the Church of England boarding schools at Hay River and Carcross progressed greatly. They had good up-to-date buildings and large gardens which helped provide training in agriculture for the boys and food for the pupils and staff. The girls were instructed in household industries. Inspectors of the different Indian agencies visited these schools regularly and submitted reports to the Department.

By 1917 there were nine Church of England day schools in the Yukon and one Roman Catholic and three Church of England day schools in the Northwest Territories.

In 1922 the Department assumed responsibility for St. Paul's Hostel at Dawson, under the auspices of the Church of England. The Aklavik mission school was opened in 1926.

Beginning in 1942 a special biscuit was manufactured of raw pulped carrots, soy bean flour, oat flour, brewer's yeast and Canada approved vitamin B flour and was distributed to schools as a dietary supplement.

The education of Indian children in the Territories continued to be carried on by day and residential schools operated by the missions with financial assistance from the Government. Residential schools were maintained by the Church of England mission at Aklavik, and by the Roman Catholic missions at Fort Resolution, Fort Providence and Aklavik. Special attention was given to manual and domestic training and hygiene in addition to the subjects usually taught in primary schools. There was a gradual increase in the number of Indian children attending Territorial public schools.

In April 1955 an agreement was entered into with the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories whereby the education of Indian children in the area was carried on by that administration. Also, joint agreements were negotiated with the Yukon Territorial government for the education of Indian children at Dawson in 1958 and subsequently at Whitehorse.

A number of young Indians attended the Sir John Franklin vocational school at Yellowknife during 1958 and thereafter. The girls took commercial and home economics courses, and the boys took carpentry and mechanics. Night classes for adults were conducted at Jean Marie River. Indian women at Fort Simpson, Fort Norman, Fort McPherson and Fort Good Hope attended sewing classes. Day schools were in operation in every settlement along the Mackenzie River. Foster homes were provided for some 50 children on a temporary basis so they could attend day school while their parents followed the traplines.

In 1957 a new school was opened at Fort Smith, and summer seasonal schools operated at Nahanni, Fort Wrigley and Lac la Martre for children who were away with their parents on the traplines during the regular school term. The Aklavik Residential School closed in 1959 and a Government Residential School was built in its stead.

In 1960 a school district was organized in the Yukon with a full-time superintendent to supervise Indian education and visit schools regularly in his district. Hostels were opened at Whitehorse, enabling every Indian child in the Yukon to obtain an education. Indian children may be admitted at the same age-level as non-Indians. Students staying at the hostels attend regular local schools with the non-Indian children, and a teacher-adviser has been appointed to give children additional instruction when required after school hours.

In 1965, Indian school enrolment in the Northwest Territories amounted to 1,786 and in the Yukon there were 596 pupils. In 1966 responsibility for Indian education was transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

### PRESENT CONDITIONS

The pattern of life among most of the Northern Indians is still semi-nomadic. Hunting and fishing are the major sources of food and trapping the major source of income. There is seasonal movement from the larger centers to summer and autumn fish camps and winter and spring trap lines, interspersed with trips to the settlements or trading posts for supplies. Cash is needed for such items as ammunition, guns, fish nets, clothing, tents, tea, sugar and other material goods, and is obtained from fur, wage-labour and



Indian Child in Hammock



welfare payments. While most men have worked for wages at some time there is still a desire to engage in hunting and trapping for at least part of the year.

There is much closer contact with the outside world than previously. Increasing numbers of non-Indian residents, aeroplane communication with other Canadian centers, daily radio communication with other Canadian centers, daily radio communication with outside points, books and periodicals, moving pictures and the mail-order catalogues have all played a part in acquainting the Indians with the way of life in the rest of Canada.

School populations are steadily increasing and education is now within the reach of all Indian children in the Territories. Although English is taught in the schools, the Indian languages are still very much in evidence in everyday conversation.

Clothing is bought in stores, largely from the mail-order catalogues. Shoes are worn in the larger centers, but the native footwear is preferred in the settlements and the hunting and fishing camps.

Radios are very popular and the traditional Indian music is seldom heard. Old style country music is popular with all ages, while the younger generation are also fond of modern rhythms.

For most of the people each of the four seasons has its own specific activities. Autumn begins early in September and lasts for only a short time until the lakes and rivers have frozen over and the ground is covered with snow. Families with children of school age leave the summer camps and move into the larger centers where the children can attend school, or else they send them away to the residential schools.

The winter's supply of fish for dog food is caught in autumn when the fish start up the rivers to spawn. The fish are placed on a raised platform until it is cold enough to store them in a tent or warehouse for winter. Lake trout and whitefish are the most common varieties caught, but grayling and northern pike are also taken. Whitefish are preferred for human consumption. The fish nets are large and made of nylon or cotton, with large rocks at each end as anchors.

Winter firewood is gathered in autumn and is used as fuel for cooking and heating in all winter houses. Ducks, especially mallards, and pintails, and Canada geese are shot, some being eaten immediately, the others frozen for winter use.

The trapping season begins the first of November when the season for most fur bearing animals opens. Animals caught are marten, mink, lynx, otter, ermine, fisher, beaver and fox.

After the first snowfall many families move to winter camps, travelling by dog team and living in tents banked with snow. The men set their traps and visit them once or twice a week, depending on the length of the trap-line. They usually trap alone. Often the women set out rabbit snares and do some trapping on their own. If a man shoots a moose or caribou the meat is shared by the whole camp, some of it eaten fresh, the rest dried. The woman of the household tans the hide and makes it into mittens and moccasins. Dogs are fed on whitefish caught under the ice.

The campers return home for the Christmas celebrations. There are church services followed by house-to-house visiting. A Christmas party, with Santa Claus, is held at the school for the children, followed by a dance for everyone. There are dog-team races and daily parties the week after Christmas. The week after the New Year the families return to the hunting camps.

At Easter time they again visit the town to attend church services and to sell their pelts. They then return to the camps.

Spring lasts from the first of May to the middle of June. This is the muskrat trapping season, which requires residence near lakes or rivers.

Summer begins the second week of June and lasts until the end of August. Families who have been out on the spring hunt come back into town, where they have houses or set up tents. Children return home from school, sometimes travelling by plane if they have been attending residential schools.



## POPULATION

The first available census figures for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are for 1895. They report 2,600 Indians in the Yukon and 4,376 in the Northwest Territories.

Population figures became more accurate after 1912 when the provincial and territorial boundaries assumed their permanent pattern. That year the Indian population was 1,389 in the Yukon and 3,589 in the Northwest Territories. In 1915 there were 1,528 Indians in the Yukon and 3,600 in the Northwest Territories. These figures remained approximately the same for the next two years. They then began to diminish, reaching the lowest point of 1,264 in the Yukon in 1929, and 3,724 in the Northwest Territories in 1939. On January 1, 1970 there were 2,484 Indians in the Yukon and 6,271 in the Northwest Territories.

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